

YMCA hires architect for project

by Sean Ruppert, Staff Writer

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The South Brunswick Family YMCA is moving ahead with plans for an addition and swimming pool.

The YMCA has retained Cornerstone Architectural Firm of South Plainfield and pool designers Integrated Aquatic Engineering of Doylestown, Pa., to create plans for the project, according to Tom Libassi, executive director.

Mr. Libassi says the firms will be creating a master site plan that "will reflect how the Y will grow over the next 10 years." He says the plan should be completed by the end of January.

The YMCA also sent out a feasibility survey to its members on Monday, meant to gauge possible financial support from the community for the facility expansion. Mr. Libassi says that the survey also will be sent to the general public in the near future.

According to the director, the YMCA's current plan is add onto its facility in three stages, this first being the creation of an indoor, six- to eight-lane, lap pool. The second stage would be a leisure pool, with the third being the creation of a gymnasium.

Mr. Libassi says the lap pool will be primarily paid for by a \$3 million grant the organization received from Middlesex County, however some additional support from the community might be needed.

"The projected cost of the lap pool will test the limits of our county grant," he said. "The feasibility study asks the community if they would be willing to contribute to the project."

Mr. Libassi says the organization will determine how it will proceed with the additional leisure pool and gymnasium based on the interest they receive from the community in supporting the projects.

The Township Council recently assisted the YMCA by changing the zoning guidelines for the Rural Residential designation that YMCA's property falls under. The changes allow for existing recreational buildings.

YMCA attorney Gary Forshner of Stark & Stark says that the changes will allow the organization to make changes without having to appear before the zoning board for use variances. Instead the YMCA will only have to submit a master plan for final site approval when making changes to its facility.

"It is more about easing the process than anything else," Mr. Forshner said. "South Brunswick has always been very supportive of the YMCA, we have never been denied a variance."

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