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Question/Comment

My big picture reaction to this proposal is to oppose it on social and economic grounds. We are being asked to providing amenities to the leisure class when the two overwhelming needs of this community are affordable housing and living wages. Having lived here for decades, I know a lot of people who are really struggling and often are being forced out of town. This type of project would accentuate those problems. So this is a criticism directed at the proponents, at the funders, and at the enablers in the city government. I am really ashamed at our focus on individual pleasures over community needs.

Point two. The city should be aware that operating costs on these types of projects are always greatly under estimated. As an example, I recently worked on remediation of the swim center at Eagle Mount in Bozeman. It was a new project built to high standards but was falling apart because of moisture degradation. Also, high operating costs, energy and labor costs for staffing and maintenance are always larger than estimated on these types of projects. Will the unanticipated funds for these problems come from the tax payers?

Third; Scale. If built, this whole project should be scaled down and focused on a swimming pool. We have other facilities in town that can be used. And we have unlimited opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Finally, Location. This facility should be close to the schools so students can walk to it after classes but should not replace our existing Civic Center and Bandshell. I would recommend that you look at the Long property between the fairgrounds and the school bus barn with a building close to View Vista Drive. I understand that the Longs are not interested in selling, but may respond to a call for civic and educational needs. A concerted effort to acquire a few acres adjacent to the schools would be worth the effort. Much better than across town where all the kids would have to be bussed or drive.

Thanks very much for your efforts at community outreach. Jim