

**Symmes Advisory Committee Public Use Working Group  
Meeting Minutes, 3 February 2003  
Symmes Hospital Conference Room**

**Members Attending:** Harris Band, Greg Blass, Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Ann LeRoyer, Suzi Lubar, Deborah O'Donnell, Brian Rehrig (Chair)

**Also in Attendance:** Alan McClennen (Director of Planning and Community Development), Patricia Worden (SAC), Nina Fisher, Carolyn Kenney and Julie Rackliffe Lucey (CATS), John Ferrell (CEO, YMCAs of Greater Boston), Willy Sclarsic (Consultant, Wingate Strategies)

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 PM.

**Meeting Minutes**

The minutes of the 20 January meeting of the Symmes Advisory Committee Public Use Working Group were approved as submitted.

**Symmes Public Forum**

Brian Rehrig announced that the SAC had confirmed the date of Thursday 13 February 2003 for the Symmes Public Forum. The event will be held at the Arlington High School Auditorium.

**YMCA Presentation**

After brief introductions, Willy Sclarsic showed a notebook computer presentation of the Oak Square YMCA in Brighton, MA. The Oak Square Y was built three years ago for \$8 million. It has a gross floor area of 50,000 sf and a 28,000-30,000 sf footprint. [NOTE: It was subsequently confirmed that the presenter misspoke on this point; according to its architect the Oak Square YMCA has a gross floor area of approximately 39,000 sf with a footprint of approximately 21,000 sf.] The facility houses a lane pool, a therapy pool, a jacuzzi, a multi-feature gymnasium, multipurpose rooms, a kitchen, administrative offices, and rooms for fitness equipment, weight training, aerobics, lockers, showers, child care, teens and computers.

John Ferrell provided the Working Group with an overview of the YMCA. He related that the Y is a nonprofit 501C3 charitable institution whose purpose is to serve communities through the operation of family-oriented facilities promoting fitness, health and values. The Greater Boston YMCA operates 16 branches, has built 5 new facilities in the last 4 years and has a capital plan for building more. Its current yearly budget is \$46 million. The YMCA works with local task forces to generate a facility that fits the needs of the community. Although the Y is not responsible for development, it assists communities by assessing their capability to develop a capital campaign, providing management support, structuring an RFP to suit their needs and sometimes taking on low-interest debt. Although ownership of Y facilities takes a variety of forms, typically the YMCA owns and operates the property while the municipality sets the building parameters. Yearly operating budgets average about \$2 million per facility. Due to their no-profit status, Ys do not typically pay real estate taxes, although they do offer affordable memberships and services.

**Community Wellness Center**

Brian Rehrig led a discussion on the minimum requirements of a Community Wellness Center, explaining that the most recent plans developed by the VHB consultant team place the Center on the ridge portion of the Symmes site (where the Nurse's Building now stands). This portion of the site is also slated to house the medical offices and may, therefore, be too small to accommodate the combined Community Wellness Center program and its required parking.

Based on the study of successful facilities offering fitness and community services, the Working Group determined that the area requirements of approximately 60,000 sf set in November were essentially the minimum requirement for such a facility. If significantly less than 60,000 sf could be made available, the Community Wellness Center could not be viable.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM.

The next PUWG meeting is scheduled for 7 PM on Monday 24 February 2003 at Symmes.