

P&Z gives nod to YMCA plan
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With a few conditions suggested, the Ketchum Planning & Zoning Commission this week agreed that a plan for a proposed YMCA meets city standards.

Commissioners discussed the Ketchum-based Wood River Community YMCA's application for a planned unit development on Monday, May 9.

YMCA supporters hope to build an 84-000-square-foot recreational facility on the city's Park and Ride lot, located at the corner of Warm Springs and Saddle roads. The proposed YMCA, which Ketchum voters approved in November 2004, would include an ice rink, two swimming pools, a gymnasium, a climbing wall and other facilities.

Commissioners combed through standards, making suggestions for the City Council to consider.

In discussing whether the development is in harmony with the surrounding area, commissioners opted to recommend more open space on the north end of the lot.

Commissioners debated whether the increased density and use would trigger the need for community housing.

"If we were going to do that, we should have said something months ago," said Commissioner Ron Parsons.

Andy Barnard, architect with Sink Combs Dethlefs, the Colorado firm that designed the YMCA project, said that directive wouldn't fit in with the overall plan.

"This building is geared to recreation," Barnard said. "We're using every square inch of the building we can to fulfill those requirements."

Wood River YMCA Executive Director Teresa Beahen said housing YMCA employees in their workplace would be in direct conflict with their operations, and could invite other problems as well.

"You'll have people hot-tubbing at night and hanging out in locker rooms," she said. "You don't want your employees living at the place they work."

Still, commissioners recommended the YMCA partner with the city to pursue community housing in some way. They also want to see the project allow for a bus turnaround on Saddle Road.

Project architects gave a preview of the updated building design, but further discussion and possible design-review approval by the commission was postponed.

Commissioners, however, offered preliminary remarks.

"I like the look of it," said Commissioner Anne Corrock. "I just wish it wasn't so darn big."

The design-review agenda item was continued to the May 23 meeting.

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