



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wildwood Moves Forward on New Community Center

Wildwood's city commission last night directed staff to begin contract negotiations with OLC Architecture to design a new recreation and outreach center at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park.

Following a conceptual design presentation by OLC's Maged Elsheikh, five citizens in attendance spoke in favor of the project during the meeting's public forum. Included were faculty and parents from the Wildwood Middle High School drama club, who described a shortage of space for programs that enrich traditional classroom education.

Elected officials discussed the significant, growing need for such a facility while raising questions about its capacity related to projected population increases, accessibility, security, and cost. Project construction is currently estimated at \$10 million, with a total project cost of approximately \$12 million.

In a split vote, the commission authorized the city manager to develop contract documents for project design. Following the meeting, Mayor Ed Wolf, one of two dissenting votes on the five-member commission, issued the following statement:

I have no question this facility is intended to serve the community. The concerns I raised this evening were centered around our best path forward, and exercising prudence with taxpayer funds as we take on the largest infrastructure project in Wildwood's history, our new wastewater treatment plant.

As an educator in Wildwood's schools for more than a quarter-century, I taught and coached many of the residents in the room tonight, as well as their children, and still regard them as family. I have no doubt that the students and athletes who will use this facility—as well as our seniors and other community members—will benefit from it.

As we proceed, I implore our management team to achieve the vision presented tonight with the same civic responsibility and meticulous attention to detail they demonstrate in other city affairs to ensure this investment does not jeopardize Wildwood's current and future fiscal health.

In a subsequent agenda item, Ben Fries from CPH LLC. provided an update on the new wastewater treatment facility, explaining that recent flows have exceeded those projected when the project began. He recommended increasing the new facility's ultimate 6 MGD capacity by one-third to 8 MGD, noting that disposal of the resulting increased volume of treated water presents additional challenges that will need to be addressed.

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