

---

Westport Weston Family Y · 59 Post Road East · PO Box 190 · Westport CT 06881-0190

Media Contact

Troy Ellen Dixon  
Senior Director  
Development and Communications  
(203) 226-8981 x106  
tdixon@westporty.org

For Release:      Immediate

**Family Y Board of Directors Gives the Go-Ahead  
For Design Development of the Proposed Facility at Mahackeno**

**Westport CT, January 11, 2006** – At their last meeting of 2005, the Westport Weston Family Y Board of Directors approved all building and site specifications for the proposed Family Y facility at the organization’s Mahackeno property.

Following an exhaustive multi-year review of more than 36 sites in Westport, Weston and neighboring communities, the Directors had voted in 2003 to initiate a development plan for a facility at Mahackeno. The vote on December 19 was the culmination of efforts by the Directors, Trustees, staff, consultants and numerous volunteers who have worked tirelessly on a project that will result in a building which meets updated and improved safety and code requirements, allows for delivery of expanded services to children, teens, tweens, adults and seniors through Childcare, Camp and School Age, Aquatics, Fitness, and Sports and Recreation programming as well as membership-oriented activities.

Family Y Board member Sam Gault whose family, along with members of the Tauck and Mitchell families, serve as Co-Chairs of the *Imagine the Possibilities* Capital Campaign, remarked that this vote cleared the way for the Family Y to proceed with full design development of the proposed building, adding “Architect Kevin Smith of Robert A. M. Stern Architects, who is also a Westport resident, has already prepared the initial schematic for a building and site plan which provides ample space for programs and services the Family Y offers – from Fitness and Childcare to meeting rooms and babysitting – plus expanded activities such as hiking and canoeing.”

Nestled in the northeast corner of the 32-acre Mahackeno property, the building is sited to leverage the naturally sloping terrain to maximum effect – only one story of the planned two-story building will be visible from the Merritt Parkway or Sunny Lane and the building will not be visible from Rice’s Lane. As well, the building design matches key elements of the surrounding environment, drawing from the traditions of American camp architecture and using a material palette composed of native field stone and rough-hewn timbre.

A fifth-generation Westporter, Mr. Gault knows the Family Y is an integral part of the larger community but allowed that “being a good neighbor is of critical importance, which is why we’ve devoted a great deal of care and concern to the development of this project – from positioning the proposed building to

Westport Weston Family Y · 59 Post Road East · PO Box 190 · Westport CT 06881-0190

reduce or limit its view from neighboring homes and adjacent roadways, to the engagement of paid professional consultants to study and plan for impacts related to the environment, sanitary requirements and traffic.”

“Going forward,” said Project Manager Cory Attra, PE, “the project is now subject to reviews and approvals by various regulatory boards and commissions including the Connecticut Departments of Transportation and Environmental Protection, the Conservation Commission, Flood and Erosion Control Board, Architectural Review Board, Planning and Zoning.” As with any permitting process for a project of this scope, it is likely to be a lengthy one but Mr. Attra noted that the Board’s vote “indicates the Directors’ commitment to the project and willingness to work toward and support a positive outcome.”

According to Iain Bruce, First Vice President of the Board, “our goal is to provide Westport, Weston and surrounding communities with a Family Y that meets the needs and expectations of the members, users and neighbors – now and in the future – and does so with an array of programs offered within the building plus accessibility to the beautiful open space on the grounds of our Mahackeno property.”

“The Boards have devoted a great deal of time and energy to this initiative, as have numerous other volunteers, and already there have been donors who’ve stepped forward with significant contributions to the capital campaign for this project,” observed a Family Y senior staffer. “On behalf of the members and staff of the Family Y, I want to express my sincere appreciation for all of these efforts. Everyone associated with the Westport Weston Family Y is working to create a facility to benefit a lot of people and that fact speaks volumes.”

###

### **About Westport Weston Family Y**

The Westport Weston Family Y is an affiliate of the YMCA of the USA and a partner agency of the United Way of Westport and Weston. Our mission is to build strong kids, strong families and strong communities. The Westport Weston Family Y is governed by two boards comprised of 40 community volunteers. Visit [www.westporty.org](http://www.westporty.org) for additional information about the organization and programs.

### **About Robert A.M. Stern Architects**

Robert A.M. Stern Architects (RAMSA) is a 140-person firm of architects, landscape architects, interior designers and supporting staff. Over its 35-year history, the firm has established an international reputation as a leading design firm with wide experience in residential, commercial and institutional work. Currently the firm has projects underway in twenty states as well as in the Netherlands, Germany, Canada, Spain, Japan, Mexico, Brazil and China.

RAMSA’s practice is premised on the belief that the public is entitled to buildings that do not, by their very being, threaten the aesthetic and cultural values of the buildings around them. We do not believe that any one style is appropriate to every building and every place. We know that no two institutions are the

Westport Weston Family Y • 59 Post Road East • PO Box 190 • Westport CT 06881-0190

same and that, as much as our past experience can inform our work process, we must always start a project with an open mind and a clean slate. We believe in the continuity of tradition and strive in our work to create order out of the often chaotic present by entering into a dialogue with the spirit of the places in which we build to develop a distinctive and appropriate character for each of our projects – an approach which is especially important for an institution such as the Westport Weston Family Y.

### **About the Building and Site Plans**

JPEGs of the following renderings are enclosed with this press release.



Aerial view of proposed Family Y building at Mahackeno



View of proposed Family Y building across Poplar Plains Brook