



CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™

City Manager's Office

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City Manager

REPORT TO MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Matthew R. Walsh, Director of Redevelopment, Downtown Services,
& Special Projects

DATE: April 26, 2017

SUBJECT: Consent Report: CIP #443 City-wide Multigenerational Community
Center and Demolition of Former Heights Community Center (a.k.a.
1977 Gymnasium)

Recommendation:

Accept the following report.

Background:

The City Council's April agenda package included a supplemental staff report concerning the City-wide Multigenerational Community Center Project. Among other things, the report noted that final budget for the project included demolition of the 1977 former Heights Community Center building. However, the report also explained that the City Administration was continuing to explore various options for potential reuse of the building. Possible reuses included a city-wide records storage facility, an equipment maintenance shop for the Parks and Recreation Department, or hybrid of both options.

Discussion:

City staff met on April 20th to review various options for the building, as well as recent input from the State of New Hampshire concerning Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) restrictions associated with Keach Park. For decades, LWCF moneys have been used to finance improvements to the park. In exchange for using LWCF moneys, recipients of these funds must commit that properties either acquired or improved with LWCF moneys shall be used for public recreational purposes in perpetuity. Although the former 5.5 acre Dame School property is not encumbered by LWCF restrictions as it is a standalone property entirely separate from Keach Park, the 1977 gym is part of the park property. As such, the gym, and its underlying real estate, is subject to the customary LWCF requirements requiring the property to be used for recreational purposes in perpetuity.

After further consideration, the City Administration recommends that the 1977 gymnasium be demolished as part of the forthcoming City-wide Multigenerational Community Center Project. City Administration is making this recommendation because of two primary considerations.

First, because the 1977 gym sits on land which is encumbered by LWCF restrictions requiring the premises to be used for a public recreational purpose, renovation of the building into a record storage facility would be cumbersome (if not impossible) as it would require negotiations with the State of New Hampshire and mitigation in the form of new recreational property from the City.

Secondly, although the gymnasium is well suited for conversion into a Maintenance Shop for the Parks and Recreation Department, City Administration felt that the highest and best use of the property would be for public recreation. Further, this site is not centrally located in regards to the Parks and Recreation Department's numerous assets, and, therefore, is not as desirable for a central maintenance facility as compared to other options currently owned by the City. Lastly, while a new central maintenance facility might be desirable for the community sometime in the future, the existing Parks and Recreation maintenance facility located at White Park adequately satisfies the Department's current needs.

For these reasons, the City Administration intends to demolish the 1977 gymnasium unless otherwise directed by the City Council.