

Residents happy with YMCA news

North Royalton officials
will vote on agreement by May

By Sara Macho
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NORTH ROYALTON — The phone calls and e-mails are pouring in. Residents are ecstatic about the arrival of a YMCA facility in 2012.

Members of City Council met March 31 to discuss the purchasing and operating agreements and are expected to approve legislation by May.

At 7 p.m. Tuesday, residents are invited to attend a meeting at City Hall, 13834 Ridge Road, to offer their input regarding the new facility, said City Council President Vince Gentile.

Gentile reached out to the YMCA of Greater Cleveland and requested a representative be present at the public meeting.

"The support has been outstanding," Stefanik said of the encouragement received from residents. "Every comment is positive."

Resident Gary Seskes said bringing a YMCA facility to North Royalton is one of the mayor's greatest accomplishments.

"When the idea was initially unveiled, I thought to myself what a great facility and location that the Avalon provided,"

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Seskes voiced in an e-mail to the mayor. "And low and behold, you made it happen."

Seskes and other residents have also e-mailed their programming and facility suggestions.

Marianne Bregar made mention of the "Adaptive Sports for Kids" program at the Middleburg Heights Recreation Center.

"It has really morphed into adults also with disabilities," Bregar said. "All would benefit and it would bring an awareness of persons with

disabilities to the community."

Kriste Smith is pushing for an eight-lane competitive pool to meet the aquatic needs of residents.

Whatever the comment, residents are definitely pumped.

As many know, the city has had a shaky history with constructing a recreation facility, but administration view this proposal as a win-win situation.

City officials recently entered into a purchase agreement with Citizens Bank of Flint, Mich. to buy the former Avalon Event Center at a proposed price of \$2.1 million. Monies will be taken from capital improvement funds.

The Avalon Event Center was purchased in 2004 by Cit-

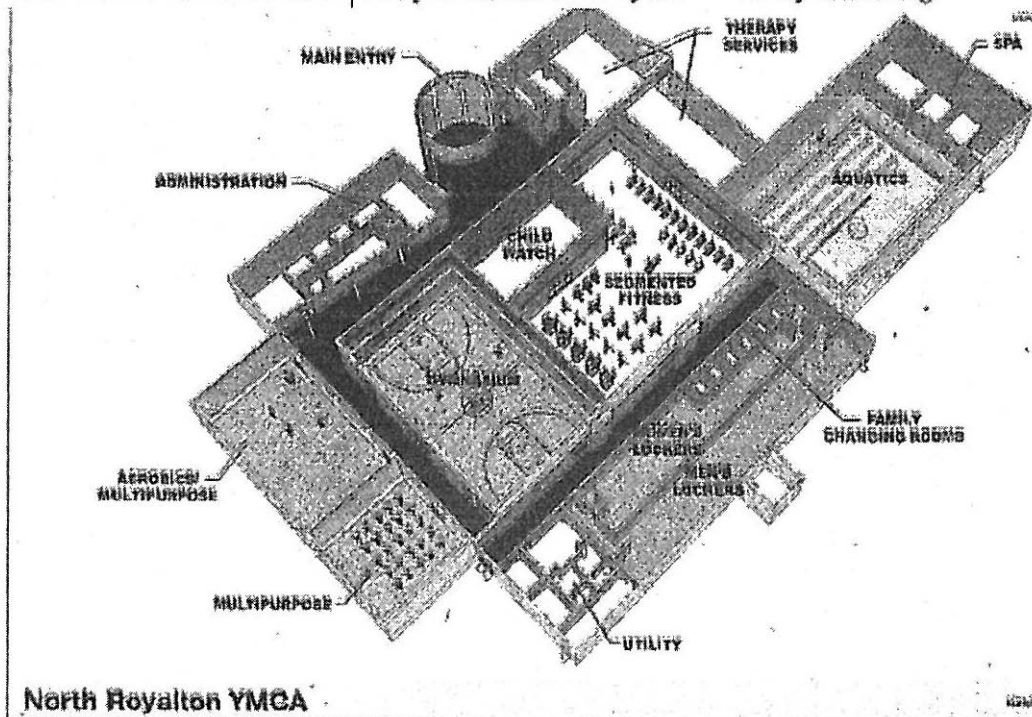
izens Bank after creditors forced it into involuntary bankruptcy.

The YMCA of Greater Cleveland will renovate and operate the facility. For residents, that means no hike in taxes.

Glenn Haley, YMCA president and CEO, is expected to make construction and architectural announcements by June and a groundbreaking ceremony will take place in the fall.

The facility, which will be renovated with \$6-7 million in pledge-based donations, will measure between 45,000 and 50,000 square feet. Amenities will include a swimming pool, gymnasium, segmented fitness center and watch services.

Visit ymca4nr.org.



The YMCA of Greater Cleveland released this rendering concept of the North Royalton YMCA. An architect will provide initial designs this summer.