

History of Summit on the Park Community Center

The concept of a community center for Canton originated in the 1970s with discussions involving the Canton Recreation Commission. A conceptual plan was created and continued to be discussed until 1988 when a millage ballot proposal was presented to Canton residents. The millage was rejected by the majority of voters. Although the issue was defeated polling and surveys indicated that many Canton residents continued to support the concept. Residents in general indicated they supported the concept and believed such a facility was needed in the community; however, they did not want to pay for its construction. When asked if they would support non-millage funding of the facility the results were universally positive.

During the 1970s and 1980s, residents in a variety of Southeastern Michigan communities resisted and fought the construction of a landfill in their community. Limited disposal sites led the County Executive to consider using his police powers to site a number of new landfills in Wayne County. At the time there were 3 closed landfills and one active land fill South of Michigan Avenue and East and West of Lilley. It became obvious that because of these existing landfills, the sites close proximity to I-275 and the presence of deep clay soils that the Canton site would be identified by the County as a new regional land fill site. Utilizing a new state law Canton official's negotiated the first host community agreement in Michigan with the Wayne Disposal Company. The host community agreement identified, through a legal binding agreement certain controls and benefits for Canton (this led to host community agreements throughout Michigan as landfills were constructed or expanded). Two important elements of that agreement included a royalty fee for each yard of waste placed in the land fill and free disposal of waste from Canton residents.

Shortly after this agreement was struck an existing landfill operator requested that Canton permit a vertical expansion of the landfill East of I-275 and South of Michigan Avenue. The same contractual elements led to a second host community agreement.

The Board of Trustees adopted at the time a policy to utilize land fill royalties exclusively for community capital projects (no funds could be used for general operations).

The Canton Township Board of Trustees held a series of public meetings to discuss using landfill royalties for the construction of a community center. There was wide spread community support for this approach.

A Community center design team was created. The team visited community centers in Michigan, Minnesota and Colorado. The Denver area at the time had 8 -10 community centers. Colorado permitted its communities to increase sales tax rates to support the construction of recreation facilities. The design team focused on providing recreation space for existing programs and facilities not available in Canton. The Township Board also directed the design team to address the cultural and social needs of the community.

The final design included indoor swim areas, a gymnasium, workout area, a banquet area, dance studios, instructional space, and a senior center. The project was given the official name of Summit on the Park (adjacent to Heritage Park), although most Canton residents refer to the community center as the Summit. The 85,200 square foot Summit was opened for business in January of 1996. The Summit is host to over 500,000 annually. In 2000 the Summit was expanded by 10,000 square feet to include a new fitness area and additional locker rooms.

The **Summit on the Park** is a cultural and recreational jewel in the heart of our community. The complex includes a wide array of outstanding amenities. Its unique design is topped by a 75-foot high glass tower and massive copper and glass superstructure. The Summit is open year-round and offers daily, monthly, and annual passes. This state of the art facility features: fitness center, personal training, aquatic center, full size gymnasium, banquet & conference center, racquet ball court, on-site child care, and a senior adult center.