



MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 30, 2015

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board/Parks Commission

VIA: Mike Riley, Director of Parks *John Nissel*
Kristi Williams, Chief, Public Affairs & Community Partnerships Division *KW*

FROM: David Tobin, Manager, Community Partnerships *DT*
Dean Turnbull, Park Manager, South Germantown Recreational Park

SUBJECT: Maryland Soccer Foundation, Inc. (MSF) SoccerPlex 2014 Annual Report

Staff Recommendation: Accept the MSF Year End Report as submitted.

Please Note: The MSF financial statements contained in the included Year End Reports and the Audited Financial report both contain confidential financial information that is considered proprietary and will not be distributed to the public. This information has been reviewed and accepted by the M-NCPPC Secretary-Treasurer. Staff recommends any discussion of proprietary financial information be conducted in closed session.

Background

The MSF has a forty-year lease with the M-NCPPC to manage and maintain the Discovery SoccerPlex, located in South Germantown Recreational Park. The SoccerPlex is a 162-acre soccer facility consisting of 21 outdoor soccer fields, one championship tournament stadium field with stadium seating, one indoor multi-purpose facility, and three artificial turf fields with lights. The SoccerPlex is one of the M-NCPPC's Public-Private Partnership projects, originally developed in 2000, with a total initial project development cost of \$28,081,000 (of which 39% was public funding and 61% private funding). Since 2000, the MSF has invested an additional \$7,200,000 in general capital improvements, creation of three turf fields and stadium improvements.

As part of the MSF's amended lease agreement terms, and per the M-NCPPC's adopted 2007 Public Private Partnership policy guidelines, the MSF is required to provide the Montgomery County Planning Board with an annual report consisting of: the programmatic benefits and services offered to the public during the year; a financial statement describing their operating and capital budget expenditures, income and reserve funding management during the year; the identification of any new initiatives, any updates to their business plan; information on the Soccer Association of Montgomery County (SAM); and community outreach and events.

Staff Assessment of SoccerPlex Activity During 2014

The SoccerPlex continues to be a successful example of the benefits public-private partnerships can provide to the community. The MSF's business acumen, innovative programming, and ongoing commitment to growing the sport of soccer have created a world class soccer venue that draws more than 1.5 million visitors every year. We continue to enjoy a strong collaborative relationship with MSF and look forward to working with them on new initiatives in the future.

FY-2014 Activity Reports

Attached is the Executive Summary from the MSF's submitted 2014 End-of-Year Report. This summary provides more detailed information on the opportunities and challenges faced by the MSF over the past year.

Executive Summary 2014/2015

2014

This year had some interesting challenges:

- Weather
- Field Usage
- Economic Impact Report
- Youth Soccer National Championships
- Field of the Year
- Player Safety
- ADA Compliance
- Proposed Pesticide Legislation
- SAM (Soccer Association of Montgomery)
- Montgomery College

Weather

This was a crazy weather year. Since weather is the one element that we can't control but has a significant impact on our operation, it's worth noting.

The SoccerPlex clocked in 60 inches of snow coupled with extended periods of unusually cold temperatures over the winter which resulted in a facility closure of an unprecedented five days. To top it all off we had a burst pipe that flooded our offices. We were able to reschedule the activity from the five day closure and insurance covered our flood damage.

The winter extended into spring and brought a wet cool spring and a mild summer. These conditions helped our bluegrass fields (cool season) flourish right through the summer. However, our Bermuda fields (warm season) struggled. They like our hazy hot and humid summers. We never had an extended period of hot weather for our seven Bermuda fields to fully grow in. We spent a significant amount of time and treasure sprigging and sodding the Bermuda fields.

The good news is the summer was mild and the fall was very nice until it turned cold early in November. After Thanksgiving we put our fields to sleep for the winter. We covered our Bermuda fields and the stadium with turf blankets to help them survive another predicted cold winter.

Field Usage

During calendar year 2014 we held 8,800 matches on our 20 fields. Our three synthetic turf fields average approximately 1,800 hours of activity each. Our natural grass fields range between 700 and 900 hours. Due to continued improvement in turf maintenance practices we've been able to increase our utilization.

Economic Impact Study

In early 2014 we released our Economic Impact Study that shows the SoccerPlex contributes more than \$24 million in positive economic impact to the County and State. Our tournaments generate 50,000 hotel room nights.

In July 2014 we hosted the US Youth Soccer National Championships. That event alone accounted for more than 8,000 hotel room nights and \$4.5 million in economic benefit. Sports tourism is a growing economic engine for local municipalities.

In November 2014, the Bethesda Soccer Club hosted their two tournaments on the two weekends preceding Thanksgiving. Each tournament had 450 teams or 18,000 visitors. Seventy percent of the teams are from out of town. The tournament booked hotel rooms from Frederick to Silver Spring and for the first time we had to house teams in Tysons Corner because there were not enough available rooms in Montgomery County.

US Youth Soccer National Championships

This is the top youth soccer tournament in the country. It is very prestigious. We hosted the event in 2002, 2003 and 2014. It provides a significant economic impact for the County and State however organizations such as US Youth Soccer, the ACC, NCAA, etc. do not compensate the facility for use. We hosted because we wanted the local soccer community to have the opportunity to see the best players in youth soccer and we wanted the local business community to benefit from the economic impact.

