

\$16M community center planned on Snipe land

Public input is welcome as planning for the "Green" building gets underway.

By **ELIZABETH FISHER**
COURIER TIMES

The YMCA plans to build a \$16 million community center on about 10 acres of land on the Snipe family's farm in Falls. The project, to be called the Morrisville Community Center, would take about three to four years to complete and

members will not be required to live in Morrisville.

The planned 51,000-square-foot building will be a "Green" building, meaning it will be "environmentally responsible," said Sandy Wiggins, chairman of the board of directors of the U.S. Green Building Council.

Green buildings combine ecology and real estate and are designed to take advantage of their natural surroundings — including plant life and sun-

light — when constructed.

"They are an intelligent integration of technology with the natural world," Wiggins said.

Ecological concerns, human health and safety and the well being of those who use the building are the hallmarks of Green building, he said.

A total of 48 construction experts, including various engineering specialists and an architect, will attend a meeting to work with the public, the

Snipes family and representatives of the YMCA to determine the building's design, "by consensus," Wiggins said.

The public is invited to attend a design meeting at 7 p.m. Tuesday at the Friends Meetinghouse in Fallsington. The design should be ready by Thursday and a "Pin-up" reception — meaning the final design will be pinned up for all to see — will be held from 5-7 p.m. at the Snipes Farm on West Bridge Street.

The YMCA will own the land and the building. The Snipes family will be involved with some of the programs. The new building will house a fitness center, an indoor and an outdoor pool, basketball courts and other recreation activities already available at the YMCA in Fairless Hills, said Erik Stark, the CEO of the Lower Bucks YMCA.

The Fairless Hills YMCA will remain open, although the center is expected to draw

about 25 percent of its membership. It's a loss the Fairless Hills building can sustain, Stark said.

Programs for the new facility include environmental education, classes to teach kids how food can be produced, and, ultimately, a childcare center, Stark said.

"It will be a great melting pot of people in the community," he said.

Elizabeth Fisher can be reached at 215-949-4173 or lfisher@phillyburbs.com