POTENTIAL RECREATION CENTER

PUBLIC INPUT SESSIONS

MEETING NOTES

OCTOBER 22, 2026 (IN-PERSON)

Questions

- "If the site hosted a tournament, how often should the facility close to the public?"
    - Is it conceivable that other parts of the facility could be open during tournaments. Question seems binary.
    - Who do you see this is for, in the community? I am interested in walking, but I do not have a tournament.
    - Choice on size - as big as you can afford.
    - Consultant to provide feedback to provide as much flexibility to keep the facility open while tournaments are going on to lessen impact to the community.
- Where do you consider respective life for facility and replacements?
- When has the City last talked about and focused on a true rec space?
- From the feedback sessions you have had so far, what is the general sediment you have heard?
- Many models that are working have a completely separate public private or a direct revenue generator (City probably not interested in being a landlord). Mindset of tournaments, but is there the appetite to put other things in the facility to offset operating costs?
- In Healthy Life Center, Iowa State was a partner from land but also the curriculum side. Is that being explored for this type of facility?
- Three sessions, then presenting to P&R Commission, the presenting to City Council. If all goes favorable, then would City Council recommend hiring a consultant at that point?
    - Is council then giving direction on the size of the facility for the consultant RFP? Who decides the size and number of amenities?
- Based on this process, it seems like the survey is one of the biggest/most important piece of the process at this point. Is that valid?

Comments

- Perspective on Nevada Fieldhouse - 56,000 square feet
- Willing to have taxes increase to have nice things.
- A building that looks nice invites people to want to be there.
- Tournaments - food and drink go hand and hand - interest for business or others to build next to if property was big enough.
- One thing missing on the list of amenities was sheet(s) of ice. Has that been considered?

- Right to Walk group representative - want to consider walking as a sport - group walks whenever and wherever. Facility should include a walking track, long, wide (enough for strollers), dry, and safe. Advocate to include a walking track in this facility. Ability to serve all people.
- Something like this, a place for our youth to go, is very important, people are very passionate about this, but thinking of it even broader than the youth aspect, very important and exciting.
- Having this project scoped tightly with specific needs will help generate support. Excited about right sizing this facility and not being controversial.

OCTOBER 28, 2026 (VIRTUAL)

Questions/Comments:

- Is there any concern that on a matter of tremendous community interest that the meeting with the Council will be held two days before Thanksgiving?
- When would the public know what size and type of facility the City would be pursuing. Providing two very broad strokes now. Two very different types of facilities - when will we know what type. When will the community know what they are asking to support?
- Tournaments (wrestling) - very important for revenue generation for the club, helps with sponsorships for athletes, and tourism dollars in the community. Why pushing the tournaments on our ends?

Chat (virtual meeting):

- What is the difference between this and the Healthy Life Center proposal?
- Here today to learn about the programs and hours, Counselor.
- Is there a publicly available list of the focus groups that have already been held?
- Is there any concern that on a matter of tremendous community interest that the meeting with the Council will be held two days before Thanksgiving?
- Yes! 100% for artificial turf!
- You mention “groups”. Who is this proposal geared towards? Informal community recreation or is it intended to primarily be used for organized “competitive” activities?
- Elevated walking track and other recreational options, bravo!
- Elevated Walking Track, Recreational options, and cardio machines.
- If “private groups” use the space, will they be charged fees
- Yes! Tournaments
- I am very concerned that a lot of this facility, supported by public dollars, will go to organized youth sports. While I think organized youth sports are great, they serve primarily families that have strong financial resources. I am not sure that this is how public dollars should be used. I would not want to see public dollars support a regional “tournament” focused facility.
- That is a good point, regarding tournaments, how are the funds being diversified back into the community?

- Who are the competitors in the area when it comes to “regional sports facilities? What has the financial picture been for these facilities? Is there concrete evidence in central Iowa behind claims of economic impact?
- When fees are being paid for, regarding services what percentage is differentiated between the public, private functions and other potential activities?
- Answer how many weekends would you be ok with the facility being closed for tournaments? Zero
- 10 or more weekends would be almost 25% of the weekends in a year. That is very concerning.
- Land within city limits or outside city limits?
- 5-6 weekends is approx. 10% of the available weekends. Maybe consider closing half a day at a time rather than a whole weekend. Ames has a history of building community type buildings without easy expansion baked into the initial design. (Library lacking footings for expansion) Fitch, limited footings). IS there the possibility that this could be built with expansion in mind?
- At this point there are too many ifs and will be doing more research prior to any comment on support or non- support
- I support a recreation facility but not a tournament facility. Asking a global question like this makes me uncomfortable. Without a definition of “Recreation Facility” I have no idea what I am supporting.
- For comparison, do we know how often other city-owned locations (Nevada, Grimes, West Des Moines, etc.) close their facilities for tournaments?
- Consider where and/or who the consultant is going to be, the cost and effective benefits of the consultant
- Based on your comment that you will be bringing a recommendation to the City Council at the meeting before Thanksgiving, I renew my plea to reconsider holding a meeting on that date
- Cost benefit analysis

NOVEMBER 3, 2026 (IN-PERSON)

Questions:

- Square footage of Nevada facility for reference? (56,000 sf)
- Does the amount of tournaments able to be offered affect the cost on taxpayers, admission, etc. with the additional revenue?
- How many surveys have you received back and how many would you like to get before taking to Council?
- Given your experience in this role, what are the biggest roadblocks or barrier in a project like this?
- How would memberships be affected with hosting tournaments and use?
- If there is a tournament that closes space at a rec center, would people be able to come to the Community Center gym?
- If the council gave the green light for a consultant, how long of a process would that take? Then, how long would the construction take?
- What research has been done with other facilities in surrounding areas? How will this stand out compared to those?
- Who is the survey available for? Ames residents only?

Comments:

- Closing the facility could be ammunition for people to possibly oppose project. All tournaments may not have to close down the area with separate areas. Need to keep an open mind on this and gear towards how spaces are designed to limit this.
- A way to section off tournament courts and public courts.
- Unsure of support as a user of the ice arena. Adding another facility without considering ice expansion.
- Important to look at other communities and state what they have. Help communicate with other residents not in the youth sports space where we are lacking.