

TERM OF COMMISSION: November Session of the August Adjourned Term

PLACE OF MEETING: Boone County Government Center Commission Chambers

PRESENT WERE Presiding Commissioner Don Stamper  
District I Commissioner Karen M. Miller  
District II Commissioner Linda Vogt  
Deputy County Clerk Melanie Stapleton

The Presiding Commissioner called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

**Subject: Boone County Fairgrounds Discussion**

Commissioner Stamper welcomed everyone to the public discussion.

Commissioner Stamper opened the public discussion with a highlight of the history of the Boone County Fairgrounds. He provided an outline of the background of Boone County's purchase of the Fairgrounds property. He stated that following his presentation, three individuals would give presentations: Joe Greaves-Ice Hockey Proposal, Brad Oxenhandler-Minor League Baseball Proposal, and Mike Sorth, Stifel Nicolaus-Financing Options.

Commissioner Stamper stated that the County Commission had neither requested nor solicited proposals for ice hockey or minor league baseball. He stated however that the County Commission did meet with those individuals who wished to present these options. He stated that the County Commission is very much aware of the impact that a change in the structure and use of the property could have on the Fair activities and the present use of the facilities at the Fairgrounds.

Commissioner Stamper stated that in the mid-late 1980s, a discussion came about whether or not the Boone County Fair could sustain itself at its location on Clinkscales. He stated that the Boone County Fair was presented with the opportunity to transition from the Clinkscales property to its present site on Oakland Gravel Road. He stated that the Fair Board purchased 214 acres of land and began developing the property.

Commissioner Stamper stated that in mid-late 1990s, the issue of what the Boone County Commission would do for the Boone County Fair was raised. He stated that the County Commission appointed a Task Force of Boone County citizens (about 21 member and 6 advisors) to review the Boone County Fairgrounds and advise the County Commission on the property's future.

Commissioner Stamper stated that the Task Force hosted a series of public meetings during which they received public comment. He stated that the Task Force held at least 12 public meetings and received a broad spectrum of input. He stated that they received comments on the following issues: space needs for youth groups and athletics, preservation of parks and greenspace, etc. from various groups such as the Boone County Fair Board, Regional Economic Development, Inc., school superintendents, Boy & Girls Club, Youth Basketball Association, Diamond Council, Green Belt, Farm Bureau, Convention and Visitors Bureau, University of Missouri, adjacent landowners, and other youth groups such as Youth Football, Little League, soccer groups, 4H.

Commissioner Stamper stated that the County Commission took measures to establish a Park Commission in January 1999. He stated that the County Commission also accepted a report of recommendations from the Task Force during the same period of time. He stated that the next ten months presented a period of intense review and discussion of the Fairgrounds. He stated that there were approximately 106 newspaper articles written, a series of discussions held, and three County Commission-hosted public hearings during this time. He stated that the County Commission also solicited a second appraisal during this time, which came in a different format, but had the same values and figures.

Commissioner Stamper stated that in September 1999, the County Commission voted to purchase the property known as the Boone County Fairgrounds (134 acres) at a closing price of \$2.59 million. He stated that the County Commission believed that the value of the property would not decrease due to the commercial corners surrounding it. He stated that the County Commission also believed that the property itself could be used to recoup the cost of purchase.

Commissioner Stamper noted that the now County-owned Fairgrounds property is adjacent to another 54 acres of County-owned land and 140 acres of County-owned land located across the highway (63). He stated that the area to the west of the Fairgrounds has been dedicated as a sort of law enforcement campus (Boone County Jail, National Guard Amory, Juvenile Justice Center, Boone County Fire Protection District).

Commissioner Stamper stated that after the County purchased the Fairgrounds, the facilities were leased to the Fair Board. He stated the open-ended lease contained terms agreed upon by the County and the Fair Board.

Commissioner Stamper stated that the County also engaged a University of Missouri study for a masterplan of the use of the property, which included trends, assets, inventory and other research. He stated that the County Commission had received the first phase of that study and would make it available for public viewing.

Commissioner Stamper stated that the purchase of Trade Fixtures was completed this year at a price of \$175,000.

Commissioner Stamper stated that the County Commission sent out a request for proposals for the use of the Fairgrounds property in March 2000. He stated that the request for proposals was specific to the location of the property and its County-owned aspect. He stated that the RFP only received one response due to the nature and uniqueness of the request. He stated that the County Commission has not acted on that response.

Commissioner Stamper stated that the County Commission then decided to take another look at the issue. He stated that ideas that came out of the review included use of an outside vendor, an enterprise fund, or an alternative use of the property.

