

Symons Recreation Complex Natatorium Board Minutes March 25, 2025

The Natatorium Board met on March 25th, 2025 at 5:30 pm. The following people were in attendance: John Cler, Dave Turk, Grant Worthington, Larry Engel, Mark Chambers, Melony Walters and Mary Miller. Staff members Mike Hardy and Kyle Ewing and Incoming County Administrator Tricia Clements were present. SRC Foundation members Barb Wentz, Alan Lins, Suzanne Fish, Dean Amundson and Lisa Rewald were also present.

1. Call to Order - Cler called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.
2. Roll Call of Membership
3. Open Meetings Compliance - Verification was met, per Hardy.
4. Approve Agenda – Engel made a motion to approve the agenda. Chambers seconded. Motion carried.
5. Approval of Minutes of February 10, 2025 – Chambers made a motion to approve the minutes. Engel seconded. Motion carried.
6. Public Comment – None

Facility Tour:

Members were given a tour of the SRC facility as well as the adjacent tennis/BB court

Administrative Reports:

7. Staff Report – Hardy provided results of the February Symons Recreation Complex Space Needs Survey, which was completed by 320 people. 80% of respondents were SRC members and 20% non-members. The survey showed larger locker rooms, added gym space and family changing rooms as the top 3 needs. There was notable support from many in public financing for added space for a gym and/or family changing rooms. A number of people left their contact info and stated they were interested in donating for future facility expansion projects.
8. Symons Recreation Complex Foundation Report – Al Lins provided a letter suggested on behalf of members of the Foundation to give SRC management of the campus gymnasium, with SRC contributing toward utility costs and any additional costs donated by the Foundation (within their budget). The proposal including cooperating with the Richland School District to share the space, but retain management with the County/Symons.
9. Update on Re-branding, Sponsorships and Partnerships – Steve Board was not present. Hardy reported on the Richland School District likely taking a step back to reconsider an MOU for gym use and how to best partner in the future. They still want to work together on our swim lesson and lifeguard partnership, but unsure of how additional partnership would be considered.

Action Items:

10. Consider proposal for future SRC space needs – Turk noted that the County doesn't want to own another building, and as the county already owns SRC, the gym would be adding another building and related costs to the budget. Hardy shared costs to the average homeowner as received from City Treasurer, noting an average property assessment in the City of about \$100,000 with the cost to taxpayer of a \$100,000 home about \$19 a year for the city's \$54,000 contribution to Symons. Turk noted that as a City resident, he pays both City and County share and while the County share is spread over more taxpayers, it should be noted that City residents are paying twice to support Symons. Hardy added that he too is a City resident and paying both taxes likely amounts to about \$30-\$35 or so a year on the average property tax payment for the \$108,000 of tax subsidy SRC receives. Turk noted that his intent is to make sure before anything happens with the campus property, extra land around the current SRC building is included so that Symons has room to expand and add on as space needs are identified and funding available. As an alternate, the campus gym is available for some immediate use, but

does have about \$2 million in costs just to make minimum needed repairs and another \$1 million or so to bring the building up to recommended use. Hardy noted that the advantage to considering an addition is that we would get the floorplan that we want/need without wasted space and everything would be new, however there would need to be a major capital campaign and there are pros and cons to both options that Symons needs to consider along with costs to make a long term decision, however there is an opportunity to work with the Richland School District to partner on a proposed use to help alleviate space needs of both groups to the advantage of taxpayers. Turk added that the MOU with the school would be the fastest way to getting the gym used again. Miller would like to see taxpayer supported facilities being used and would like transparency in decisions. Walters stated that the City will need to review any MOU that would result in potential expenses as the City has the same tight budget and levy limits as everyone else. Chambers agreed. Engel would like to see direction in the minutes so we ensure we move forward, regardless of what we do. Members agreed to direct Hardy to work with the County interim and incoming Administrators and the School District Administrator on a proposal that would allow both RSD and SRC use of the gym on a temporary basis. Future space needs will be considered as cost comparisons are available and the future campus use is determined, which could determine if any money is left from the UW grant to assist in repairing the SRC parking lot and possibly help match grants for the tennis courts and/or trails.

11. Consider recommending naming the former UW-Richland wellness trails the Marty Brewer Nature Trail – Hardy advised that Turk had made the comment at County Board when it as decided to assign management of the trails to Symons that he would like to see the trails named for former County Board chair Brewer due to his many years on the County Board and his desire that the hilltop area be used as a future County Park when the campus closed. Turk added that it could include signage on the trail about Marty’s service to the County and his family would be involved in the ribbon cutting and dedication. Engels asked about the opportunity to pursue Corporate sponsorship to raise money for the trails by naming them after a paying sponsor. Turk noted that sponsoring and getting a name on a bench or some other trail amenity could always fulfil that need and serve as a fundraiser. Members added support for Marty’s service, but also asked about other local officials who have also contributed to the County. Hardy added that this is only a recommendation to the County Board and they have final say, so there could be further discussion or alternate suggestions discussed there as well. There are also opportunities to name the tennis courts and soccer field in the future. Miller made a motion to recommend the naming of the trails for Marty Brewer. Walters seconded. Engels noted that if we have an opportunity to make a buck, we should consider. Motion carried 6-1 with Engel opposed.

12. Future Agenda Items – None

13. Adjourn—Chambers made a motion to adjourn at 7:32pm. Engel seconded. Motion carried.