

December 31, 2020

Upper Arlington City Council and Community Center Feasibility Task Force:

**Re: Endorsement of Community Center Feasibility Study**

On behalf of the Upper Arlington Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, this letter is submitted as an endorsement for the recommendations resulting from the current community center feasibility study conducted by the Community Center Feasibility Task Force.

Our Board members have all been closely following the study process since it began in the summer of 2019, receiving regular updates from Parks & Recreation Director Debbie McLaughlin and her team as the work has progressed. Task Force Co-Chair, Margie Pizzuti, and City Manager Steve Schoeny joined our December 10 Board meeting and provided a detailed update on the study process, findings and recommendations. Our Board voted unanimously to approve a Motion of Support for the Task Force findings and recommendations, and I would like to share with you the reasons for our support.

We applaud the Task Force for undertaking such a thoughtful, thorough and extensive process. Some items of note that particularly resonated with us include:

- The extent to which the study reached out to the community for input, using techniques that made it easy for residents to learn about and engage in the process.
- Their commitment to due diligence. For example, even when it had already become clear the Kingsdale site was a community favorite, the Facilities Subcommittee undertook a detailed study of multiple sites to make sure all options were appropriately considered.
- Their commitment to considering issues of access and affordability for our residents, to ensure that an Upper Arlington Community Center would serve all members of our community.
- Their detailed analysis of a complex set of financial considerations and their development of an option that enables the City to pursue a community center without increasing taxes.
- Financial recommendations for operations that include the continuation of the City's investment in recreation services, a cost recovery target that allows market driven cost structures and a capital set aside for the longevity of the facility.

In 2018 as the Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Plan was presented to Council, Board Member Mary Duchi spoke to Council on behalf of our Board. At that time, we specifically highlighted our desire for City Council to initiate and support a resident-driven feasibility study of options for a multi-generational indoor recreation facility.



The Board thanks Council for taking the initiative to prioritize this recommendation from the Comprehensive Plan, for empowering an impressive team of residents to conduct the study on our community's behalf, and for giving them the necessary resources to accomplish their work.

This is an unprecedented and exciting opportunity to add recreational, fitness, sporting and social amenities not previously available to our residents, and to provide them all within one convenient location.

We encourage City Council to follow through with the recommendations from the Task Force, by seeking voter support for an Upper Arlington Community Center next May.

Assuming residents vote in favor of this request, we encourage City Council to ensure the following steps are taken in preparation for the design, construction and operation of this incredible new community asset:

- Continue to involve the public in next steps in the design process to make sure the community center best reflects the wants and needs of all residents;
- Place a high priority to design, build, and operate the building and site to meet green building standards such as those outlined by the USGBC (Green Building Council) LEED Certification Program;
- Adopt policies that ensure the Upper Arlington Community Center will be accessible and affordable to everyone who wishes to participate.

All members of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board are grateful for the opportunity to serve the community in an area that positively impacts so many lives, and we are excited that we are on the cusp of realizing a long-held dream for our community. Through our endorsement, our Board recognizes the contributions of time and talent of each Task Force member throughout this extensive process and support the findings and recommendations. Our Board encourages City Council to take the necessary next steps in seeking approval from our residents for the community center and is willing to assist as necessary to bring this to fruition.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Matthew Petersen  
Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Chair

