

CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC MEETING ON NORMAN FORWARD PROPOSAL

May 20, 2015

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, attended a public meeting at 6:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building Council Chambers on the 20th day of May, 2015, and notice of the public meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray, and the Norman Public Library at 225 North Webster 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting. Although this meeting was not a regularly scheduled meeting of the Council a quorum was present; therefore, a summary of the meeting was recorded as required by the Open Meeting Act.

PRESENT: Councilmembers Allison, Castleberry, Heiple, Holman, Jungman, Lang, Miller, and Mayor Rosenthal

ABSENT: Councilmember Williams

DISCUSSION REGARDING A CITIZENS' QUALITY OF LIFE INITIATIVE ENTITLED "NORMAN FORWARD" AS WELL AS ADDITIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE PROJECTS AND FINANCING OPTIONS DISCUSSED.

Mayor Rosenthal said City Council holds meetings every Tuesday evening and for the last month and a half, Council has been meeting on Thursdays as well to review Norman Forward proposal. She said Council and the public has been asking questions during these meetings and Staff has been working diligently to obtain answers to the questions. Some of those questions have been answered by Staff while some questions are still being researched. She said tonight is the first formal opportunity for members of the public to weigh in and she is looking forward to that after the Staff presentation. She encouraged everyone to visit the City of Norman's website and provide input on the survey questions regarding Norman Forward. Further into the process, the City will be conducting a statistically valid survey of the public to assess the community's interests and priorities. She said no formal proposal has been determined, no specific method of financing has been selected, and no term of a temporary tax or oversight mechanism has been determined. Council would welcome thoughts and comments from the public as they make these determinations. She said Staff will provide an overview of the projects discussed to this point, which includes questions raised during previous meetings then the floor will be open to public questions or comments. She said Staff will answer questions to the extent the information is available. She asked the public to limit their comments to five minutes or less, but will extend time to groups that have organized themselves to make presentations through a group spokesperson. She said the purpose of the time limit is not to cut off discussion, but to allow reasonable space and time for all who wish to speak.

Mr. Steve Lewis, City Manager, said Norman Forward is a proposal that includes a number of quality of life projects designed to renovate, expand, and construct a number of facilities consisting of park facilities, recreational facilities, cultural facilities, and tourism facilities. He said the initiative came to the Council from a number of community groups, stakeholders, and Norman residents. It was originally prepared by the community groups backed by well-respected recreational planning professionals as well as research firms. The proposal was brought to Council in March 2015, and since that time Council has been working with Staff to review these projects and explore details that need to be addressed. He said the proposed projects are estimated to cost \$143 million. He highlighted the projects that include an indoor basketball/volleyball facility; James Garner Avenue extension; Griffin Park land acquisition; Canadian River Park; central branch library; east branch library; indoor aquatic center competition pool; Expo Center; various park projects; and Sports Complex projects for Reaves Park, Griffin Park, and a new Adult Softball/Flag Football Complex. He said these projects have long been envisioned in the community and are part of the Park Master Plan (PMP). He said the Canadian River Park was recently added to the list as well as integrating public art into the projects.

Mr. Lewis said Council has spent approximately 16 hours of meeting time to understand and refine the projects. Tonight Staff will be presenting the various projects to the public to give them a good understanding of the extensiveness of the projects. He said all the projects are listed on the City's website under Norman Forward. A copy of tonight's presentation will be available on the website in the morning and will be aired on Channel 20 periodically each day for a number of days going forward.

Central and East Branch Library Projects

Mr. Lewis said the Central Library Branch Project was considered by the community in 2008, but was rejected by the voters. Council requested an update of the Library Master Plan (LMP), which was completed in 2014, and the updated plan recommended the construction of a new Central and East Library Branch. The proposed central library will be 82,000 square feet envisioned to be constructed north of Andrews Park at an estimated cost of \$39 million. The update estimated a central library with a parking lot at a cost of \$39,177,428 and if a parking garage is needed, the estimated cost will be \$48,135,278. The proposal envisions a three level library with surface parking of 349 spaces. The central library would include meeting rooms, collections, electronic work station, children's programming, and training/classroom space. He said additional land would need to be acquired to assemble all the parcels needed at that location.

