



Onondaga County Legislature

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KEVIN A. HOLMQUIST, CHAIRMAN
PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEV COMMITTEE

DEBRA J. CODY, CHAIR
COUNTY FACILITIES COMMITTEE

JOINT MEETING OF PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AND COUNTY FACILITIES COMMITTEE

PLANNING MEMBERS PRESENT: Mrs. Abbott-Kenan, Dr. Kelly, *Mr. Kinne, *Mr. Williams
COUNTY FACILITIES MEMBERS PRESENT: Mrs. Tassone, Ms. Kuhn, Mr. Bush, Mrs. Ervin
ALSO ATTENDING: Chairman Knapp, Mr. May, Mr. Ryan, Dr. Chase; also see attached

Chairman Holmquist called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

1. PARKS & RECREATION: Brian Kelley, Commissioner
a. INFORMATIONAL: Sports Complex

- Parks Department thrilled for opportunity for sports complex at Hopkins Road
- Introductions: Visit Syracuse's Jeff Mickle, Senior Sales Manager and Danny Liedka, President; Bud Loura, Restaurant QB; Tony Mangano and Carmen Emmi, representing area hotels; Bill Krueger, consultant on feasibility study; Len Montreal and Josh Prutch, representing AC Syracuse
- Big push for sports tourism; Visit Syracuse shared numbers; according to Sports Events and Tourism Assoc. 2019 State of the Industry Report – sports related travelers, event organizers, and venues spent \$45.1 billion in 2019
- \$45.1 billion generated \$103.3 billion in business sales; achieved by 180 mil traveling to sports events in US in 2019
- Resulted in \$14.6 billion in tax revenue
- *Articles about other communities similar in size that built complexes are on file with the Clerk*
- Proposed site Hopkins Road Park – currently baseball/softball complex in Salina; county owned and developed; additional site prep minimal; within a mile of 81 and I90; centrally located
- Site within 5 min drive to downtown, village, and Syracuse airport; great location for people coming into town; lot of parents travel and bring kids to programs and tournaments;
- Proposed location is close to Onondaga Lake Park, baseball stadium, downtown; synergy helps with local folks doing this; only complex with regulation fields at 345 x 210
- Proposed complex – 10 fields; each with lights; artificial turf; two concession/bathroom areas; parking for everyone; maintenance and operations building; bubble structure for those teams playing in inclement weather (year round facility)
- Economic impact for bringing in folks - parks and athletic fields bring in businesses and home buyers
- Predominate use is soccer and lacrosse

*Mr. Kinne arrived at the meeting.

- Home of lacrosse and proud to have something like this
- Local competition – do not have much; few significant places – Golden Goal has 8 adult fields, no turf; Adirondacks in Lake Placid has 25 acre complex with 6 adult fields, no turf; Capital Region has 53 acres with 6 adult fields, 2 youth fields with 1 or 2 turf
- Location, turf, and lights set apart this apart; 10 lit fields mean longer play and playing in inclement weather
- Goal to have third party vendor to run facility, similar to NBT Bank Stadium and Amphitheater
- Work with group through RFP; will put in things would like to see happen; great for youth and adult soccer at national, state, and local level; thrilled and hopeful it will be home of new professional soccer team
- Soccer and lacrosse play weeknights; could be home for some town and village recreation leagues

Mr. Krueger:

- CSO international – been doing feasibility studies for sports tourism projects for 26 years
- Study completed – in speaking to local and nonlocal producers in Onondaga County was lack of high quality fields for lacrosse, soccer, and multisport activities; lack of fields in one location, which is key
- High quality, synthetic turf fields in one complex, one location; appeals to tournaments looking for destinations and host markets through state, region, country; Onondaga County limited in respect to facility
- If do not see right type of feasibility, profitability, economic impact, etc., will say that
- In this case, when doing market analysis and talking to local groups, certainly found demand to warrant project
- Foundation is incremental usage generated; capture tournament users leaving county, as well as new business
- Having quality complex in great location, good visibility and accessibility; proximity to neighborhoods - landed on good location and good market opportunity
- 10 fields in 1 location; modeling came up with close to ½ mil participants, spectators, and officials drawn to site
- 65% net new to county that does not exist today; substantial impact with sports tourism
- Percentage of net new users will be overnight guests; spending more than day tripper and locals
- Economic impact: ~500,000 total for participants and spectators; 144,000 net new nonlocal visitor days; ~31,000 net new hotel room nights generated annually, upon stabilization of project at about year 4 and beyond
- Did due diligence prior to pandemic and now - followed up with secondary to have accurate numbers
- Total net new spending annual - \$20 mil per year from in facility and out of facility spending (not including construction impact) operations
- Total output – good estimate of total economic impact of \$34 mil indirect, direct, and induced spending annually
- 433 jobs (fulltime/part-time) supported throughout county and economy by virtue of project
- Hotel sales tax revenue net new
- Enhancing quality of life for families, taxpayers, residents; ability to have this be an anchor; ½ million to one area – revitalizing and master planning for areas; drawing activity and bodies; will spill over with private development
- Wellness opportunities, recapturing lost business; certain amount of people bring children or players participating in tournaments that do not live here - might be first time visiting county, and may be back for vacation or other spending
- Financial standpoint – low operating costs with synthetic turf fields (do not need same maintenance as natural grass)
- Upon stabilization – looking at profit of \$100,000 or more a year; not an operating subsidy or financial drain
- Confluence of positive economic impact and financial importance; driving incremental tourism and quality of life for local residents

