

Feith Family Ozaukee facility begins talks with Grafton about bringing YMCA staff, programs to aquatic center

The Feith Family Ozaukee YMCA may soon begin taking an active role in operating the Grafton Family Aquatic Center.

YMCA Executive Director Keelyn Lyon said the Saukville-based facility's interest in expanding its mission has prompted discussions with the village about ways to add YMCA programs and staff to the Grafton outdoor pool.

"We're definitely looking at what we could do in Grafton," Lyon said. "We're always interested in any type of collaboration that would help us serve our families better."

Lyon said she met with Village Administrator Darrell Hofland to discuss a partnership that could benefit the YMCA and Grafton center, which like other area community pools faces an annual operational deficit.

Besides offering YMCA aquatic programs at the Grafton pool, the collaboration could provide shared lifeguards and other staff, Lyon said.

"Grafton is kind of our focal point" because of the outdoor pool's location, Lyon said. The facility, 675 N. Green Bay Rd., is relatively close to the middle of the county and near the Ozaukee Interurban Bike Trail, she noted.

"Grafton appeals geographically. It would allow us to serve our constituency across the county equally," Lyon said.

Hofland said discussions with the YMCA have been preliminary, with no formal proposals presented to the village. However, the partnership has potential, especially if it will help defray pool expenses, he noted.

"The focus of the village is to provide the same level of services with a decreased level of taxpayers' subsidy," Hofland said.

"It's a fiscal consideration. But the village has not received any proposal, so it's wait-and-see at this point."

During the past three years, revenue generated by the Grafton pool has covered less than 60% of its operating expenses.

YMCA, village discuss sharing pool

Written by STEVE OSTERMANN

Wednesday, 16 November 2011 18:45

According to a report on the 2011 season, the pool received \$74,253 in revenue from season pass sales, daily admissions and concessions, swimming lessons, rentals and exercise programs. Expenses — including staff, utilities, equipment, repairs and other costs — totaled \$146,070.

Daily pool attendance this year was 22,453 — a dip of nearly 5,000 from last year's total of 27,353. However, the pool was also open nine fewer days this year, including a one-week delay at the start of the season to repair a leak.

John Safstrom, the village's parks and recreation director, said a partnership with the YMCA to upgrade the operation of the aquatic center is worth exploring.

"Absolutely. We'd be glad to entertain any suggestions of ways to offer new programs and cut costs," he said.

The aquatic center has successfully partnered with local groups and neighboring communities, Safstrom noted. Among the collaborations is a reciprocity program with the City of Port Washington that gives season pass holders in Port and Grafton access to each other's pools.

This year, Grafton pass holders used the Port pool 530 times, and Port pass holders visited the Grafton center 456 times.

Safstrom said the village's Parks and Recreation Board was informed of the YMCA's interest in the Grafton pool but has not discussed any plans. The board has also compared pool fees to those in other area communities but has not recommended changes for next year.

"In the light of the YMCA situation, a lot of things are on hold," Safstrom said.

Lyon said Feith Family YMCA officials are continuing to explore ways to partner with Grafton and could present a proposal early next year. Besides requiring village approval, a plan would have to be endorsed by the local YMCA's board of directors and approved by the YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee's executive board, she said.

The tentative target for a collaborative effort is the 2012 season, according to Lyon.

"We would hope there would be a clear directive by the first quarter of next year," she said.