Mr. Lewis said the LMP envisioned an east library branch at an estimated cost of \$5,111,294 million. That project consists of a 12,500 square foot building proposed to be constructed east of Fire Station No. 9 (intersection of Alameda and Ridge Lake Boulevard). He said the City of Norman owns that site so no land acquisition would be needed. The east branch library would include meeting rooms, collections, and electronic work stations.

James Garner Avenue Extension Project

Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works, said James Garner Avenue was formerly known as Front Street, but was renamed in honor of the now deceased actor, James Garner, who grew up in Norman. The James Garner Avenue Extension Project will create a new two lane roadway extending from Acres Street to Robinson Street tying into Flood Avenue. He said this is essentially a connection to Downtown Norman and ultimately to the Campus Corner area. Staff would utilize an existing bridge substructure built with the Robinson Street Underpass. He said there are a number of side streets what will not be connected to the roadway in order to keep it more fluid for traffic and a more arterial type roadway. He said the cost is estimated to be \$6 million. He said Legacy Trail would also loop over the underpass on the bridge structure and tie into the north side of Robinson Street. Currently bicycles and pedestrians have to cross Robinson Street to get back onto the existing Legacy Trail. The southern portion of the project ties into Acres Street, which has been identified as the proposed central library site so the road would be parallel or adjacent to the library.

Westwood Pool Project

Mr. Jud Foster, Director of Parks and Recreation, said the Westwood Pool Project estimated at \$12 million involves razing the existing pool facility (built in 1966) and replacing it with a new family aquatic center. The proposed project includes water slides and a plunge pool; a free form recreation pool with zero depth entry and play/spray features; a lazy river; a 25 yard x 25 millimeter lap pool and diving area; large shaded deck and special events area; new bathhouse; concession facilities; and additional parking.

Mr. Foster said three pool designs were presented to Council and the design being presented tonight is not necessarily the one that has been chosen, it is simply being used to depict the types of activities that would fit on the site.

Parks Projects

Mr. Foster highlighted the various park projects in the Norman Forward Proposal at an estimated cost of \$25 million as follows:

- Ruby Grant Park (\$6 million)
Develop initial phase of Ruby Grant Park to include utility improvements, signage, parking, walking and running trails, practice fields, pavilion and pedestrian lighting.
- Saxon Park (\$2 million)
Develop Phase II of Saxon Park to include additional parking, decorative fencing, site furnishings, children's play area, restroom facilities, and event shelter.
- Existing Neighborhood Park Renovations (\$6.5 million)
Renovations to existing neighborhood parks to include items such as new signage, decorative funding, site furnishings, walking trails, trees and playground shade structures, additional playground equipment, picnic pavilions, additional soccer goals, and backstops.
- New Neighborhood Development (\$2 million, approximately \$325,000 per park)
Develop new parks for the Cedar Lane, Southlake/St. James, summit Valley/Bellatona, Redlands, and Links neighborhoods.
- Andrews Park (\$1.5 million)
Renovations to include splash pad enhancement, shade for amphitheater seating, skate park expansion, and additional tree planting.
- Westwood Tennis Center (\$1 million)
Convert two existing courts to indoor facility and construct two new outdoor courts with lighting and site furnishings.
- New Trail Development (\$6 million)
Complete Legacy Trail loop, connecting segments from Ruby Grant Park, east along the Little River Corridor, and south to the existing Robinson Street trail.

Sports Complex Projects

Mr. Foster gave an overview of Norman Forward's proposal for sports complexes at an estimated cost of \$23.5 million as follows:

- Reaves Park (\$10 million)
Remove six existing adult softball fields and existing park maintenance facility and construct fourteen youth baseball/softball fields with lighting, restrooms, concession facilities, and additional parking. (Optimist youth baseball complex, Kidspace, Veterans Memorial and existing festival and picnic areas to remain as currently constructed)
- New Adult Softball and Flag Football Complex (\$2.5 million)
Purchase and develop new 25 (more or less) acre site to accommodate a five field adult softball complex and a four field flag football complex with lighting, restrooms, concession facilities, and parking.
- Griffin Park (\$11 million)
Remove fourteen existing youth baseball/softball and four adult flag football fields and construct nine new outdoor soccer fields with lighting and convert one soccer field to indoor soccer facility (one indoor and twenty outdoor fields) and construct a new Park Maintenance Facility in northeast portion of park site.