Mr. Kelley:

- Potential for community use; tournaments will usually be Fri, Sat, Sun; M - Th vision
- When stadium was turf and Chiefs were not home, had up to 80 days to do other things like championships, paintball, marching band, field hockey, etc.; will work with whoever gets bid on this project to continue local and community use

Mr. Montreal:

- Local contractor and developer; owned and revitalized Gem Diner and Preserve Restaurant; organization has representation for asking for no pilots or funding
- Financial struggle as kid made him appreciate families – former owner of Syracuse Soccer Academy, who gave scholarships to teams including Fowler High School State Champs (almost 100%)
- Host tournaments, bring in teams from out of town; ideally all programs would operate out of sports complex
- Please support effort to build the sports complex; home for AC Syracuse and benefit entire community

Mr. Prutch:

- National Independent Soccer Association (NISA) – morale compass is league, club over league, community over club
- Shown rapid growth; NISA true partnership with Syracuse; do not have to be in top 50 metropolitan area to host team
- Communities should not be deprived from professional soccer; play with 14-16 clubs, not franchises (charge fees)
- Tear down barriers has ripple effect - money spent on community; charging \$350 mil for franchise requires billionaire to be owner of team (generational wealth)
- Ownership group includes 4 people of color, 1 woman owned club, and three 1st generation – came here with little or nothing; proud of what NISA is

Mr. Liedka:

- Worked previously at Marriot and Ritz Carlton identifying opportunities from sports standpoint in markets
- Before owners built hotels, go in and study market to see opportunities; facilities like these are around the country, he understands why the work, how they make money, and why they do not work
- Why will this work here? Sports Force Park outside of Cleveland (very similar to this), not as many fields, but packed
- Canadian teams and Boston do not want to go to Jersey, Syracuse an easy stop
- Huge advantage with new hotel stock, tremendous growth at 38%
- Been to Diamond Nation for tournaments with 4 hours to kill – 45 min to get back to hotel, hour to get something to eat; here everything is within 5 minutes; feel consultant was conservative with proximity to things
- Benefit local businesses big time; nothing like this in NY or Northeast
- Turf is the key; extends schedule; weather proof; demands premium price; get calls every day asking about 3 or 4 turf fields side by side (currently no); now could say yes; huge opportunity
- Hopkins road – talk of softball and baseball being displaced; that will work out; other parts in this county for that
- All about drivability; 6 hours to Cleveland is horrific; coming here much more feasible
- Investor – no brainier; can get anywhere in 5 – 10 min; lot of money to spend, but benefit to local economy will be well over \$1 mill every weekend
- Hotel rate an issue due to COVID, but occupancy rate flat; will inject much needed rooms into businesses; will have times in summer when hotels are busy already; will get rate they want, which affects growth in room occupancy tax

Mr. Loura:

- Restaurant consultant - work with 185 local restaurants; primarily Onondaga County; heard opportunity, formed committee, wrote letter - 30 restaurants signed off in support; no industry hurt harder than restaurants in last 18 months
- Everyone lives in community goes to local restaurants; #1 employer having all restaurants added together; #2 generator of sale tax; local restaurants sponsor local children's sports teams; benefits are at local restaurants
- Ask everyone to go out to a local restaurant in Onondaga County, order to go, and get dinner; ask for the owner; 90% of owners at restaurant; talk about opportunity coming to county and what they think

Chairman Holmquist thanked Mr. Kelley for the presentation.

Chairman Knapp thanked Mr. Kelley, and he said sports tournaments are 30 seconds of excitement and 99% boredom. The location being discussed is key with restaurants, hotels, and entertainment being close.

