

# Architect's Designs Presented: Wood River Has Meeting To Discuss Roundhouse Future

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**SEE VIDEO:**

WOOD RIVER - There was a 45-minute discussion Monday night in Wood River with City Council, Mayor Cheryl Maguire, and community members with a presentation and discussion about a new rec center and future for the Roundhouse.





Information was given out about the four capital projects that have begun in part by using the 1 percent sales tax revenue. An architect had begun a design in February to repurpose the Roundhouse and that was going to be presented to council in March, but there had not been an in-person meeting since March 2. The design was discussed on Monday night. About 60-70 people were attendance. There were 50 people inside and another 10 to 15 outside.

"The architect put on display ways that the Roundhouse could be repurposed and it was an idea for the council," Mayor Maguire said. "The council was not able to discuss it and no decisions were made back in March. The rec center was the only thing discussed. The citizens came here and expressed concerns before COVID hit.

"People have passionate feelings about the Roundhouse. This started in summer of 2018 of what people wanted to see in City of Wood River. Ideas decided were a rec center, flood relief and sewer work and it was presented to them how to pay for this and it was the 1-percent sales tax and it passed.

"If 1-percent sales tax had not passed we never would have had the rec center, sewer and flooding work. These are projects that can be done outside our budget. We have an opportunity for a \$2.5 million grant, so that is why the rec center got pushed forward to the forefront. It has been on hold, we are not there yet, waiting to see how the grant money rolls out and we want the best for the citizens of Wood River.

Mayor Maguire added that the architect looked at many ways to incorporate the Roundhouse.

"I personally would like to see the Roundhouse stay in some sort of form," Maguire said. "I don't want to see it demolished. The city council has never advocated it be demolished. We are just going to go forward and see if we can come up with some solutions that will make the majority happy. In 10 months we have collected over a million dollars in sales tax revenue and 50 to 60 percent of that comes outside from outside people who shop in Wood River and it is doing exactly what it set out to do."

Maguire continued: "There are things being claimed out in the public that are misleading and half truths and part of the problem is that people have threatened to sue the city and we are limited about what we can sit down and talk about since these threats of lawsuits have come through."

Wood River's Bill Dettmers has been part of a grassroots effort to save the historic Roundhouse.

Dettmers has been openly opposed to the possibility of tearing down the Roundhouse and wants to see it saved. He spoke at the Monday night meeting.

“The real question is if the needs of the community couldn’t be served in the Roundhouse,” Dettmers said. “We are opposed to a new park and rec center for several reasons. First of all, they have never done a study to determine what the real needs are. Nobody is opposed to a park and rec center itself, but there are priorities that the city has to take care of, like the flooding on the east side of town, roads, streets, sewers, have to take priority over the rec center. There are real questions whether the needs of the community would be served by this new rec center that can’t be accommodated by the Roundhouse.”

Dettmers said the big objection to the plan with the rec center is a splash pad was put in place of a swimming pool and the Roundhouse was used as a way to pass the 1-percent sales tax.

Jeremy Plank, a Wood River citizen, was interviewed at the meeting and he said he believes the city has been tone deaf in regard to the citizens on this issue and they have a cash reserves issue.

“They need to focus on building up the cash reserves, flooding, sewer, rather than building new buildings at this point. Once cash reserves are built up, I think everybody would be in favor of building a pool, a new rec center, and pushing forward with those sorts of things, but until then, until cash reserves are back up to a normal range I think they just ought to hit the pause button.”

Jason Woody, the Wood River Park and Rec Director, said he believes everyone wants to see all the different options around the Roundhouse and there are three, demolish the Roundhouse and completely start over as a park, save the Roundhouse as a building or turn it into a pavilion. All three options are on the table and nothing has been decided or prepared, at this it has to be decided which option to pursue. All three options are simply an idea at this point.

“The initial proposal is a \$7.5 million recreation center which sits next to the Roundhouse. It is on the old Aquatics Center property and that is a 34,400 square-foot building. It has two gymnasiums inside, a gymnastics room, office space, multi-purpose rooms, lobby area, bathrooms, not made to be a workout facility. We have taken a back-seat approach since COVID, none is in the very foreground, but a lot are talking about it around town and brought me to give a presentation tonight. We have a good option for the Roundhouse and could preserve the building and save us money in the future.”



[Charles Thomas also contributed to this story.](#)