



Mike Wildgen, City Manager

# City of Lawrence KANSAS

City Offices  
Box 708 66044-0708  
TDD 785-832-3205  
www.lawrenceks.org

6 East 6<sup>th</sup>  
785-832-3000  
FAX 785-832-3405

**CITY COMMISSION**  
**MAYOR**  
DENNIS "BOOG" HIGHBERGER  
**COMMISSIONERS**  
MIKE AMYX  
SUE HACK  
DAVID M. SCHAUER  
MIKE RUNDLE

January 20, 2006

Dear City Commissioners,

This application is submitted to establish the "Carnegie Community Center," a multi-purpose facility owned by the City of Lawrence and operated/managed by the Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department.

This proposal details the information requested, which outlines the specific use of the facility. It is important to note the Carnegie Community Center would continue its history as a public facility, while addressing the current space needs for parks and recreation classes. The Carnegie Community Center would also provide much needed meeting space for a wide variety of groups, organizations and events in the community.

Since \$432,000 of City funding has already been invested in the facility and an estimated \$750,000 for Phase 2 of the renovation has been discussed, your consideration to keep this facility in the public domain will be appreciated. We would also honor any previous commitment to provide office space in the facility for the Bleeding Kansas Heritage Area Commission efforts that have been progressing in the community.

If you have questions regarding this proposal, please feel free to contact me at 832-3450.

Respectfully Submitted,

Fred DeVictor, Director Parks and Recreation Dept.





# **CARNEGIE COMMUNITY CENTER**

*A Multi-Purpose Facility  
Owned by the City of Lawrence  
& Operated by the  
Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department*

# CARNEGIE COMMUNITY CENTER

- **Proposed Use**

The Carnegie Community Center would provide the community with more opportunities in recreational programming, as well as affordable meeting and Downtown reservation space for the public if the Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department were to begin operating the facility in 2007. The department has a great need for additional programmable space, and the Carnegie facility has five large rooms/spaces, which could help meet this need.

The Carnegie Community Center would also be an economic benefit to the Downtown Lawrence corridor through Parks and Recreation sponsored activities and events, as well as public events sponsored by outside groups and organizations.

- *Classes/Activity Offerings*

Classes offered by Parks and Recreation have added to the quality of life citizens of Lawrence have enjoyed for well over the past half century.

**With the elimination of the continuing education program provided by U.S.D. 497 in 2003,**

Parks and Recreation began providing continuing education opportunities to the community to fill the void. With these additional classes and the department's move of its gymnastics program in 2005 from the University of Kansas campus to the East Lawrence Recreation Center small gymnasium, programmable space

has become a major constraint for the department to continue offering a variety of quality, affordable programming to the public.



Many of the added classes in the Carnegie Community Center would address **the needs of the youth market, which continue to be of major importance to the community** – helping to provide constructive outlets for their personal development and time. The additional classroom space at the Carnegie Community Center would allow the department to offer additional youth activities and programs at critical times – after school.



The department currently offers eight sessions of youth dance classes each of the year's four seasons providing opportunity to over 160 children to enhance their skills in balance, communication, listening, poise, agility and a wide array of additional skills, which are fundamentals to personal growth and development.

Many of the classes offered to youth are also limited to 9 or 10 students, ensuring a ratio of students to instructor that allows for skills to be taught in a manner that are retained and of benefit to the child. In fact, all additional classes offered would continue to provide a ratio of student to instructor, ensuring life-enhancing skills would be transferred from instructor to pupil.



While the department's classes and activities are affordable, the department doesn't turn away anyone for the inability to pay. We continue to utilize the department's Wee Folks Scholarship Fund created for the community in 1996 to assist all youth in accessing the department's life-enhancing programming – building esteem, skills, and socialization with others.



The department would also be able to expand class offerings to adults and relocate some classes that are in crowded spaces i.e. dance classes (ballroom, swing, country, Latin, etc.) in South Park Recreation Center, which in turn would open up space for new programs and/or rental space for community/citizen use. New programs the department plans to offer include health initiatives to educate the public, curbing obesity and sedentary lifestyles.



The performance area of the Carnegie Community Center would more adequately serve fitness/health classes and smaller aerobic classes for both youth and adults.

A major initiative across the U.S. is currently being aimed at educating individuals, especially youth, on the issue of obesity. Parks and Recreation will continue to assist in this effort.

**Recently, the department has expanded its offerings to include fitness programs in its Special Populations programming.** Healthy eating, physical fitness and active lifestyles are encouraged through its programming to all demographics. Areas of the Carnegie Community Center would be utilized by the Special Populations Division for its displaced programming. When the gymnastics program was relocated to East Lawrence Recreation Center, the Special Populations Coffeehouse program was moved to the Union Pacific Depot. Logistics makes this a less than ideal location for the program.

- *Rental Space*

After the Lawrence Arts Center moved into its new facility, requests continued for using the existing gallery and performance hall space. Parks and Recreation handled those requests, assisting individuals/groups with their needs and provided alternative space for those events/programs that could not be accommodated at the Carnegie.