Canadian River Park

Mr. Foster said proposed development of Canadian River Park (260 acres), south of Lindsey Street and west of I-35, at an estimated cost of \$2 million would include an entrance with roads, bridge, and parking lots; Trailhead Facilities with restrooms, picnic tables, and pavilions; Trail System with paved and primitive trails, benches, and signage; enhancements such as water features; observation deck. It would also include land acquisition, which is uncertain at this time.

Indoor Aquatic Competition Pool

Mr. Foster said Norman Forward proposes an Indoor Aquatic Competition Pool (\$12 million) and Indoor Basketball/Volleyball Facility (\$8.5 million). The proposed site is adjacent to the existing YMCA and would consist of a 50 meters by 25 yards competitive pool and 15 meters by 25 yards teaching/aerobic/recreation pool. He said operational costs are expected to be \$750,000 annually to be paid through proposed contribution agreements with YMCA, Sooner Swim Club, City of Norman, Norman Public Schools, Norman Regional Hospital System, and swim meet revenues.

The Indoor Basketball/Volleyball Facility is proposed to replace the existing five-court facility (hanger), operated by the Optimist Club, located east of the existing YMCA.

Griffin Land Acquisition

Mr. Foster said \$5 million has been earmarked as a “place-holder/down payment” to cover a portion of the acquisition of Griffin Park, Sutton Wilderness Park, and Francis Cate Park property currently owned by the State and leased to the City. The State has informed the City that all long term leases are invalid and will not be renewed; therefore, the City will need to acquire property currently being leased. In 2014, Legislation authorized the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS) and the City of Norman to discuss disposition and redevelopment of the properties. He said the City has no idea what the final costs will be and ODMHSAS is currently reviewing those costs. Mr. Lewis said the City needs to act sooner rather than later to purchase the land before the leases expire.

Senior Citizens Center

Mr. Foster said in 2008, the renovation of the current library building to include a Senior Citizens Center was authorized by the voters; however, the renovation required a successful vote for a new central library that failed. He said the proposal for a Senior Citizens Center includes improved parking; office space; Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) restrooms; multipurpose rooms; game rooms; fitness room; computer lab/classroom; ceramics; reading and television areas; arts and craft area; and kitchen and dining areas. He said final design for the project has not been decided and will include extensive public input, especially from senior citizens.

Expo Center

Mr. Lewis said \$7 million is included in the Norman Forward proposal for an Expo Center is being proposed at a construction cost of. The Expo Center could act as an economic generator and public resource for the local community. The City could host conventions and tradeshow; public and consumer shows; amateur sports tournaments and competitions; and it would also be available for other local and non-local events. The goal of the facility would be to attract non-local events that presently cannot be accommodated by existing local facilities to provide new visitation and local economic impact. Norman has a number of smaller and specialized meeting and event venues, but lacks a convention facility that offers traditional concrete floor space.

Expo Center, continued:

Mr. Lewis said in 2015, the Norman Convention and Visitors Bureau (NCVB) retained Convention Sports and Leisure International (CSL) to conduct an Expo Center Phase I and II analysis. The analysis studied the need for a large exhibition space to accommodate tradeshows, conventions, amateur sports tournaments/competitions and other events. The analysis outlined a market supportable program that consists of a 35,000 square foot facility. Three preferred sites were identified and recommended along with three construction scenarios ranging from \$15 million to \$42 million. Any needed operating subsidies would need to be negotiated.

Public Art

Mr. Lewis said public art was a dimension of the Norman Forward proposals brought up by City Council. He said public art can include art components as part of public construction projects and/or art placed in public areas. Examples of public art include outdoor sculptures/art pieces; indoor paintings; murals; unique architectural elements; and gateways. In many instances, municipal ordinances include one percent funding as part of their capital projects dedicated for public art. Qualifying projects could include public buildings expected to be visited by the public, large renovations of public buildings, major additions or renovations to public parks, and projects with funding over a certain dollar threshold.

