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Question/Comment

Hello Commissioners,

I am writing to express my opinion about the future site of the future 4 Ranges Community Recreation Center. I am a County resident who has lived on the 9th Street Island for 26 years and I very much look forward to having this facility a resource for our communities. Because of where I have lived, I have watched and experienced the way the river has changed over the course of recent years. Because the river is subject each and every year to many variables that influence its level of flow and course of direction, I am not in favor of putting this brand new multi-million-dollar 40,000 square foot building on the site that is currently occupied by the Civic Center. On June 12th last year, I watched and experienced the island flooding completely and after we left our house under evacuation orders, I walked the dike when the river was just coming even with the top of it at about 5:00. From my perspective, with this memory as recent as it is, and the damage that caused so many residents and their property (the County is still trying to put things back in order lots of different places more than a year later), it is a bit naive, or foolhardy, to not deal with the reality that the river will breach the dike again with whatever force it wants to; let's remember after all, the current dike was built to get through the floods of 1996 and 1997, and it had to be lowered later because of the Army Corps of Engineers decreeing that it had been built so high that it was going to negatively impact the natural flow and direction of the river. The use of the space for community purposes (the band-shell, farmers market, etc.) that is there now is pretty low-impact and although many great people rushed to sandbag last year to prevent the river from completely overwhelming that area, at least there wasn't a brand-new 25 -million -dollar structure behind them that was completely at risk of being flooded. Yes, I have read that the Army Corps of Engineers is "remapping the Flood Plain" but no matter what they determine the flood way or flood plain to be, that won't change what the river will do any given year and although I have read that the building could be elevated 2 or 3 feet to perhaps prevent major damage, is this really the best place to start thinking about putting a building when it certainly isn't the only site in the hopper? I don't think so.

My vote is to put the Community Center at the M Street Park location. The project funds that are dedicated to being used to "improve the economic well-being a neighborhood" can still be taken advantage of and I believe that if the facility were located there, it would do that and more. It would give that neighborhood, and that whole north side an anchor, a bigger sense of community and it would help to balance out that part of town with vast majority of all the other amenities in Livingston that are located across the tracks on the river side. And yes, people are going to say then that "everyone will have to cross the tracks to get to the Center" on the north side of town, but isn't that same amount of traffic going to be on the move if everyone on the North Side has to cross the tracks to get to the Civic Center location?

My third choice for the site is near the North Side Soccer Fields. Although I believe that some of the funding sources in hand would not be eligible in this case, if we had to move away from the M Street Park location and that funding for any reason, I favor this because there is plenty of space in that area, it would group the two biggest recreational complexes in town together, and that would make it convenient for parents with multiple children who would take advantage of both facilities.

Thanks for encouraging and listening to people's opinions on this matter,

Cara McNeely