Chairman Holmquist asked about the life span of turf fields. Mr. Kelley responded that there was synthetic turf at Alliance Bank Stadium at a lesser quality, and it lasted 15 years before being replaced with grass. This turf will probably have a life span of 20 – 25 years with field maintenance and grooming. Mr. Kelley replied to Chairman Holmquist that the \$100,000 net includes the maintenance. In the RFP, it will be on the vendor to take care of the maintenance and make those decisions; similar to the Amphitheater. Chairman Holmquist asked if one enclosed field is adequate for the climate, and Mr. Kelley said yes. The outdoor turf season is April to November, and the bubble for indoor is for participating in the offseason with house leagues.

Mrs. Abbott-Kenan commented that this could be a significant gold mine for the area with the stay to play requirements, and she said she's concerned about displaced local travel. Mrs. Abbott-Kenan asked about having a playground (or something equivalent) for kids to be able to do while their siblings are in the tournament. Mr. Kelley said that it is something to look into, because that is extremely important. This is only a rendering.

Mr. Kinne:

- Great exception about other people using field back in 2000, had honor to be a Legislator back then, and took many calls about not being able to use field; do not have faith community will use the way they think they will
- Fiscal standpoint, "if you build it, they will come"; why has the private sector not built one?
- Was an RFP put out for this gentleman's serves?

Ms. Harris responded that there was an RFP for the market and feasibility study.

Mr. Kinne asked why this location. Mr. Kelley answered that the county owns the facility, and the location is ideal. There were several areas the County Executive looked at but did not work. At Hopkins Road years ago when Mr. Kelley started there were 200 adult slow-pitch softball teams, and now there are 25. It had to do with location and potential for growth.

Mr. Kinne:

- Great idea and think it would work; think private sector should build it; studies about these facilities show they do not bring in money they say
- Against this - took 4 phone calls of basic services not being provided from county that the county charge's people \$500/year for; these people get 7' of sewage in basement
- Cannot provide basic services for constituents; every year WEP asks for \$10 increase and legislators whittle down to \$1.88; everyone has a phone they pay for monthly, but cannot provide basic sewer services
- There are mental health, social service, and library issues - like it, but cannot support it
- If they want support, then want to know why not taking care of basic services; pay each constituent \$25,000 for their sewage issue

Mr. May:

- Good points raised by Legislator Kinne; did not have input wanted on how stimulus was being appropriated, but have seen comprehensive plan; this is about the complex – like idea and enthusiastic about it
- There are some obstacles that administration and proponents need to address
- Lakeview Amphitheater successful as revenue generator - originally proposed small amphitheater next to big one; raised by this group that the little amphitheater would impact the investments of towns and villages for local venues; local concert venues in Baldwinsville, Liverpool, etc.; it was taken out of project
- County government; not competing with local business; should facilitate business
- 10 field facility not something private sector would invest in; something only government can do; not year round facility
- Indoor facility field sized will directly compete/impact 5 or 6 facilities and ultimately take business from them; 10 field facility stands on its own; other communities cannot do
- Other sites were too expensive to develop; not cost effective; indoor facility puts county in tricky spot with respect to other facilities; strong consideration of public/private partnerships may be the way to go
- Placement is important; wonderful opportunity for partnership; been to places where they have to drive 1.5 hours to get to next game; versus driving maybe 25 minutes between fields
- Enthusiastic it will be a success

Ms. Kuhn:

- Agree with much that has been said; back up to use of pandemic funds - Onondaga County not out of pandemic; this under consideration in early 2019
- Department of Treasury provided documents with how money spent - (1) assistance to household, small business, and nonprofits; (2) providing premium pay to essential workers, particularly low wage workers; (3) supplementing governmental services, mental health, public health negatively impacted by pandemic; (4) investing in water, sewer, broadband, and infrastructure; additionally recommended to engage constituents and public in developing plans to allocate resources
- FAQ from Senator Schumer's office – can they use funds for general economic development; answer is generally not, except project underway interrupted by pandemic; not the case for this
- How is this appropriate for use of pandemic funds while still in pandemic while people are still struggling?

Mr. Morgan responded:

- Set record straight for allowable uses of funding - people need to understand intricacies and allowability of what funds can be used for
- Look at full text and guidance regarding use, big part missing is that any county or municipality can use for general government services up to level of loss revenue incurred as a result of the pandemic
- Specific formula by Treasury Department to figure what loss revenue is; based on calculation and amount of lost revenue identified, municipalities can invest those funds in any government services
- Able to calculate loss for 4 years; can calculate at end of 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024; combine it all and have total amount of loss revenue incurred from pandemic

- Up to that level, can invest funds in any government service including infrastructure, road work, etc.
- Calculated revenue loss for 2020 in Onondaga County was ~\$67 million

Mr. Ryan requested the information on the study performed, and Ms. Harris responded that she will send them a copy of the report.