Potential Project Funding

Mr. Anthony Francisco, Director of Financing, said the total package the Norman Forward projects is approximately \$143 million. As it was presented to the City, the costs would be paid through a one-half percent, fifteen year sales tax. The City believes Norman Forward's costs are sound and could be paid off in fifteen years. Norman Forward did not want the City to use a pay-as-you-go scenario because it would be ten to thirteen years before the projects were even started. He highlighted sales tax rates for other cities and said Norman is currently on the low end of average for sales tax rates and if the one-half percent sales tax were to pass Norman would be at the high of average, but still in the average range and affordable.

Potential Governance Options

Mr. Lewis said Council used the Oklahoma City (OKC) MAPS Projects as a comparison for governance options. During the course of a 20 year period, OKC utilized three difference types of oversight 1) a Trust, 2) an appointed Oversight Committee, and 3) an appointed Advisory Board that could make recommendations to City Council. He said Norman currently utilizes citizen advisory board oversight for the University North Park Tax Finance Increment District, the Citizen's Public Safety Sales Tax Oversight Committee, and the Citizen's Wastewater Oversight Committee.

Additional Project Considerations

Mr. Lewis highlighted other project considerations that include additional infrastructure costs for traffic and utility improvements associated with expanded facilities; budgetary impacts for ongoing operation and facility maintenance; length of tax, i.e., number of years; project financing versus pay-as-you-go; operational agreements needed, e.g., YMCA, Sports Associations, Norman Public Schools, OU, and Norman Regional Health Systems; property acquisition, e.g., Central Library and Griffin land; and approval needed from governmental entities and agencies, e.g., OU, Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ), and ODMHSAS.

Public Comments/Questions

Mr. Gordon Drummond, Norman High School Soccer Coach, has been involved with youth soccer in Norman for almost 40 years. He said in 1976, the Norman Youth Soccer Association (NYSA) was created and Norman Parks and Recreation Department prepared two fields at Reaves Park for soccer games. He said the sport continued to grow and eventually expanded onto school fields and OU allowed the teams to play at North Base and South Base, but even that was not enough over the years because the sport continued to grow. The City of Norman helped by opening fields at Griffin Park, but more space and better facilities are needed. He said soccer is a healthy activity and since Norman is promoting a healthy community soccer is a step in that direction. Besides recreational soccer there is competitive soccer with teams traveling the country and individuals earning scholarships because of their training in NYSA. He said the popularity of soccer is unquestioned if you look at youth leagues all around the country. He said with bigger and better facilities more soccer tournaments can be held and soccer tournaments are money makers. Broken Arrow and Edmond have done exceedingly well by hosting tournaments. When people come to tournaments they come from surrounding states, eat at local restaurants, stay in local hotels, shop in local stores, etc.

Mr. Don Rather, NYSA Director of Coaching, said Norman Forward's proposals are a tremendous opportunity for the community. He said soccer is one of the fastest growing sports in the United States (U.S.) and over the past two years NYSA players have increased to approximately 3,000. Although this is exciting for NYSA, it brings many challenges as Norman hosts 350 competing teams each weekend throughout the season that easily brings in 6,000 to 7,000 spectators. He said Norman needs more soccer fields and more parking spaces for those fields. He said NYSA currently hosts three tournaments with the largest tournament attendance of 150 to 170 teams, which is the maximum capacity that can be hosted in Norman at this time. He said tournaments currently bring in approximately \$1.5 million per year to local the economy. In April, the Tulsa Soccer Club based out of Broken Arrow and Tulsa hosted the largest tournament in Oklahoma consisting of 400 teams, which brought in \$6 million to the Tulsa economy. The Edmond Soccer Club hosted regional tournaments, a week-long event, that consisted of 208 teams and 12,000 spectators bringing \$8 million to the local economy. He said everyday a family travels to Moore, Edmond, or Oklahoma City they are eating at local restaurants and shopping at local retail stores. An expanded facility in Norman will not only impact opportunities for the children, it will impact local businesses.

