

**Pima County Sports & Tourism Authority  
Viscount Suite Hotel  
4855 E. Broadway Blvd., Tucson, Arizona  
Wednesday, July 16, 2008  
10:00a.m.**

**SUMMARY OF MEETING**

The following is a summary of what transpired at the July 16, 2008 meeting.

1. Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m. by Tom Tracy with a quorum.

**Members Present**

Tom Tracy  
Justin Lanne  
Rick Vaughan  
Mike Feder  
David J. Cohen  
Linda McNulty  
Edgar Soto  
David Sitton

**Members Absent/Excused**

Jack Camper  
George Favela  
Sheila Baize  
Kendall Bert  
Carlotta Flores  
Rocky LaRose

**Others Present**

Rick Grinnell (Metro Restaurants)  
Fred Gray (COT Parks)  
Ben Buehler-Garcia (Marketing)  
Brian Johnson (Loews Ventana/SALARA)  
Tracy Neish (COT, Ward 2)  
Dan Schneider (Schneider Group)  
Matt Brown (UA Athletics)  
Suzy Mason (UA Athletics)  
Catherine Strickland (Pima County ED&T)  
Tom Moulton (Pima County ED&T)

2. Welcome and Introductions

3. Approval of the minutes

Minutes were passed unanimously as written.

4. Community/Legislative update

Tom Tracy summarized the past few months regarding the bill. It was supported by the senators and became a Senate bill to be heard by the House before the

Senate could approve it. The bill went to the House Commerce Committee and was modified per negotiations for about a week. This resulted in a good compromise that passed the Commerce Committee and thus the House. It left the House late on a Friday with 19 votes (only needed 16 to pass). It was held up since the gay marriage amendment was calendared before the bill and resulted in contentious discussion and the session was adjourned before the bill could be discussed. No one was to blame; it was just a matter of untimely political circumstances that prevented the bill from being heard during the session.

The bill is still open and if the Governor decides to have a special session later in the summer or fall, the bill may be heard at that time. Tom is working with local legislators to show continued support for the bill and keep it alive should a special session come along. If this doesn't happen, the Minority House Leader has said that he will try to move it during the first few weeks of the next session, but it would have to be renegotiated at that time.

In brief, the elements of the bill are straightforward:

- Generate renewable funding source that would be adequate to build and retrofit existing facilities to house more teams as well as support youth and amateur sports.
- 15 million is the annual revenue required to do this (according to an economist who worked on the bill)
- The tax would be spread across industries affected by tourism. Breakdown: 1/10 of 1% tax from retail to generate about 7.5 million a year, the other industries (hotels, restaurants, and car rentals) would have a 0.375% tax to generate about 7.4 million a year.
- The Authority Board will be made up of seven private sector individuals. The Pima County Board of Supervisors is allowed to name three members; one from each list of recommended candidates from: Southern Arizona Lodging and Restaurant Association (SALARA), the Arizona Restaurant Association, and Major League Baseball/Professional Sports. The City of Tucson is allowed to name two members in the same manner from a list of recommended candidates from: rental car places, and a tourism professional from the Metropolitan Tucson Convention and Visitors Bureau (MTCVB). The final two are selected by the local smaller cities in the region and the Governor respectively. The Board could expand to nine members if an entity was to buy a seat on the board through support funding at 20% (i.e. a tribal nation).
- Bill sunset is five years.
- Floor for youth and amateur sports spending is at a 10% minimum and there is no ceiling.
- Bill allows for community meetings to get a public opinion on how the money should be spent.

Tom said that he feels if the public understands how the money is to be spent and it's a good plan to help facilitate youth and amateur sports, Pima County will probably support it.

Dan Schneider shared how important it is that the Authority continues to let the Governor know that the bill is supported and should go to special session.