Commissioner Stamper noted that the County Commission continues to receive calls weekly from individuals who wish to use the Fairgrounds for free for a variety of use. He stated that the County Commission has also had contact from groups wanting to develop the Fairgrounds in the following ways: Minor League Sports, Ice Hockey arena, Amphitheater, Youth Basketball, Youth Baseball, Soccer, Rugby, Recreational Ice. He stated that all of these ideas have merit, however the questions for the County Commission are: where does one set the priorities and what will have value for the community?

Commissioner Stamper stated that the County Commission's original viewpoint was that the property presented a number of possibilities. He stated that therefore the County Commission took the necessary steps to purchase the property. He stated that the County now has the capability to develop the property, however the question is: how should it be developed?

Commissioner Stamper introduced Joe Greaves to present the ice hockey/arena proposal.

Joe Greaves, Principal in Questec Corporation stated that he has expertise in mechanical/electrical consulting and subcontracting. He stated that the firm also has an interest in bringing a recreational, ice facility to Boone county. He stated that the firm made a proposal to the Recreational Center Committee for the Clinkscapes property, however no agreement was reached.

Joe Greaves stated that the firm has assembled a team, which consists of representatives from Questec, New Stadia Development, ICC, Professional Contractors and Engineer, other consultants to review the establishment of recreational ice facilities. He stated that a recreational ice facility would make good economic sense for the Boone County community. He also noted that the community's market would be ideal for this kind of league. He stated that the firm would

be very flexible and try to meet the needs of the community. Joe Greaves introduced John Akerly, a member of the team.

John Akerly stated that he is part of a team that developed a system for communities to work in public/private partnerships to deliver a facility to meet the recreational needs of a community in such a way that would not be overly hard on the taxpayers of the community. John Akerly stated that a key element in the success of the arrangement would be the commitment of public and private entities to work together.

John Akerly stated that a Fairgrounds is an asset. He stated that a Fairgrounds must provide a link from the past (which is usually agricultural based) to the present, while developing a vision for the future. He stated that Fairgrounds usually do not make enough profit to sustain themselves because they cater to the public. He stated that therefore the deficit of operation must be reduced. He stated that one way that this could be done is through bringing in other amenities that create revenue. He stated that his team focuses on entertainment and sports that can be put together with the existing traditional uses of the Fairgrounds. He stated that the team works to provide entertainment that is family-oriented at a reasonable price.

John Akerly stated that the city of Columbia and Boone County has a community that is able to sustain a multipurpose building. He stated that the Coliseum as it is now could hold temporary ice pads to accommodate recreational ice activities. He noted that this would only be a temporary solution. He stated that the Coliseum could be converted into an amphitheater to hold hockey, basketball, and equine sports activities.

John Akerly stated that he was representing the group today to express their interest in establishing a recreational ice facility, which has demand in the Boone County community. He stated that since the County already has a building, parking, and demand, his group could finance temporary ice pads into the Coliseum.

Commissioner Stamper introduced Brad Oxenhandler for a presentation on minor league baseball.

Brad Oxenhandler stated that there has been a resurgence in minor league sports in general. He stated that in 1967 the attendance at minor league baseball games was about 10 million people. He stated that by 1998 the attendance grew to about 34.5 million. He stated that in the 1990s, over 70 stadiums were built to accommodate minor league sports. He stated that minor league sports are becoming more popular because they are affordable and cater to families.

Brad Oxenhandler stated that he would estimate that about 26% of the fans that would attend minor league baseball games would be from outside of Boone County. He stated that the real economic impact would be evidenced in that minor league teams manifest themselves in civic pride. He stated that the stadiums themselves become a gathering place for the entire community.

Brad Oxenhandler stated that an excellent option for Boone County would be a single A minor league baseball team that affiliated with a major league ball team. He stated that his group has spoken to a major league team that they would like to participate in this project. He stated that his group has worked with Clay Co. Inc. on a cost estimate.

Brad Oxenhandler stated that the big question would be: how to finance the stadium? He stated that there are many ways to do this. He stated that the County could issue a tax or bonds, charge rent, sell naming rights, etc. He stated that Boone County is an outstanding location for a minor league stadium, however capital would be needed to build and maintain a stadium.

Commissioner Stamper introduced Mike Sorth, Stifel Nicolaus to give a presentation on financing options.

Mike Sorth stated that Stifel Nicolaus is a full-service investment banking firm in St Louis. He stated that Stifel Nicolaus has brokerage firms throughout the country. He stated that he works in the public finance department of Stifel Nicolaus helping cities, counties and other levels of government finance projects for the citizenry of their jurisdiction. He stated that one level area

that Stifel Nicolaus has developed a niche in, is sports and entertainment financing. He stated that the O'Fallon Baseball team is a good case study.

Mike Sorth stated that a public/private partnership is key to the success of the kind of minor league sports and multipurpose facilities that have been mentioned previously. He stated that once a private entity comes forward with an opportunity for the public entity, then Stifel Nicolaus works out a financing option that is affordable and in the best interest of the parties involved.