Mr. Bruno Sasaki, Sooner Swim Club, said the Oklahoma City Community College (OCCC) pool recently closed, which was widely used and a new indoor aquatic facility in Norman could benefit from this by hosting more swim meets. He believes a new indoor aquatic center would promote swimming, which is very beneficial to health, and should be done as quickly as possible.

Mr. Brian Hopper, NYSA Board President, said NYSA currently has 2,600 players and activities are held every night, but the existing playing facility is at capacity. He said the current facility is also beginning to show its age. The new proposed turf fields would allow players to practice and play year round and an indoor facility would allow practice during inclement weather. His children play soccer and they travel to many complexes that are much nicer than Norman's. NYSA has one the largest clubs in the state and their complex should reflect that. He said two of the biggest complaints are parking and restrooms. To combat parking issues, members are urged to carpool and porta potties are brought in for tournaments, but NYSA really does not want to host guests with these types of facilities.

Mr. Steve Ellis stated he is a former NYSA Coach and loves sports, but Norman will have to spend some serious money going forward on basic infrastructure over the next five or ten years. The City is discussing a stormwater utility, putting water wells back online, cleaning water for reuse, sewage infrastructure, transportation issues, etc. Any expenditure on Norman Forward will be heaped on top of that. He would love for Norman to adopt a high amenity, high tax strategy to make Norman more attractive, but is skeptical that will happen. He said the City needs to think about prioritizing the proposals. The "must do" kinds of things are the Griffin land acquisition,

Public Comments/Questions, continued:

a central library, Senior Citizen Center, and the east branch library. These are needed to preserve the quality of life in Norman, but there are a variety of things that can be left to the private sector such as the Expo Center, indoor aquatic competition pool, and indoor basketball/volleyball facility. He said there is no evidence these are fiscally productive for the City of Norman. The City needs to decide what proposals it can afford and how much it can afford.

Ms. Gretchen Harris said Mr. Ellis is correct that the City has major infrastructure improvements to face over the next few years. She said the area around North Base has a horrible traffic problem and that needs to be taken into consideration. Will sales tax money be used for those improvements? The City needs to look at Norman Forward in the context of what needs to be done for the City of Norman. She said new libraries are a critical priority and an eastside library is absolutely critical. She is lucky enough to have a computer, iPad, iPhone, but not everyone is that fortunate and there are a lot of Norman citizens that depend on a physical facility. She said the east side does not have the same technological facilities as the west side and that needs to be addressed. Another priority is a new pool at Westwood and an indoor aquatic facility because the closing of the Oklahoma City Community College (OCCC) pool should be factored into that decision. Does the City need a pool on the eastside because all children in Norman should have access to a pool. She will leave the financing up to the experts in the City's Finance Department, but the length (number of years) of the tax is an issue because the City will be asking people who pay sales tax on their food to pay more sales tax on their food for things that can be privately funded. How does the City know the entities they are proposing to make agreements with for operation of the facilities are financially sound to do that? These things need to be given due diligence.

Ms. Hannah Agee said she is 11 years old and has been a competitive swimmer with the Sooner Swim Club for the past four years. This year she competed in the state championships and placed third in the 100 meter freestyle. She practices five days a week at the OU pool, but it is very crowded and there are not enough lanes for everyone to practice. She said many swimmers are accidentally kicked or hit because of the crowding. She said recently they could not practice for a week because the OU pool had a broken pipe and there was nowhere else to practice. There is also not enough seating for families and guests. She said Sooner Swim Club is not able to host large, competitive swim meets. They used to hold swim meets at OCCC, but that is closing. She said Norman deserves better and if a new indoor aquatic complex is not built, competitive swimming may die in Norman.

