Dixon Park District to Postpone Expansion Referendum

After consultation with the #DixonStrong Leadership Team, Dixon Family YMCA, Dixon School District, and the City of Dixon, Executive Director Duane Long has made a recommendation to his board to postpone the park district expansion referendum. Executive Director Long said, “We made a commitment to our community that we would not run this referendum until all questions were answered and all partnerships were finalized. We have made great strides toward both of these goals, but we need a little more time to guarantee fiscal responsibility and to create space for transparency with the community.”

The park district expansion will allow Dixon to compete with surrounding towns—whose park district boundaries almost all match their school boundaries—in the race to retain young families, cultivate healthier and more sustainable communities, and ensure Dixon remains one of the few thriving towns in an increasingly desolate rural landscape. Currently, while the park district itself serves Dixonites who live beyond the City limits, it is operating only on funds collected from residents within City limits.

In November, the park district hired a business consultant to help create the formal business plan, identify strategic partnership opportunities for the community center, fully analyze operations and maintenance costs, and project future capital expenses for the community center. The consultant has worked on many community center projects that involve partnerships with park districts, school districts, and YMCAs.

The consultant presented preliminary findings yesterday to representatives of the park district, school district, YMCA, City, and #DixonStrong. Following the meeting, the group agreed that further research and analysis needed to be completed before moving forward. Dixon Family YMCA Executive Director Andy McFarlane said, “We are excited to work as a true partner with the park district on the community center. We have made great progress in the planning process and are committed to creating a partnership that is a win-win for Dixon.” Executive Director Long said, “As a team, we feel it is important to be able to provide the answers to every question from operating expenses to partnerships and the final business plan. We have been working diligently with our partners, but this is too important of a project to rush the process.”

City Manager Danny Langloss said, “Once again, Duane is displaying great leadership and showing true responsibility and accountability to our citizens. This is an important project for the health of our community, and we have to get it right. This complex will serve our community for generations, and we all realize this cannot be rushed. Our community deserves a guarantee of long-term success before making a decision on this project.”