

## Meeting Minutes

**Project Name:** Willmar Rec/Events Center  
**Project Number:** 19.1030.01  
**To:** Rob Baumgarn  
**Present:** LSE Architects: David Leschak; Maura McDaniel  
AJA Inc.: Jay Pomeroy  
City of Willmar: Rob Baumgarn; Vicki Davis  
Marcus Construction: Joe DeGrote; Andrew Lindquist  
Invest in Willmar: Matt Dawson  
Event Center Committee: Gretchen Otness; Michael Fagerlie; Gary Laughlin; Beth Fischer; Justin Bos  
**From:** Maura McDaniel  
**Meeting Date:** 4.8.2020  
**Subject:** Willmar Rec/Events Center Design Sub-Committee Meeting No. 4

### Items Discussed:

1. Introductions of the persons representing the Design Team of LSE Architects, and thanks to everyone for attending this remote meeting.
2. It was confirmed that the meeting documents, including meeting minutes from previous meetings and the updated plans, were distributed to meeting participants & reviewed prior to meeting time. It was established that it was unnecessary to review meeting minutes and the minutiae of the plans, as participants had reviewed these on their own time.
3. Review of Site Plan C, initially shown at the 2.19.20 committee meeting. Invest-in-Willmar Design Sub-Committee establishes that Site Plan C was identified as the site plan to move forward with as the “basis of design”. LSE was instructed by the committee members to review only the highlights, as the committee members are already familiar with the plan.
  - a. As per this plan (south option), the existing lobby space remains the “hub” of all building components. The 2006 addition created an East/West connection, and this project is proposing making a new North/South connection in order to support the additional programming of the new dome and the new rec/ events center.
  - b. It was also established by the design sub-committee that a priority in this plan will be to preserve as much existing parking as possible so as to spend as much funding as possible on the facility improvements and additions.

4. LSE presented the developed masterplan “C” that places the rec/events center to the south of the existing Blueline Ice Rink, as per discussion at the 3.11.2020 committee meeting. The following points were highlighted on this south option:
  - a. Parking has been a major concern and driver of this project. There are (400) parking stalls on the existing site. This plan disrupts approximately (25) – (30) existing parking stalls. This plan also adds an additional parking lot on the north end of the site, west of the dome project, with approximately (145) parking stalls. This will leave the site at approximately (515) parking stalls, which is a net increase of (115) parking stalls. It also creates a distributed parking layout, whereas there is (1) lot to serve the dome/ fields programming, as well as serve the back entry to the rec/ events center, and (1) larger lot to be the primary lot for the rec/events center and the existing cardinal and blue line ice rinks. It was also noted that the north parking lot is currently sized to its maximum capacity, and it is not feasible to get more than (150) parking stalls in the north parking lot without significant revisions to site plan option C.
  - b. This option strengthens the existing lobby space and maintains the existing entry as the primary entry into the expanded facility. It also provides for an opportunity to create a new image for the expanded facility.
  - c. The rec/ event center and dome projects both carry a significant occupant load. The rec/ event center will add (1200) occupants, and the dome will add (1863) occupants. In the south option, this load is distributed among the site. The rec/ events center is in close proximity to the main entry/ exit, where occupants may need to exit. This option provides a very short travel distance.
  - d. Gary Laughlin noted that, aesthetically, the rec/ event center was better placed on the south.
5. LSE presented an alternate masterplan that places the rec/ events center to the north of the existing cardinal ice arena, as per a request via email by committee member Matt Dawson.
  - a. LSE notes that it cannot be said at this time what the possible cost implications would be of the north option versus the south option. There are possible cost savings in maintaining a single construction site to the north instead of having a construction site to the south and north as would be the case with the south rec/events center option. Other considerations that could affect the cost efficacy of this option are the potential locations of existing electric/ water/ storm, and sanitary utility lines, and other site conditions having to do with the location of the north property line. It is schematic design, costs at this phase of the project are based upon square foot costs. The north option shown is approximately the same size as the south option at this time and potentially a little larger due to the increased distance between the dome location in the north option vs. the south option.
  - b. LSE notes that the rec/ event center and dome projects both carry a significant occupant load. The rec/ event center will add (1200) occupants, and the dome

will add (1863) occupants. Adding both loads on the north end of the site would be challenging. The existing (south) primary entry/ exit would still need to serve the large occupant load as a result that the majority of the parking is located on the south side of the existing Willmar Civic Center. Consequently, the existing lobby would still need to be renovated to accommodate the large occupant load accessing the north option as well exiting the north option. The travel distance from the rec/event center on the north of the site to the existing entry would be much longer in the north option.