Mr. Tim Mauldin thanked the City Council for giving such dedicated attention to the Norman Forward proposals. He said libraries offer many children's programs and Norman is fortunate to have such a wonderful, professionally trained library staff. He said the current library had 500,000 door counts in the past year. When the library was built in the 1960's, Norman's population was about 30,000 and that count has tripled, but citizens are still using the same library. The library offers over 1,000 programs and NYSA and other organizations use the library to hold meetings, but more meeting space is needed. He said thousands of children will visit the library this summer for story times, reading programs, etc. He said "library dogs" are therapy dogs brought into the library for children to read to them because the child may be too shy or does not read well and it helps to read to the dogs.

Mr. Kent Nicholson, Sooner Swim Club Coach, supports all the Norman Forward proposals. He said immediacy of need is there and apparent. He said Norman needs all of the projects and is falling behind many other cities. The desire for an indoor aquatic center has been vetted and there have been surveys that show this to be a priority to citizens. He said the Norman Forward's proposal is a very sound plan and the partners will optimize the benefits of the pool and minimize the cost to the community. He said the indoor aquatic center will serve the entire community and citizens of every age not just serve competitive swimmers.

Mr. Keenan Anderson said he is ten years old and a member of the Sooner Swim Club. He has competed in swim meets and available facilities are overcrowded. He said many people in Norman want a competitive swimming pool as many are passionate about swimming. He said Jenks, Oklahoma, has an awesome facility and makes him see how inadequate Norman's facilities really are.

Public Comments/Questions, continued:

Mr. Roger Gallagher said the Sooner Swim Club has been vagabonds for about thirty years having to use any available facility to practice and compete. He said recreation and health are critical and a pool is critical to that. He said Westwood Park has a large area and Council should consider building an competitive aquatic center at Westwood instead of a waterpark. At one time he thought John Q. Hammons, owner of Embassy Suites, wanted to build an expo center behind the hotel and the City should contact him about that and relieve costs to citizens. He said if the City increased its Guest Room Tax by 1%, public art throughout Norman could be paid through that. He also wondered if the City would really be ready for a vote on Norman Forward projects in September because there are no solid costs at this time.

Ms. Sophie Scarramucci said she is 9 years old and is excited about the sports improvements proposals. She likes to play basketball and there is no basketball court in her neighborhood.

Ms. Stella Scarramucci loves to play volleyball, but there are very few facilities where she can play. She said there are usually lines of people waiting for courts to open so they can play.

Ms. Melissa Scarramucci supports the entire Norman Forward proposal including an increase in sales tax. She hopes these proposals do not come forward as piece meal projects for a vote. She said tournaments equal money and are good for business, which is good for Norman. She is also a member of the Public Arts Board and is pleased to see funding for public arts being proposed as part of the Norman Forward projects and hopes that stays in the proposal.

Ms. Kathrine Nidell supports Norman Forward and hopes the entire package is funded with sales tax.

Mr. Michael Vicery is for all the Norman Forward proposals; however, when one entity grows, another entity shrinks. Norman is becoming a soccer town and he has no problem with that, but he is a football, baseball and basketball coach. He asked if football fields at Griffin Park will be replaced by soccer fields. He said the Norman Forward proposal is for adult flag football and asked if tackle football would be allowed. His son plays baseball and there are currently no programs for ages 12 and over in Norman so his son has to play in Moore. He would love to give his money back to the Norman community. He said if kids do not make the cut to play baseball for Norman High or Norman North, then they do not play baseball because there is nowhere to play.

Mr. Foster said the City is not shrinking any entity, they will simply be moving one complex to another and the six baseballs fields currently at Reaves Park will remain and additional fields would be built to take the place of the fields currently at Griffin Park. When all the projects are completed, Norman will have the same number of fields and programs it currently offers. He said in terms of the teenage boy's baseball programs, the City will be adding that to their programs in the future.

Ms. Sally Allerd is supportive of Norman Forward and the half percent sales tax.

Mr. Thatcher Ridings said his brother is a senior swimmer at the Sooner Swim Club and he will not get to see him compete again because the OCCC pool is closing. He also felt there should also be more soccer fields so more people can play.

