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Submitted by anonymous user: 184.166.227.217

Submitted values are:

First Name Pam

Last Name Van Giessen

Question/Comment

While I appreciate the excitement over selecting a site for the Wellness Center, it seems a bit of cart before horse as a mill levy will need to be passed to fund the annual operating expenses. I have concerns that the annual expenses are understated and may quickly rise (just like the city budget, especially in terms of personnel as those costs have appreciated substantially even without an increase in personnel). The city hasn't shown (or discussed) that they have the onexpertise in managing such an operation and/or can compete with private industry for qualified personnel. Also, what assurances can the city make that costs (and our property taxes) will not increase in subsequent years — because everyone — wealthy, middle class, working class, low income — will pay one way or the other (through property tax or rent increases). Finally, has the city looked at putting out an RFP for experienced companies to run the facility and programs on a profit sharing basis to alleviate the burden on taxpayers (so that taxpayers perhaps fund low income memberships only)? If there are none that are interested, might that tell us something about the fiscal viability of having such a facility? I am for the center, in theory, but it seems as though the ongoing operating costs have not been fully examined. It is great for private donations to fund the build but if the operating costs (and time involved) become overwhelming, then what? This at a time when our property taxes are set to increase rather substantially, when we are told that that sewer and/or water rates will again increase (after an increase 2 yrs ago), and when inflation is hitting everyone from the grocery shopper to small and larger businesses. Might we look at what the center means financially for all residents and get voter approval before we jump into selecting a site? And can we fill the lake sized potholes in the civic center parking lot too before spending big bucks on a new facility?