Mike Sorth elaborated on two examples wherein Stifel Nicolaus developed financing options for recreational facilities. He stated that in St Charles County, a private developer came forward with an interest in building an arena. He stated that St Charles County was interested in the project and conducted a specified, feasibility study on the project. He noted that a second feasibility study is a good idea regardless of the financing option selected and is a necessity when bonds are issued.

Mike Sorth stated that St Charles County created a new entity—an arena authority. He stated that the authority then issued bonds to the facility. He stated the Arena authority issued the bonds to build the facility and became the owner of the facility upon its completion. He stated that the facility was then leased to the County for use. He stated that the organization structure flow chart was as follows:

Arena Authority  
(St Charles) County  
Private Arena Manager (Developer and Manager)  
Leases with Tenants

Mike Sorth stated that as funds are generated by the team, the lease payment is made to the Private Arena Manager. He stated that the Manager then makes the payment to the County, who in turn sends a portion of payment (as a contribution) to the Arena authority who makes the debt service payments.

Mike Sorth stated that the private industry is in charge of a major portion of the operations, however they are also responsible for a large portion of the debt. He stated that the County is able to grasp the tangible and financial benefit of this find of facility

Mike Sorth stated that any bonds issued on this kind of facility would not be taxable due to the fact that the operations would be ran by a private entity.

Commissioner Stamper noted that these kinds of facilities are being established all around the country. He stated that they are often used to grow the economy of an area. He stated that this kind of facility could also aid in the development of other recreational venues.

Commissioner Stamper stated that the County Commission is not accepting or negotiating on any of the options presented before them today. He stated that everyone giving a presentation was invited to attend in order to provide an open discussion on the options that are available.

Connie Grant asked about the use of the Coliseum for cattle shows etc. during the time that the temporary ice pads were in place.

Commissioner Stamper stated that temporary ice pads would change the use of the Coliseum temporarily for about six months out of the year. He stated that minor league baseball would probably occur on a different area of the property known as the Fairgrounds and would not affect the use of the Coliseum as much. He stated that regardless of what option was selected for the future use of the Fairgrounds property, that use would be an adjustment from the present use of the property.

William Woodard stated that the area is not maxed out in seating for spectator sports in venues that already exist in the community.

Commissioner Stamper stated that the County Commission met with the University of MO. He noted that the University of MO, Columbia College, and Stephens College are all assets to the community. He stated however that the University of MO has a priority for its functions. He noted that basketball and ice hockey seasons run primarily at the same time. He stated that it would be hard for a minor league hockey team whose payroll would be dependent upon scheduling etc. to work around the basketball schedule.

Commissioner Stamper stated that most minor league teams eventually evolve into their own facilities. He stated that with a minor league team there is an opportunity to grow the market.

William Woodard stated that there had been talk of building another facility for MU Basketball. He stated that if he was not mistaken, ice events were already being held at Hearn Center. He stated that perhaps it would be a good idea to coordinate with the University of MO in building a new basketball facility, in order to make the Hearn Center available for other events.

Bruce Gray asked if the County Commission would entertain the possibility of the ice facility being open year around with ice skating clinics, ice hockey camps.

John Akerly that the proposal for the Coliseum is for temporary ice pads or recreational ice, which could accommodate use by ice events and then an equine or cattle show two to three days later. He stated that the Coliseum is not set up to be a permanent ice facility. He stated that a permanent ice structure in the Coliseum would require a concrete slab with a permanent refrigeration at an elevation that would allow 12-18 inches of dirt on top in order to allow usage for the rest of the year for other activities. He stated that this would result in a much larger expenditure than a recreational ice facility.

Joe Greaves stated (in response to a comment made earlier by William Woodard) that often time increased recreational facilities in the area increase the attendance at all of the recreational facilities. He stated that the entire community as well as the individual facilities benefit from the multiple facilities.

Barry Homan asked what would occur with the economic growth, zoning, and density around the Fairgrounds (park) itself. He cited O'Fallon as an example.

Mike Sorth stated that a lot of the development in O'Fallon, MO was planned prior to the ballpark. He stated that the actual ballpark was built on an old city park, so therefore it was already being used by the city.

Mike Sorth stated that planning and development is very important in these types of ventures. He stated that a lot of developers who placed a subdivision near the park saw the value in being next to it. He noted that there are economic development opportunities available for retail developers in this kind of venture.

Larry Grossman asked if there was a community that entered into a public/private partnership and built a certain size stadium as a result. He asked, if so, what financial support is the facility receiving from the government?