Ms. Patty Mills is for the entire Norman Forward proposals. To make a better Norman, Norman has to be built for the youth. She is a very frugal person, but will vote for a one percent sales tax increase to make Norman a better place. She said eight years ago Norman did not even know what volleyball was and her husband started a youth league at Crosspointe Church with 70 young girls. She said the sport has continued to grow and they began playing competitively, beginning with three teams, and now have thirteen teams. She said five teams are competing in the nationals in Orlando, Florida, this year. She said there are very few volleyball courts the sport continues to grow so Norman needs this.

Public Comments/Questions, continued:

Mr. Dan Schemm, Executive Director of Norman Convention and Visitors Bureau, encouraged Council to submit the entire Norman Forward proposals, as presented, to a vote of the people. He said the proposals will improve the quality of life and revenue generators are included in the proposals. He said an Expo Center would bring in additional sales tax revenue that can help offset costs to local residents. He said Norman lost out on eighteen conferences, conventions, or groups because Norman was not able to bid on them due to the fact that Norman does not have the exhibition space. These events represent more than 15,000 room nights and if the City even had half of those come to Norman it would generate \$2.77 million direct spending in the community. In addition, the Marriott, which has conference space, was unable to bid on four events losing approximately \$5.6 million direct spending in the community. He said an Expo Center would be an economic engine that would help pay towards the Norman Forward proposals through sales tax dollars from visitors outside of community.

Ms. Michelle Sutherland is a soccer mom, former player and coach, and has lived in Norman all her life. She said the greatest opportunity for a child to graduate from high school is for them to become connected some way in the community and have motivation to get through school. She works with at-risk students on a regular basis and students connected through sports, art, etc., have a much greater opportunity of graduating high school and becoming productive members of the community. She asked Council to bring the proposals to a vote. She said children can be connected through the Senior Citizen Center by volunteering. She is a huge proponent of everything proposed tonight and would vote for a sales tax or property tax increase.

Ms. Samantha Oakright said she is 13 years old and a member of the Sooner Swim Club and supports the entire Norman Forward proposal, especially the indoor aquatic center.

Ms. Angie Drury said her daughter plays competitive softball and for the next six weeks the family will be out of State for softball competitions. She said 25 teams compete and they come from Arkansas, Kansas, Texas, etc., and Norman teams cannot compete locally because there are no teams in Norman in that age group. She said kids go out of state to college because they cannot get recruited in Norman and families are spending their money outside of Oklahoma when they could be spending it in Norman if the facilities were available.

Ms. Nancy Yoch supports all the Norman Forward proposals, especially the indoor aquatic center. She said for over ten years the PISCES group has been advocating for an indoor swim facility that could be used by the entire community. She said kids could learn how to swim, adults could enjoy fitness programs, and swimming is the preferred activity for people with asthma, heart problems, diabetes, mental health issues, autism, etc. She said the PMP survey indicated that walking and hiking trails ranked number one as the most popular activity with swimming ranked second. She said Norman was ranked last in the survey in terms of indoor aquatic facilities when compared to benchmark cities.

Ms. Gina Mitchell said she is a mother and a business owner and as a business owner supports #ShopNorman. Her daughter is a volleyball player, but the family has to travel out of town for tournaments and they make the drive to Dallas all the time. The complexes they travel to are phenomenal and host basketball games, volleyball games, and have batting cages so the complexes are multi-use venues. As a business owner, it irritates her to travel to Texas spending money in Texas. She urged Council to allow citizens to vote on something that will bring people into Norman to spend money at Norman's businesses.

Ms. Jennifer McCain has a toddler that loves being in the pool, a teenage daughter that is at swim practice right now at OU, and a mom who swims five or six days a week. She said swimming is an activity for all ages and encouraged Council to allow citizens to vote on all of the Norman Forward proposals.

Public Comments/Questions, continued:

Mr. Ken Wilpitz, NYSA Board Member, said NYSA continues to grow and Norman is not a soccer town compared to Edmond or Tulsa. He said NYSA loses players that are willing to commute for a higher level of play. NYSA also scholarships a lot of kids never turning away anyone and those blessed with the means help with getting kids cleats, uniforms, equipment, etc. He said from a business standpoint, the consolidation of all these sports is a good thing and he supports Norman Forward and urged Council to move this forward for a vote. He said the powerpoint presentation by Staff was very well done and he hopes the City will follow through on the proposals.

