

Leaders brainstorm about land use

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
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School, hospital boards and city council gather for joint meeting.

What would you do with a blank check to develop three acres of land?

A YMCA, an indoor swimming pool, a new baseball field or parking lot were several ideas tossed around by leaders on March 15.

Members of the District 20 school and Gothenburg Memorial Hospital boards and Gothenburg City Council, Gothenburg Chamber of Commerce director Anne Anderson, Dawson Area Development director Jen Wolf and a handful of patrons threw in their two cents worth during a two-hour planning retreat at the school.

Superintendent Mike Teahon invited the groups to discuss what to do with land, across the street from the school on Avenue I, that was donated to the Gothenburg Public Schools Foundation.

Teahon said the donor wanted the property to be used for kids.

“The school board will decide but we want to partner with you,” he told the group.

Some other ideas included a greenhouse and/or community garden, a soccer field, splash park, building a preschool which could house a day-care or a place where college classes could be offered.

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GMH board member Mike Bacon challenged the group to think big.

John Johnson, GMH administrator, didn't think a YMCA or other type of wellness center would work because most are not financially feasible.

"Ours (Wellness Center) works well with our rehabilitation center," Johnson said.

Administrative assistant and nursing director Kayleen Dudley said the hospital's Wellness Center could expand on land around the facility.

GMH board member Mike Bacon noted that because exercise facilities must be maintained and staffed which costs money, partnering with other entities would be important.

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