There is a continued need for space in the community to accommodate meetings, activities, receptions, dinners/banquets and other events. For instance, the public library turned away approximately 800 applications for use of their public rooms in 2005, according to Bruce Flanders, Library Director.

Parks and Recreation has also seen its rental requests increase for facilities to be rented for a number of activities around its programming schedule. The Parks and Recreation Department's facilities - South Park Recreation Center, the Community Building, East Lawrence Recreation

Center, Holcom Park Recreation Center - combined to accommodate 1139 reservations for parties, rehearsals, receptions, weddings and meetings in 2005, around its numerous scheduled programs, activities and events.

South Park's William Kelly Bandstand and other park areas were utilized for 46 weddings in 2005. Many of the individuals who host weddings in parks also reserve South Park Recreation Center or the Union Pacific Depot for receptions and/or dinners. Because of its location to the park, as well as the open atmosphere and size of the performance area, the Carnegie Community Center would be an ideal space and would compliment a wedding in the park for many citizens.

As previously stated, the main use of the Union Pacific Depot is as a rental space for outside organizations and individuals for a number of uses. In 2005, the Union Pacific Depot had 365 reservations. It is also estimated over 100 individuals were turned away because their request could not be accommodated, due to availability and/or need for a larger-sized facility.

The Carnegie Community Center's main area, formerly the performance hall space, is approximately 2540 square feet compared to the 1050 square foot main room in the Union Pacific Depot, which is a very popular, but is a very small venue for receptions, accommodating only 70 people in a seated arrangement.

The Carnegie Community Center's performance hall area and adjacent gallery space (600 square feet) have excellent potential to help fill the void in providing larger spaces for the rental requests the department receives.

The Carnegie Community Center would also be available for all citizens to use at reasonable rates. Displaced organizations like the Potter's Guild and Lawrence Own Your Own Home would be able to utilize the space they once used for programming.

It would also be available to **work toward the City Commission's goal of having more events in the Downtown area.** Since it would be owned by the City, new events could be developed to utilize the space in conjunction with bringing people to the Downtown area.

Parks and Recreation currently partners with Downtown Lawrence, Inc. and U.S. Bank to hold a summer concert series Downtown. As an example, a new series could be developed to create a winter/spring concert series using the performance hall area to hold the concerts at specific times throughout the year. Smaller art and craft shows could also

be accommodated, as well as demonstration fairs and other activities to bring people to the Downtown corridor.

- **Business Plan**

If the Carnegie Community Center were to be developed, it would become one of the City-owned facilities operated/managed the Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department.

- *History*

With the 60th anniversary of the Parks and Recreation Department in 2006, the track record of success is evident throughout the community in its quality programs and facilities open to the public.

Park and Recreation's Facilities Operations Division oversees the coordination and scheduling of all activities held in the City's 52 parks, as well as the numerous recreation centers and other facilities operated by the department.

Programming is coordinated by professional staff and the quality of programs/activities is ensured through evaluation of both programs and staff hired to instruct. Parks and Recreation prides itself with its innovation and responsiveness to meet the needs of the public.

Over the department's 60 year history, many community events were assisted and/or started by staff of Parks and Recreation, such as Art in the Park and the Summer Youth Theatre. Anticipated community events, like the annual Holiday Bazaar, have been continued by the department when a group is no longer able to continue its implementation.

**Computerized-scheduling software is already utilized for coordination of department activities and programs.** The Carnegie Community Center could be easily added and integrated into the department's facility rental space. The software has allowed the department to offer the community the opportunity to reserve department space at any its Parks and Recreation facilities.

- *Day-To-Day Operation*

The department's recreation budget would need to expand to provide funding for initially equipping the Carnegie Community Center (i.e. chairs, tables, etc.). Funding would also need to operate, staff and maintain the Carnegie Community Center on a daily basis. Additional revenue could be generated via user fees to offset some of the annual operation and maintenance costs.

If the Carnegie Community Center was made available to Parks and Recreation, the department would address further budgetary needs in its 2007 proposal.

- *Building Requirements To Accommodate Proposed Use*

Upon review of what is expected to be completed in the second phase of building improvements, it appears minimal additional costs would be required to prepare the building for public use. Any additional work could most likely be handled in-house by department staff.

- *Parking Requirements*

Parking would need to accommodate a large number of vehicles during larger reservations at the Carnegie Community Center. Parking can be accommodated through the use of existing public parking around the building and nearby city parking lots.

- **Additional information that would assist the City Commission in understanding and evaluating the proposal**

It is anticipated a mixed-use of the flexible spaces would be available at the Carnegie Community Center to accommodate the rental requests the department receives for receptions and events beyond the scheduled classes and activities offered by the department.

As noted in the Carnegie Community Center proposal cover letter, we will honor any previous commitment the City Commission has made to provide office space for the Bleeding Kansas Heritage Area Commission.

With the location of the Carnegie Community Center so close to Downtown, the Community Building and South Park, the Parks and Recreation Department is eager to utilize the space to continue its mission of enhancing the quality of life of the Lawrence community through its many programs, activities and available rental spaces for public use.