Ms. Cindy Rogers is a former competitive diver and spent her youth in a pool. She loves sports and libraries and would be willing to support a vote to get all these amenities, but is not excited about using sales tax to get them. She said the Expo Center does not fit in the category of a community amenity that is about bringing people together. Norman Forward is about investing in the children and community. She felt the Expo Center should not be part of the Norman Forward package.

Mr. Will Decker said senior citizens do not want to be stuffed in another old library, they want a new stand-alone facility adjacent to the proposed central library. He said a parking garage may have to be constructed in order to have enough space for a stand-alone facility, but that is what senior citizens want.

Ms. Pamela Stewart supports a community pool as well as the other Norman Forward proposals. She said all the proposals focus on wellness and an active quality of life. She is a member of the YMCA; however, not everyone has the funds to be a member so a community pool for all ages regardless of income or physical ability is a critical part of the proposal package. She applauds the City for looking so carefully at these projects and for the research they have done. She is really excited to see what happens to Norman in the future if these plans come to fruition.

Ms. Gwen Lovell swims year round and said swimming is the only sport she can participate in because of ageing issues. She said to stay healthy the body needs to exercise year round and swimming is one of the best exercises available to seniors. She likes all the Norman Forward proposals, but especially the indoor aquatic center.

Ms. Mary Francis said Norman has a huge stormwater problem and it will only get worse so the City needs to deal with the stormwater problem first. The City has done a thorough study and has a plan it just needs to be funded. She said this infrastructure will cost a lot of money. She likes the Norman Forward proposals except for the Expo Center, which should not be included. The Canadian River Park would be marvelous, but the City needs to do the things that need to be done before taking on further projects.

Mr. Don Nicholson supports all the Norman Forward proposals. He said Cleveland County has a lot of abused and neglected children. There are lots of children that are not graduating high school. As an attorney, he has represented a lot of these children on a pro bono basis in the last fifteen years. A child needs to be able to read before they can do anything in life and sports can turn a child's life around even if they have a lousy family.

Ms. Ellie Simon, Ms. Bria Borum, and Ms. Alana Mallory are members of the Sooner Swim Club. They love swimming and the Sooner Swim Club has very talented swimmers, but they can be even better with an adequate facility. Recently OCCC closed their pool, which will have a huge impact on all swimmers in Oklahoma. With OCCC closing where will they practice? A new indoor aquatic center would attract new swimmers and benefit Oklahoma.

Mr. Allen Allard said Sutton Wilderness Park is a unique jewel in Norman and is very important to the community and he hopes it can remain a wilderness area. He supports all the Norman Forward proposals and felt about the Expo Center would bring many visitors to Norman and those visitors would bring in sales tax revenue to help pay for these projects. He said, in that aspect, the Expo Center does fit into the proposals.

Public Comments/Questions, continued:

Ms. Kishi Gabriel has heard a lot of good points tonight regarding stormwater infrastructure versus Norman Forward proposals, but does not see an either/or proposition here. If the City does not invest in amenities the community has to offer, what will continue to attract people to Norman not just to visit, but to live and build businesses? All the projects seem to have revenues built-in and if the City does not invest in Norman, people will not come.

Ms. Ann Gallagher does not support the Expo Center, but supports the remaining proposals for the children. Being able to focus on a sport helps children focus in school and without that a lot children are sunk. Having these facilities would greatly advance children's ability complete school and become productive adults.

Mayor Rosenthal thanked all those attending and said another public meeting will be held tomorrow evening at 6:00.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "NORMAN FORWARD - Overview of Projects, Potential Project Financing Options, Potential Governance Options," Public Meetings May 19-21, 2015
2. Letter dated May 20, 2015, from Dan Schemm, Executive Director, Norman Convention and Visitors Bureau, and William Murray, Norman Convention and Visitors Bureau Board Chair, to Mayor and Norman City Councilmembers
3. Youth Soccer Association information dated May 19, 2015, provided by Randy Laffoon

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

ATTEST:



City Clerk



Mayor

