

PLAY in Linn County

Minutes from April 9, 2009 General Meeting at 42nd Street

Present: Myrt Bowers, Gail Loskill, Jim Voss, Julie Sina, Jeff Krayyenbrink, Judy Fitzgibbons, Nancy Nygren, Jackie Harrington, Tom Saxen, Robin Robertson, Tom Poulous (WA), Brian Long, Scott Schulz, Mindy Kasyer (Salvation Army), and Gregg Calpino (WA—JJR).

Tom reported that Gail, Jeff, and Tom were working toward a 2nd lobbying trip to Des Moines to meet with legislators. He was told the Legislature was interested in signature project for CR and they expressed in PLAY. Jeff, Gail, and Justin Shields (City Council) were planning to go down to Des Moines but Jeff was told the legislators were tied up with budget talks so the trip was not made.

Tom/Jeff met with Ty Olson (State Rep) at the Chamber, along with several members of the business community for updates on the bonding authority and establishing project priority. Consensus from group was sought that was that PLAY is a good thing for CR. However, Tom was not allowed to speak at this meeting. Tom contacted Rob Hogg (State Senator) and Ty Olson about how PLAY “touches” the community as a whole.

Sat, April 4, the Corridor legislators and business community met and it was said that CR would be guaranteed \$57M out of the \$700M bonding bill. It was possible that this could increase to \$100M. The Czech Museum, Paramount, Science Station, and regional Economic Development Center have \$45M allocated to them. PLAY will have to compete for the remaining money. Julie said that downtown steam and the African American Museum are also looking at getting funding.

Doug Neumann (Downtown District/EPRC) told Tom that PLAY is below the line for competitive bidding (which means that we will have to compete for funds with other projects around the State). Job creation is an important criteria for Economic Development grants. Parks & Rec would increase jobs, Early Childhood, Witwer would all be first-tier recipients of jobs. There is also an intangible that quality of life and wellness amenities enhance the attraction/retention of a talented workforce. As community economy improves, next tier of groups for EDA applications would be reviewed.

Tom had meeting with the City. It was learned EDA grant criteria requires that the building cannot be in the 100-year flood plain NOW and must be city-owned NOW. Considering this criteria and the fact that Ellis Park has over 30 acres of buildable land above the flood plain, it was decided that this would be our best site for grant planning purposes. Jeff took 3 City Council members over there (Shields, McGrane, and Wieneke) to view the proposed site. Other Council members have expressed support for PLAY, but there is a lingering concern by some of the amount of operating subsidy needed – this insight was provided by Williams Architects.

Gail reported that the EDA application was done for Time Check location, then changed to the Ellis site and sent to Doug Neumann and Mike Sable for comment – awaiting their response. We are hoping it will go to Council next Wed (Apr 13) to be signed off by Mayor. Gail noted that other proposals were fairly weak in the “job creation” statistics. Mike Sable did not think that job creation statistics were show-stoppers for the grant application.

Tom stated that the PLAY facility will offer a “Beacon of Hope” for the community. At time of demolition and home rebuilding, it would stand out to residents that the overall community and flood-impacted neighborhoods would not be forgotten.

Gail will continue to look for funding from alternative sources. **We really appreciate the time and effort Gail has contributed this project.**

From the Federal and State perspectives, there is definite need for Cedar Rapids to demonstrate that it has its priorities in order. The City needs to find the funding sources and prioritize the projects.

If the City obtain the EDA funding it will be for planning, architecture and engineering (not building at this juncture). The City will still have to apply for construction funding, likely from a variety of sources.

US Cellular Center may be able to demonstrate more strength for job creation.

Human Services money that might relate to early childhood, after school projects, and health and fitness, and seniors may be potential funding sources (perhaps more for programming rather than construction??).

Myrt stated that Congressman Loeb sack would help. Myrt will call Kristin today to see what we need to do to setup and prepare for a meeting

Gail and Jeff are going to talk to Mike Sable for guidance as to whether we should do a PLAY construction grant application. EDA funding may be a bigger pool of funding.

Neighborhoods still want to see recreational facilities in the neighborhoods. We need to make the case for overall sustainability of a central location with some neighborhood components.

Robin and Jackie attended and spoke at the Linn County Health forum and met Curtis Dixon, the new County Health Director. It was not well attended but Stephanie Neff may be a good resource for statistics relating to health and wellness.

The YMCA is concerned about competition from PLAY. This ultimately is a discussion with the City and the YMCA. The YMCA is hoping a PLAY facility in either Hiawatha or Marion's Lowe Park. The Y is limited by its current facilities, a fee-based approach and endowment funding. But this could offer a

collaboration opportunity if the YMCA would want to consider the use of PLAY facilities for its programming without the need to expand its operations.

Based upon PLAY outreach and the Neighborhood Enhancement process, people want a place to go where they can just drop in and be able to use the facilities without a membership. They would like to be able to use indoor walking trails for free (vs walking at shopping centers).

Julie reported that Jim Prosser, City Manager, and the Council is very concerned about operating funds and sustainability. It should be noted that the city also subsidizes the Ice Arena, US Cellular, etc.. PLAY would/could "touch" more citizens than those facilities. County also subsidizes Witwer and other county health/services facilities. Scott mentioned that clubs are willing to lay out a lot of money for tournaments and practice facilities as experienced by his soccer club and their rental of facilities.

Tom Poulos and Gregg Calpino, Williams Architects, updated the group on a conceptual drawing of a potential facility. June 2009 should conclude the feasibility study.

The plan is based on shared operations and shared usage. There are planned points of control in the facility to control access and traffic through building.

Facility concept is approximately 240,000 sq feet and includes the following:

- Open Gymnasiums (8) high school-sized
- Indoor Walking
- Climbing Wall
- 50 meter Olympic Pool
- Water Park
- Childcare and Early Learning Institute (separated from rest of facility)
- Playgrounds
- Gardens (enhance Shakespeare and sculpture garden) and wetlands for environmental concerns and a water feature.

Opportunities for partnering:

- Branch Library
- CELI
- Wellness
- Physical Therapy
- Coffee Shop

We requested data on Elgin and its economic development statistics and WA stated that they needed city data, criteria, user fees, subsidy, and city requirements. A pro-forma will be developed with GreenPlay. A leadership team is also required.

WA said that partnerships should be breakeven to the facility (as a rule of thumb). They should absolutely not be a drain on the facility. Operations and

Partners will want to be revenue generating. Would Parks and Rec see Child care/Early Learning Institute (CELI) as a revenue generator?

Jeff will take the lead to answer questions from Green Play and WA.

We need to consider:

Bundling (isolation of areas/bundled services)

Soft Costs vs Hard Costs

WA will do a formal presentation to the council in June. Probably 4-6 weeks to wrap up.

Next Meeting: **WED** (Not Thurs), **May 13**, at **HACAP** (not 42nd Street) in Hiawatha, Kacena Dr., 7:30 AM.