

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

Parks & Recreation Committee

Issue Briefing

Topic: Space Needs Study of the Ardmore Avenue Community Center and The PALM Center – Positive Aging in Lower Merion Study Recommendation

Prepared By: Donna L. Heller, Director of Parks & Recreation

Date: December 1, 2016

- I. Action To Be Considered By The Board:** Receive the Space Needs Study of the Ardmore Avenue Community Center (AACC) and The PALM completed by Kimmel Bogrette Architecture + Site
- II. Why This Issue Requires Board Consideration:** The Study was funded by Community Development Block Grant Funds and also supports our future Grant fund applications and fundraising efforts for design and construction.
- III. Current Policy Or Practice (If Applicable):** It has been the practice of the Board of Commissioners to receive completed Plans and Studies.
- IV. Other Relevant Background Information:**

The purpose of the study was to determine the current and future facility space needs with the goal of creating a facility or facilities which meet the needs of both organizations. The scope of the study included the following:

- ☐ Program and site analysis
- ☐ Public meetings and interviews with stakeholders
- ☐ Preliminary construction concept/recommendations
- ☐ Financial implication

The Ardmore Avenue Community Center-122 Ardmore Avenue in Ardmore
was built in 1978 and is a single story, pre-engineered steel structure.



Mission: To providing a wide range of educational, recreational, cultural and social resources for residents, particularly children and youth in South Ardmore and its neighboring communities.

Vision: “Teaching the Youth of Today...Tools for Tomorrow”

Goals

- Give our youth the tools and confidence needed to become strong goal oriented adults who will have a positive impact on the community and the future.
- Safe haven with programs that give the youth the opportunity for growth and supportive and caring relationships with adults.
- Opportunities tailored to the needs and interest of our youth where they can learn new skills, develop important competencies and establish healthy supportive relationships with peers and adults.
- Our programs provide meaningful relationships, a sense of belonging, self esteem, self-identity, leadership skills, self-initiative, positive time management and conflict resolution.
- Empowers the young people allowing them to be involved in the decision making process during planning, implementation and evaluation. The Center involve youth as leaders in programs.
- Opportunity for hands on learning.
- Relationship building is an important focus.

The current layout of the AACC building includes a general “living room” style area, a “Teen/Media Room”, a homework/Computer Center, a Game Room/Kitchen/Meeting Room, a gymnasium, three offices, one storage/filing area and a cold storage area.

The PALM Center-117 Ardmore Avenue in Ardmore was built in 1975 and is a two story masonry structure with timber roof trusses.



Mission: To assist adults 55 years of age and older to maintain a healthy, satisfying quality of life by providing services and activities in a nurturing environment that enables them to function more independently in the community. The Center is an advocate of unmet needs of older adults and is a repository of information to assure them their rights, benefits and opportunities.

Vision

The Center for Positive Aging in Lower Merion (PALM) will be widely known for supporting positive aging and independence with dignity to older adults. We will be a resource and cultural Center, continuously expanding services and growing membership with an effective Board, staff and financial stability. Our staff and volunteers will engage in partnerships with public agencies, private businesses and applicable institutions to support older adults through programs and activities to:

- Advocate for rights and benefits;
- Create/promote opportunities to optimize health and welfare;
- Increase community outreach initiatives;
- Maximize life enrichment opportunities.

Goals

- To advance the well-being of older adults by providing activities and programs which promote healthy lifestyles and independence so that older adults can Age in Place safely and with dignity.
- To advocate for unmet needs of older adults.
- To act as a repository of information regarding the rights, benefits and opportunities for older adults.

- To provide opportunities and encourage continued learning and creativity.
- To recognize the dignity and strength and wisdom of adults 55 and older.
- To promote collaborative relationships between area agencies providing services to older adults, local government, business, non-government and community organizations that support positive aging.
- To seek out and identify older adults who may feel isolated or be in need of services and information.
- To promote intergenerational activities.

The current layout of the PALM building includes a general reception area, a meeting room, a Computer Center, two office areas/filing, and a second floor kitchen and multi-purpose room with a separate craft room.

The Study has concluded that the existing structures are inadequate for current or future needs, and has recommended the construction of a new facility combining the programmatic elements of both the Community Center and the PALM on the site of the current Ardmore Avenue Community Building. The Public meetings and interviews with stakeholders concluded that certain key spaces could be utilized by both facilities and that by combining the two facilities, the mission could be fulfilled at lower cost and with a more community minded outcome. The resulting proposal is a new 3 story, 35,000 Sq. Ft. facility which would stay within the boundaries of the existing Community Center lot, while the site of the current PALM Center building could be taken over for approximately 48 additional parking spaces.





A link to the complete study “Space Needs Study of the Ardmore Avenue Community Center and The PALM Center – Positive Aging in Lower Merion“ is located on the Township website. <http://www.lowermerion.org/services/parks-and-recreation-department/master-plans-and-studies/space-needs-study-of-the-ardmore-avenue-community-center-and-the-palm-center-positiv>

V. Impact On Township Finances:

The financial impact to the Township could be significant.

The Total estimated cost to implement the plan, is \$12.5 M with a potential 4% escalation cost per year.

Funding sources through Foundations are part of the plan to support our future Grant applications as well as potential for donations for Room Naming Rights. Another funding avenue could also be the use of land development/subdivision Recreation/Open Space fees because of the Township Wide impact for our residents. The rental potential could also produce a return on investment, but I also believe the two Organization would like a portion of those funds for their operating purposes so that is a detail that will need to be developed.

VI. Staff Recommendation: That the Committee recommend to the Board receiving the Space Needs Study of the Ardmore Avenue Community Center (AACC) and The PALM