David Cohen asked where the Restaurant Association stands on the bill and asked if the attractions could be separated out since their contribution is low but they may oppose the proposed tax. Tom Tracy read part of a letter from the President of the Restaurant Association dated July 15<sup>th</sup> that conveyed the Association's support for the bill. Tom addressed the attraction question stating that their contributed amount is higher than was originally thought and the democratic caucus wanted to make sure they were included. If the bill goes to the next regular session, this could maybe be renegotiated.

Brian Johnson commented that Senator Tim Bee has been outwardly supportive of the bill. Tom agreed and added that the Governor has also been supportive throughout.

#### 5. Youth and amateur sports discussion

##### *Rick Vaughan's proposal*

Rick Vaughan of the MTCVB shared his opinion relating to youth and amateur sports explaining that he feels it is the Authority's role as leaders to rethink the positioning of Tucson using the approach discussed in the book *Blue Ocean*. Rather than try so hard to compete with larger cities that have more resources he encouraged the Authority to create their own space and develop something that can be sustained for years to come. Is there money to acquire more teams, retrofit and build new stadiums, and sustain them over the years? He feels Tucson may not have those kinds of resources, but that we could become a premier youth and amateur sports destination in the southwest. It will still require new and improved facilities but it would have a huge economic impact. If we had pristine venues we could secure celebrities that would generate awareness and brand Tucson as a premier youth and amateur sporting destination. He offered to follow up within 30-45 days with a written report containing statistics backing his thoughts.

Tom Tracy thought that the recent White Sox report that is still in draft form could probably support Rick's vision if the numbers are accurate.

##### *White Sox Youth Tournament Facility*

Tom Moulton shared a little bit about the draft report that the White Sox are working on to help meet their legal needs and community needs with their upcoming departure from Tucson. The plan is to keep the Diamondbacks in their area, and turn the White Sox fields into professional fields for youth and amateur

sporting tournaments. They are working on a report that shows the economic impact of such a facility. This report will be submitted to the Authority soon for review. The Authority will then make a formal recommendation to the County Administrator per their thoughts on the report.

The general feeling is that the White Sox are trying to mitigate the violation of their current contract before moving on. Mike Feder expressed his concern in turning those fields into a tournament facility and eliminating the future use of the area for another MLB team.

#### 6. Report from the Executive Director

Dan Schneider, the Authority Executive Director, reported that this is about economic development, not baseball. The Authority has to have a vision as this project is eight to ten years in the making with short and long term goals. The short term goals are to retain the Diamondbacks and Rockies. The status of this goal is that the Rockies want to stay as long as another team replaces the White Sox. The Diamondbacks are in discussions with other places so there is the issue of competition concerning them. There are options to pursue once a plan is in place to offer them. Spring Training and youth and amateur sports are not mutually exclusive so it's important to pursue both at the same time.

The long term goals are to gain a fourth team, increase the usage at the facilities to be year round whether it be MLB or youth sports. He also wants to see MLB step up their involvement in the community. Dan stressed the importance of keeping the public in the loop so that people will continue to support the cause.

#### 7. Budget and in-kind services discussion

Tom Tracy explained that thus far all of the money spent has come out of the respective board member's pockets or businesses since there is no budget for the Authority. There is a grant request out to the tribal nations for some funding. Tom shared that he is planning on pitching the city and county for support again despite the budget shortfalls.

David Cohen who is chairing the finance subcommittee said that his plan is to have one-on-one meetings to share some details of the plan in order to compel them to support the Authority. Dan Schneider also encouraged all of the Authority board members to share their ideas or pass along interested contacts who would be able to fund the Authority.

#### 8. Discuss Future Agenda Items

The next meeting was set for Wednesday, September 17<sup>th</sup>. The date may be adjusted if the legislation goes to special session. Future Agenda items at the meeting will include:

- White Sox report discussion
- Youth and amateur sports facilities discussion
- Report from the Executive Director
- Committee updates
- Budget and in-kind services discussion

6. Call to the Public

Brian Johnson from the Loews Ventana Resort offered to host the next meeting at his hotel.

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:50am.

Dated this 18<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2008

Pima County Sports and Tourism Authority

Respectfully submitted by Catherine Strickland