Mr. Bush asked if there are any stats on how many private funded versus government/private funded complexes there are. Mr. Krueger said that projects like this include high capital outlay, and there is not enough income generated annually to pay the capital. Typically around the country about 85-90% of projects are developed and owned by the public sector, and they are ran by the private sector. Under this model, the county would own the facility, which means they can dictate the rates being charged. The enclosed facility rental rates could be at a rate higher than the privately owned facility to eliminate the competition.

Mr. Bush said he has a couple complexes with outdoor fields and a bubble, who are on the tax rolls trying to keep their heads above water, and they are proposing a non-taxpaying facility around the corner. Mr. Kelley:

- Had conversations with the facilities on 481 and Jones Road - difference is these are full size regulation fields at 345 x 210, and those are smaller fields, catering to youth more so than adult
- Their big business is indoor center with a setup of 2 - 3 fields at a time; not intent of bubble – does depend on what vendor will do; believe this will create synergy with the other fields
- Believe the beauty is RFP process and private vendor; county will be involved in writing RFP and dictate how it is used; public/private partnerships; have not come full circle; no means is the intent to compete

Mr. Kinne requested the cost of a turf field, and how much it will cost to replace it. Mr. Kinne asked why this will be privately run instead of county run. Mr. Kelley answered that he does not have the resources to run this, and he said if they would give Park's 10 – 15 more positions to handle this, he would. Parks has been the outlet to the community throughout the pandemic with a staff of 85 people across 13 parks. Mr. Kinne asked what the projected cost is to pay a private company, and Mr. Kelley said he does not know.

*Mr. Williams left the meeting.

Mr. May asked why 85% of facilities are professionally managed by experts. Mr. Krueger:

- 85% of them are publicly owned, and about 2/3 of that are privately managed by contract; reason is that some portion of private management is invested interest by user group or tenant (soccer club or association)
- Soccer association most suitable to bring in volunteers to staff; sometimes complicated partnership with multiple tenants
- Third party private management companies make money with long term lease with facility owner; operating at own risk; revenue agreement spills back to county
- Third party private come in with 3,5,10 year contract being paid base fee and incentive fee to run
- Public sector owner - county issues RFP for qualifying management or interested parties (sports teams, potential tenant), county owns it, picks management group, and negotiates agreement
- County can put in guidance that protects county interest with usage and revenue, services, and minimize competition
- Choice of operate year after year within a department, or develop sports authority, or turn over to third party; most do private management routes - certain efficiencies that user groups can manage; typically how they are structured; not all

Chair Cody thanked Mr. Kelley for his presentation and said the location and drivability from the area is fabulous. The stadium, DesitNY, and downtown are all within minutes. She is happy that this will be a huge boom for local hotel owners as well. Chair Cody asked what the timeline is. Mr. Kelley responded that the hope is to start construction as early as possible in 2022, and to be complete by fall 2022 or spring 2023.

Mr. May:

- Will not diminish concerns expressed by Legislator Kinne or Legislator Kuhn; valid in their priorities; half of what county spends is on their concerns
- Another way to look at this – as an economic generator this would become a sustainable funding source for things like they discussed; stimulus money is good, but it is a one shot deal; when gone, its gone

- Using stimulus to create sustainable ways to generate funds to cover cost of government more efficiently; using to reduce property taxes for residents; things of that nature; worth looking at it that way too

Mrs. Ervin thanked Mr. Kelley for his presentation, and she said the project is exciting, but they are only in the beginning of the process. She stated that her caucus found out about it yesterday, so it is tough to make a decision when they do not have the information before them. There are a lot of obstacles on making a decision at this point. Chairman Knapp said no one is asking anyone to make a decision, and this is the first they have heard of this as well.

Chairman Holmquist agrees with both leaders and the Chairman and said process matters. This is the beginning of the process, and it was an outstanding presentation by everyone today. There will be full due diligence and vetting, and there is time to digest this. Chairman Holmquist thanked everyone for their participation.

A motion was made by Mrs. Ervin, seconded by Ms. Kuhn, to adjourn the meeting. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:28 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



JAMIE McNAMARA, Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: **JOINT MEETING OF PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND FACILITIES COMMITTEE**
DATE: **SEPTEMBER 15, 2021**

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
Br. Kelly	Purcs
CHRISTINA WHITESIDE	CONSTITUENT
D. Liedtke	VS
Jeff M...	VS
Tony MANGANO	PRIMA TONDA
BUD LOUIS	RESTAURANT QB
TENASHA MURPHY	CE OF
DARCIE LESNIAK	LEG
Len Montreal	Montreal Constructa
Heather Waters	constituent
Yvette Velasco	LAW
Steve Morgan	CE