Mike Sorth stated that in Collinsville, IL, Stifel Nicolaus is currently working on a private/public partnership that has a stadium and tourism authority created by the State of Illinois. He stated that in this case, the facility will cost about \$6 million (with about \$1 million coming from the State). He stated that about \$200,000 of the debt service would come from the authority. He noted that the remainder of the debt service would come from the manager of the facility (about \$600,000). He stated that Stifel Nicolaus would close on the deal next week.

Brad Oxenhandler stated that there is no set model. He noted that the arrangement is different in each case. He stated that naming rights is becoming key factor in financing these ballparks.

John Akerly stated that single A and double A baseball seem to work well in smaller parks. He cite the example of Pringle Park in Jackson, TN. He stated that Pringle Park was built using tax

dollars from hotels, etc.

John Akerly stated in response to a question from the audience that in a public/private partnership structure, the public side usually provides the capital value (in goods, services, or cash). He stated that the private side provides value in the form of capital contributions or loans to pay their portion. He stated that the total cost of the project usually includes the cost of infrastructure, which is part of the contribution of the public side.

Commissioner Stamper noted that that in the Fairgrounds area, most of the infrastructure is in place.

Mike Sorth noted that oftentimes development increases in the area around the facility. He stated that in the case of St Charles, the city donated parking space and roads as its contribution.

Tom Maran stated that a recreational ice facility seemed to be at the bottom of the list on the Boone County Task Force survey.

Commissioner Stamper stated that the Task Force survey was for County residents only. He stated that the survey conducted by the city of Columbia placed recreational ice at the top of the list

Tom Maran stated that this kind of facility would limit public access to the area.

John Akerly stated that the community would have to decide what is important to them. He stated that in many of the business ventures that he has entered into of this nature, the agricultural contribution was a high priority on the list.

Diane Winans asked if a temporary ice facility would affect the use of the Coliseum for other purposes such as dog shows held by the Columbia Kennel Club. She noted that the Columbia Kennel Club has a vested interest in the Coliseum in that they placed concrete in the Coliseum at a cost of \$15,000. She stated that dogs shows are generally weekend long events held at certain times of the year, which bring a lot of revenue into the Fairgrounds and the city.

Mike Sorth stated that a multipurpose facility could be complimentary to a dog show in a lot of ways. He stated however that the only problem would be the booking of the dates for the competition.

Commissioner Stamper stated that the Coliseum at present has a high degree of use.

Diane Peckham noted that the Fairgrounds that are flourishing are ones that maintain the fair expositions and expose people to the facility at other times of the year.

Joe Greaves stated that exposure of the facility is essential to the success of the Fairgrounds.

Barry Homan asked if the city of Columbia has a stake in the Fairgrounds property.

Commissioner Stamper noted that the city of Columbia has tracts of land which are contiguous to the Fairgrounds. He stated that he has had discussions with the city of Columbia about appointing a joint committee to participate in an ice facility at this location. He stated that the city of Columbia could possibly be open to this type of arrangement.

Nick Peckham stated that if the facility is made attractive in order to draw people out to the facility, there would be no mode of transportation to the facility other than an automobile. He stated that public transportation should be planned to accommodate the increased use of the facility.

Melinda Lochwood asked if the two ice pads mentioned by John Akerly in his presentation referred to the establishment of two ice rinks.

Joe Greaves stated that two ice sheets would have to be placed in order to hold a recreational ice tournament. He stated that the ideal setup would be a building with four ice pads in order to accommodate a twin pad arrangement.

Barry Homan asked if the multipurpose facility would include areas (fields) for soccer, baseball, etc. altogether.

Brad Oxenhandler stated that this was a possibility, however there were many factors involved.

John Akerly stated that the field setups for soccer and baseball require specialized care and arrangements. He stated that it would be difficult to transition the fields. He also noted that use of the field for one purpose could threaten the use of the field for an alternative purpose.

Mike Sorth stated that the two sports also compete for dates being that the seasons are so close together. He noted that there was a project in Wisconsin that attempted to have shared field space, however the setup was expensive.

Commissioner Stamper asked if there was anyone else that wished to give comments.

Waldo Palmer stated that when the Fair began at the Clinkscales location in 1946, volunteers from the 4H clubs and their families did the work. He stated that when the Fair moved to its present location, it took on a different attitude. He stated that if 4H is going to continue at the Fair, then income must be received from the Coliseum rental. He stated that this income should be used to support youth groups such as 4H. Waldo Palmer stated that the purpose of the Fair and 4H is to teach children about showmanship.

Commissioner Stamper thanked Joe Greaves, John Akerly, Brad Oxenhandler, and Mike Sorth for their presentations. He thanked the public for coming out to express their opinions and interest in the Fairgrounds property.

The public discussion adjourned at 8pm.

Attest:

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Don Stamper  
Presiding Commissioner

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Wendy S. Noren  
Clerk of the County Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
Karen M. Miller  
District I Commissioner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Linda Vogt  
District II Commissioner