

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANFORD
SANFORD, NORTH CAROLINA

The City Council met at the Sanford Municipal Center, 225 E. Weatherspoon Street, on Tuesday, June 30, 2015, at 11 A.M., in the Council Chambers. The following people were present:

Mayor T. Chet Mann	Mayor Pro Tem James Williams
Council Member Byron Buckels	Council Member Sam Gaskins
Council Member Jimmy Haire	Council Member Norman Charles Post, III
Council Member Charles Taylor	Council Member Rebecca Wyhof
City Clerk Bonnie Davis	City Attorney Susan Patterson
City Manager Hal Hegwer	
Brailsford & Dunlavey Representatives Joe Collums and Joe Winters	

Lee County Chairperson Amy Dalrymple
Lee County Recreation Director John Payne
Lee County Commissioner Doc Oldham
Sanford Area Soccer League Director Jonathan Shockey
Friends of the Park President Ray Covington

Mayor Mann called the meeting to order. He said this meeting is to hear a presentation on the proposed multi-sports complex in Sanford and Lee County. This has been a three to four month process on the feasibility study and there has been a lot of ideas and work behind the scenes. Everyone will learn what makes a sports park work.

Joe Collums explained the process for how information was gathered for the proposed multi-sports complex and the financial implications. They interviewed leadership, staff and held a community-wide survey; they received about 1,000 surveys (some involved in sports and some that were not), which gave them feedback on their preferences for recreation, whether the athletic facilities or parks in general. Brailsford and Dunlavey's role was to come in and leverage the interest and ideas everyone has and to bring the truth; that is B&D's mission – good or bad to give an honest assessment of what is possible in Sanford. Their architectural team, Woolpert, performed a site analysis on the O. T. Sloan Park.

Mr. Collums advised that the strategic vision was to elevate the athletics experience to recruit and retain businesses and families; generate economic activity by drawing visitors to the community; deliver a first-class facility in terms of quality and to maximize value of community investment. The key questions based on the vision were if there is an external market opportunity; what will be the economic impact; are the community's needs and preferences aligned with the vision; will the facility be financially self-supporting; and can the vision driven solution be realized at the O. T. Sloan Park?

Mr. Collums gave a summary of the key findings. They found that the community supports the City/County's vision and quality-of-life goals; the external market is highly competitive; an opportunity exists to create significant economic activity through a sports facility; additional

resources will be required to operate as a stand-alone facility; and that the O. T. Sloan site has limited ability to achieve the City/County vision.

Mr. Collums stated that they found that whether it is rectangle fields (football, soccer, lacrosse, outdoor sports played on a rectangle field), diamond fields (baseball, softball), indoor (can serve a litany of sports), with each of those facilities, there is opportunity here to build it and gain tournaments and economic impact from it. In terms of achieving Sanford's vision, they felt rectangles would be crucial (the required program is six natural grass fields and two synthetic fields.) Anymore would be beyond what the market would call for – for the type of tournaments you could bring to town; any fewer would compromise the City's ability to do it. He said they have broken it down in terms of six natural grass and two synthetics. The key reason why they feel the synthetic fields is the answer here is because Sanford has an urgent need for more high-quality practice space for rectangle fields in particular. The balance to that is if you overuse those practice fields, you start to compromise your ability to bring in outside tournaments; you have to establish a reputation of extremely high-quality venue. It is recommended to have a balance of synthetic and natural grass fields.

Mr. Winters said that the reason synthetic is a great tool is there is an increased ability to play on it and not degrade the surface. Grass fields are limited to 600 hours each year to maintain a quality surface; that puts a cap on how much you can use that space. Synthetic turf provides additional capacity beyond that.

Mr. Collums referred to the page listing the summary of findings. This summarizes the local need and the external market to opportunity. He said the local community need is the highest priority. In terms of external market opportunity, this is the space that is the most difficult to compete. Mr. Collums added that they are not saying that the City can't; it is just a balance of between understanding your local need and the external opportunity. When you look at diamonds, the vision of opportunity calls for five natural grass fields and 300 feet of skinned (dirt). The reason they are showing this is that you need to build the diamond facility to have the utmost flexibility to accommodate baseball and softball. The way to do this is to construct the field with this configuration, have the ability to use portable mounds, portable fences to draw tournaments based on what is available – baseball or softball. Baseball and softball tournaments in North Carolina run from February to December on almost a weekend basis, so there are opportunities to bring those to town. For indoor facilities, it calls for a four-court facility with a multi-purpose room. It is very similar to how baseball and softball tournaments are run with outside vendors. There is a need for it locally, and there is a robust market for outside tournaments.