Field of the Year

The Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) awarded the SoccerPlex's Maureen Hendricks Field (stadium), the Professional Soccer Field of the Year. We were up against the stadiums of Major League Soccer. In 2014 the stadium saw a significant increase in activity including the Youth Soccer National Championships and Montgomery College. Our sports turf management staff is very proud to have been recognized.

Player Safety

A well maintained playing surface will provide a safer surface however injuries are sometimes part of competitive athletics. Concussions, in particular, are of increasing concern to all involved in athletics. Concussion education, diagnosis and prevention are now a priority for all sports organizations. We drafted and implemented a concussion policy for SAM Soccer, our in-house soccer club. The policy includes a strong education component but also requires coaches to remove a player who exhibits the symptoms of a concussion during the game. That player may not return until they have been cleared to play by a health care professional.

Several years ago the SoccerPlex installed a Weatherbug lightning detection system to warn patrons of an impending storm. When a horn sounds, players and parents must leave the playing field and seek shelter in their cars until an all clear sounds.

The SoccerPlex also has six AEDs on the complex grounds including four at comfort stations, one on the scoreboard in the stadium and one inside the Discovery Sports Center.

We are also partnering with Holy Cross Hospital – Germantown to provide educational seminars for players and parents in nutrition and injury prevention.

ADA Compliance

We are in the process of reviewing the ADA audit documents that pertain to the SoccerPlex. We will develop a multi-year plan to respond to the items included in the audit.

Proposed Pesticide Legislation

On October 28 legislation was introduced by Councilmember George Leventhal to ban the use of non-essential pesticides on athletic fields. This is of grave concern to our Foundation. Our history of turf management will demonstrate that we, like Parks, have operated under an Integrated Pest Management program for the past 15 years. Five years ago we began implementation of a program to increase the health of the plant and thereby have been able to reduce our use of pesticides by almost 75%. However, there are situations when there is not an effective alternate organic product to combat a serious disease or infestation. If athletic fields are included in the final bill, the potential impact to the SoccerPlex could be devastating.

Soccer Association of Montgomery (SAM)

SAM is our in-house soccer development and recreational league program for youth ages 3-18. SAM was started in 2006 with 960 players. In 2014 SAM grew by 8.2% over the previous year and had 3,000 registered players in all programs. SAM is 65% boys and 35% girls. Geographically, registrants come from Gaithersburg, followed closely by Germantown and then Boyds and Clarksburg. The growth of SAM is necessitating the development of fields 1 & 2 to meet increased need for field capacity. We are projecting SAM to grow by 10% in 2015.

Montgomery College

Montgomery College was renovating its soccer field this fall and played all of their men's and women's home games at Maureen Hendricks Field. This was the first time they have used our fields outside of a national tournament. We were very pleased we could accommodate them. We do not know if they will return in 2015.

2015

Anniversary

In October we will celebrate the 15 year anniversary of the Maryland SoccerPlex and our public-private partnership with the Commission. It is very exciting and gratifying to see how the facility has grown to become an integral part of the community. With more than 700,000 visitors annually, expanding programs and new initiatives the facility is poised for a strong and sustainable future.

Field Development

Field Development and improvement are once again a focus in 2015, including:

- Development of fields 1 & 2 with a target usage date of Memorial Day 2016
- Renovation and improvement of all Bermuda fields
- Installation of sand drains in several fields.

Washington Spirit

The Washington Spirit of the National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) will once again call Maureen Hendricks Field their home. The team will arrive in March and their first home game will be mid-April. This year is the Women's World Cup beginning in June. The league will take a two week break in early June and as such the season will end in late September. Fingers crossed that the US Women come home with the trophy.

Loan Extension

Our loan with TD Bank will have a rate reset in June. The loan is a fixed rate currently at 3.57%. We anticipate the new rate will be between 3.4 and 3.6%. We will extend the loan for the remaining term of 11 years.

Holy Cross Hospital

We entered into marketing partnership with the new Germantown Holy Cross Hospital. It's a mutually beneficial community partnership. We are helping to market the new hospital to visitors to the SoccerPlex. We are also developing a speaker series to be conducted by HCH and held at the SoccerPlex.

Partnerships with Local Elementary Schools

In 2014 we kicked off our partnership with Spark Matsunaga Elementary School with four initiatives:

- Sponsorship of their Milk Run annual fundraiser
- Field Day where the entire student body of 1,100 students came to the SoccerPlex for their outdoor field activities. It was a huge success.
- We conducted before-school soccer clinics at Matsunaga for interested students
- And we commissioned the fourth grade class to create a mural with the theme, "Sports Meets the Arts". The mural was unveiled at Field Day and is displayed in the Discovery Sports Center.

In 2015 we will extend the partnership to three additional schools in Germantown and in Clarksburg.

Marketing

We are expanding our marketing efforts in 2015 including the redesign of our three websites, development of more digital initiatives, promotion into new markets and more community involvement. We have added a Marketing Manager who will spearhead these efforts.

Thank you once again for your support of our efforts and for your continued guidance as we move forward.

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