

## **City holds third public meeting about possible future uses for former YMCA site**

Approximately 80 people turned out held at Changepoint Church. for the City of Poughkeepsie's public information session on Wednesday, Oct. 23, regarding possible future uses for the former YMCA site on Montgomery Street.

At the meeting, the two remaining respondents – one proposing a multi-use facility that would include community and recreational services, the other envisioning a Poughkeepsie Museum of Contemporary Art – were expected to make presentations to the public. But the co-founders of The They Co., which is proposing a contemporary arts museum for the site, cancelled shortly before the meeting was to start due to illness.

The meeting went on with a presentation by The 35 Montgomery Community Coalition, followed by questions from the public. The coalition includes Community Matters 2, Inc., DAY ONE Early Childhood Learning Community, Dutchess Community College, Dutchess County, MASS Design Group, Nuvance Health, Poughkeepsie Farm Project, Poughkeepsie Public Library District, Vassar College and YMCA of Kingston and Ulster County.

In opening comments, City of Poughkeepsie Mayor Rob Rolison noted that the city took ownership of the former YMCA site earlier this year and also has created a Site Selection Committee including members of the public and city officials to make recommendations to the administration.

James Watson and Chris Kroner, both of MASS Design Group, one of the partners in the project, took the audience through a presentation of the coalition's ideas, which include services for children and adults, such as a 24-hour day care center, health

facilities, an early learning center and many other community-based programs.

They said when the coalition started considering what should be created at the site, they soon realized “it needed to be for all ages, and it needed to be for all hours.”

Kroner cautioned, however, that the coalition is just getting started “This is not a design; this is a process. ...This is the sketch of an idea.”

L’Quette Taylor and Christopher Grant, both of Community Matters 2 (CM2), another partner in the project, went over the results of a survey they conducted of students in both the Poughkeepsie Middle and High Schools. The survey found that, particularly among high school students, a vast majority expressed a need for a community center with both sports and academic programming.

While questions from the public involved a variety of topics, the predominate ones centered around the timeline for the project and how it would be funded. Kroner said he would expect a year of design time, which would include solidifying the arrangements with the involved partners and getting considerable public feedback. He said that could be followed by a yearlong construction timeline, noting that the project could be done in phases and that there would be more than one funding source.

“We don’t know the price of this today. We don’t know the price of the vision that we sketched,” he said. So far, Dutchess County government has committed \$3 million to the project.

As the community and the coalition await next steps, Taylor said, “We can put some programs in place to test them.” He and others at the meeting pointed to the success of the Friday Night Lights

program at the Poughkeepsie Middle and a Saturday Night Program offered at the Family Partnership Center.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the project. To make a comment, email [PoughkeepsieRFEI@cityofpoughkeepsie.com](mailto:PoughkeepsieRFEI@cityofpoughkeepsie.com)