

Richland Economic Development

Joint Meeting Minutes

On March 23rd, 2023 at 6:30 pm a joint meeting was held between a three-member ad hoc committee for Richland County, a three-member ad hoc committee for the City Richland Center and a three-member ad hoc committee for Richland Economic Development.

March 23rd, 2023

The Cooperative Relations Team convened on Thursday, March 23rd in person in the Council Room of the Municipal Building.

Committee members present: Mayor Todd Coppernoll, Alderpersons Melony Walters and Carson Culver; County Board Chair Marty Brewer and Supervisor Ken Rynes; Richland Economic Development (RED) Board Chair Mike Breininger, members Kari Honer and Al Lins.

Not present: Supervisor Melissa Luck

Others present: Administrator Ashley Oliphant, Administrator Clinton Langreck taking minutes, and several members and general public.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Mayor Coppernoll, County Board Chair Brewer, and RED Board Chair Breininger at 7:05 p.m.

1. **Approval of the March 9th Meeting Minutes:** Mayor Coppernoll asked for approval of the minutes as presented. Moved by Mike Breininger to approve the minutes as presented, Seconded by Ken Rynes. All voting aye, motion carried.

2. **Cooperative Agreements between the City of Richland Center and Richland County related to Symons Recreational Complex and Economic Development:**

Symons Recreational Complex – As directed, the RED Board representatives provided a recommended plan for the successful operation of the Symons Recreational Complex. Breininger outlined several recommendations to include transitioning the Natatorium Board into a working board assisting heavily in all forms of marketing, grant submissions, membership drives, and conducting community surveys. The plan sought partnership with the Symons Foundation in the form of financial assistance and involvement on the Natatorium Board. Lastly, the plan considered relinquishing ownership of Symons to a nonprofit entity.

In an exploration of a potential union of the Symons Recreational Complex and the YMCA, Walters reported contacting the directors of both the La Crosse and Madison YMCAs. As the YMCA organization has stopped issuing new charters, the only available path for unification would be for Symons to integrate under an existing charter. By doing so, the Symons Recreational Complex would become a branch of an existing YMCA.

Walters shared the director of the La Crosse YMCA was not interested in the development of a YMCA branch in Richland Center. However, the Madison YMCA director requested more information about Symons to determine if a branch opportunity was viable. While the financial challenges associated with operating a pool were noted by the Madison director, he also indicated the other amenities available may be profitable.

To determine whether continued engagement with the Madison director was supported, Walters sought feedback from the members. If supported, Walters will provide a response to the following questions posed by the Madison YMCA director:

1. Is the campus gymnasium part of Symon's? If not, could it be included in the complex?
2. Who owns Symons? A lease agreement or a purchase of the facility would be necessary for a YMCA branch to be established.
3. What is the future on the UW Campus? What is the plan for the buildings?

4. Is Richland Center's Community Center part of Symons? If the campus gymnasium cannot be included with the Symons facility, the Community Center may need to be utilized for programming. Would the City be amenable to this?
5. Does the Parks & Recreation department offer programming that would be in competition with YMCA programming?
6. What is the financial performance of Symons? Requested financial data for the last five years. If it is determined that discussions should continue following the review of financial data, the director will seek a tour of Symons and the community.
7. Would the City and County consider providing financial contributions for a YMCA branch?

All members expressed their support for continued exploration and research. Director Gobin encouraged decision makers to follow a methodical approach and to provide a clear understanding of what the City and County's positions are on providing operational and capital funding.

Comments were given from community members in attendance advocating for the continued presence and operation of the facility. Walters encouraged members and citizens in attendance to help promote the message that efforts with the YMCA are only in a research phase.

Economic Development – Administrator Oliphant presented a transition plan that was delivered to the City Personnel Committee on March 20th 2023. The transition plan outlined impacts to equipment, vacation, sick leave, IT-Network, continuation of County projects, and the next steps to be taken.

Discussion was had by committee members regarding the future of the RED Board. Breininger expressed concerns that the director position may transition to the role of administrative process facilitator rather than fully participating in traditional economic development largely executed through public engagement.

A recommendation was given to the members to allow the City and County Administrators to begin action on drafting a revised Symons agreement and requesting the County to bring forward a recommendation on the utilization of a City County Committee (with configuration) to review and recommend resolution to the Common Council and County Board.

Set Next Meeting Date: The date of the next meeting was not scheduled.

3. **Adjournment:** The joint meeting of the Cooperative Relations Team adjourned at 9:10 p.m. by Mayor Coppernoll for the representatives of the Common Council; by County Board Chair Brewer for the representatives of the County Board; and by Chair Breininger for the representatives of the RED Board, all voting aye, motion carried.

Minutes respectfully submitted by
Clinton Langreck
Richland County Administrator

Minutes reviewed and submitted by Economic Development Director – Jasen Glasbrenner