Mr. Collums gave a summary on the cost to build the rectangles, the diamonds, and the indoor facility, along with the minimum land requirement for each. The rectangle fields require approximately 60 acres at an estimated cost of \$10,410,000; diamond fields would require approximately 15 acres at an estimated cost of \$4,550,000; and an indoor facility would require approximately 5 acres at an estimated cost of \$12,230,000. They projected the multi-sports complex being built in 2018.

Mr. Winters indicated that the O. T. Sloan Park site would not be sufficient for the rectangle fields as there is only 40 acres in this site and the rectangle fields would require about 60 acres.

Mr. Collums advised that the rectangle fields bring more families and visitors to town as far as economic impact. They projected more visitors with the rectangle fields than the diamond fields; however, there would be more tournaments with the diamond fields. The reason for this is that the market is different. You get more localized population for diamond tournaments each weekend.

Mr. Taylor asked what the basis for the multipliers is and how they derived at the multipliers. Mr. Collums replied that they used the Bureau of Economic Analysis RIMS II Model, which they believe is the most accurate tool for showing how money is spent in the community impacts locally. There is a whole process of applying these leakage factors to money that would benefit outside Lee County.

Brailsford and Dunlavey recommended building the rectangle and diamond fields at an estimated cost of \$14,700,000 which would require approximately 75 acres. This would create an economic impact annually of around \$2 million, plus generate around 7,500 plus hotel room nights annually. It would have to be a community effort to be successful; additional resources will be required to operate as a stand-alone facility. The operational deficit would be estimated at \$310,160 not including the debt service payment. They stated it would be ideal to have 100 acres for the proposed complex for future expansion.

Mr. Collums said that the personnel and field maintenance costs are projected to comprise 75 percent of the operating costs. He said that Lee County's registration fees are \$23 lower per person than benchmark set of nearby communities which include Wilson, Rocky Mount, Cary, and Holly Springs. The families surveyed expressed that they are willing to pay higher registration fees with the improved facilities.

Mayor Mann said when he ran for office, he kept hearing we have to do something for our children, family space and parks. The last thing he wants to see is a mass exodus of our kids going 15 miles down the road to play ball, to join their leagues and leave our leagues. He wanted to preface that in everyone's minds because as the City revitalizes and spends bond money, the last thing we want is to have another reason why people would want to leave Sanford and not come to Sanford; 80 percent of the respondents said that regardless of their level of participation, they see this as a priority for the community. Your community is telling the elected leaders and stakeholders, you have to have this and it is important to them. All the things the City and County have done and worked hard on is to grow Lee County. He said that with the Occupancy tax we are working on to couple with the County's, to lean on our senators now to have some flexibility in that revenue stream to allow some of the money to go towards tourism/parks. Lastly, he has had a chance to study this proposal, but the biggest slide in this presentation is, we have 447,000 kids that live within 60 miles. Wilson and Rocky Mount, who have phenomenal sports parks, have 210,000 kids that live within 60 miles, so we have a distinct advantage as we always have in Sanford when we put our minds to something. We need to do it right and figure out a way and tap those 447,000 kids and attract and retain the people we have now.

Mayor Mann advised that there has been a lot of private interests in helping with this from several different organizations and families, and there are some opportunities to make this a reality. We need the whole community involved to pull it off.

Mayor Mann said that we will get back together as quickly as we can and move it to the next step and see what we can do. We have \$2 million of City bond money that needs to be implemented and issued. This is something we need to move forward on. He thanked everyone for attending.

ALL EXHIBITS CONTAINED HEREIN ARE HEREBY INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE AND MADE A PART OF THESE MINUTES.

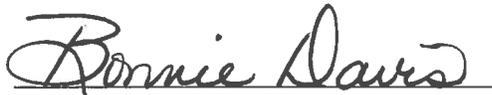
ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Wyhof made the motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Council Member Post, the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,


T. CHET MANN, MAYOR

ATTEST:


BONNIE DAVIS, CITY CLERK