- c. LSE notes that this plan would need significantly more design work and program development consideration for this option to be at the same level of development as the south option developed to-date; some of the considerations that would still need to be looked at would be public toilet room locations and the exiting of the additional "A" occupancy occupant loads. These aspects that were heavily considered in the south plan have yet to be explored in the north option.
- d. Committee member Matt Dawson notes that a potential benefit of the north option is that the north parking lot could then serve both the rec/ events center and the dome. This could prevent parking strain on the existing south parking lot. Concern was expressed that sharing the south lot between the existing cardinal and blueline ice rinks and the new rec/ event center could cause a significant amount of congestion in this lot.
  - i. In response to this comment, it was noted that the north lot is significantly smaller than the south lot, and there was concern that the approximately 150 stalls would not be sufficient parking for both the dome and rec/ event center. This could lead to other parking issues and congestion. This could cause dome and rec/ events center visitors to go to the north parking lot as their primary lot, find that it is full, causing them to drive around the block and back to the south parking. This causes a significant inconvenience on the likely occasion that the north lot is at capacity. It also leaves visitors a further distance from their destination, causing them to walk through the existing lobby and back to the north end of the site.
  - ii. It was also noted that by developing a larger parking lot on the north side of the existing civic center that it would not be in alignment with the goal of the design sub-committee to build as little new parking as possible by using the existing parking as efficiently as possible. That is why the future football field is located where it is so that it when constructed can take advantage of the existing parking on the high school site.
  - iii. The north parking lot in the south option was identified to serve as a drop off area for youth hockey participants, curling center participants and dome users. All users of the rec/events center were anticipated to use the existing south parking lot.

- e. Committee member Matt Dawson notes that the idea of a separate dome and rec/event center entry could be a benefit of the north option. It was also noted that the south plan could leave too much happening on the south side of the site, and it could be better to have all of the new construction on the north side of the site, in the same area.
  - f. Gretchen Otness expressed concerns of north option with regard to the future curling center. In this option, there is no potential connection to a future curling center. Benefits of this connection were discussed at the 3.11.2020 committee meeting, and all of these benefits are being lost in the north option. Additionally, there is not room for future expansion of the rec/ events center with the north option, given its location sandwiched between the dome and the varsity locker room addition master planned to occur on the north side of the cardinal ice arena.
6. It was confirmed that the cost of the north parking lot that would primarily be serving the dome is currently being carried by the Rec Fields project and would not come out of the rec/events center budget.
  7. LSE clarified that parking lots denoted as “future” parking lots would be included in the development of the future master plan projects; this was decided as a result of the committee’s decision that the priority of this project was to limit expenses spent on parking and maintain as much existing parking as possible.
  8. LSE notes that the rec component could work well on the north side of the site. However, as an events center, the north option doesn’t seem to be as viable due to the north side location and the greater distances to travel to access it. Also, the servicing of the events center is more difficult on the north side again as a result that it is less accessible because of it being sandwiched between adjacent building program spaces; it is better served on the south. It comes down to whether it is primarily a rec center, or if it is truly a rec and event center facility that serves each function equally.
  9. It was voiced by many of the committee members that they appreciated the opportunity to look at the north rec/events center option. However, having seen both options side by side, the committee believes that the south option provides for a better flow of the overall Willmar Civic Center and rec/events center project realizing that the parking situation is what it is but that it better serves the south option than it does the north option. The design sub-committee votes to proceed with the south option. This motion passes.
    - a. It is noted that this motion was come to only after significant discussion and vetting of multiple site options; the committee did their due diligence in terms of site options and parking considerations.
  10. David Leschak of LSE thanked Matt Dawson for challenging the design subcommittee and consultants to look more closely at the pros and cons of a north rec / events center option. David also makes the point that it is important that the entire design subcommittee and consultants are a team and that all of the team members are on the same page as it pertains to the vision and design direction of the project.

11. Moving forward, LSE will begin to get our MEP/Structural consultants more involved, now that we have re-confirmed the south Rec/Events Center vision/direction.
12. It is anticipated at this time that the rec/events center design subcommittee will meet again in (2) weeks, on Wednesday, April 22<sup>th</sup>. LSE shall have additional schematic design conversations/meetings with the project consultants, Marcus Construction and the city of Willmar to continue to develop the SD south option scope of work. The intent of the next design subcommittee meeting will be the presentation by Marcus Construction of schematic design costs to the design subcommittee for discussion. This exercise shall then allow the design subcommittee to begin the process of prioritizing the individual master plan projects identified to-date by the subcommittee.

**Copy To:** Rob Baumgarn, Consultants, subcommittee members, File

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