



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB June 11, 2020
Item #

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 1, 2020

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Mike Riley, Director of Parks ^{mr}
Miti Figueredo, Deputy Director ^{mf}
Andy Frank, Chief, Park Development Division ^{af}
Brenda Sandberg, Real Estate Management Supervisor, Park Development Division ^{BS}

FROM: David Tobin, Manager, Public-Private Partnerships
Neal Hollingshead, Park Manager, South Germantown Recreational Park

SUBJECT: Maryland Soccer Foundation, Inc. (MSF) SoccerPlex 2019 Annual Report

Staff Recommendation: Accept the Maryland Soccer Foundation’s 2019 Annual Report as submitted.

The confidential MSF financial statements contained in the 2019 Annual Report and the Audited Financial Report both contain financial information that is considered proprietary and therefore is not to be distributed to the public. This financial 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 until 2040 with the M-NCPPC to manage and maintain the Maryland SoccerPlex located within the 646-acre South Germantown Recreational Park (SGRP). Maryland SoccerPlex is the largest Public-Private Partnership with Montgomery Parks that was constructed in 1999 with a project development cost of \$28,081,000 (of which 39% was public funding and 61% private funding). Since 2000, the MSF has invested over \$7 million in general capital improvements, construction of three artificial turf fields and stadium improvements. Today, the Maryland SoccerPlex is a 162-acre soccer facility consisting of 22 soccer fields (including three artificial turf fields with lights), one championship tournament stadium field with stadium seating, and one indoor multi-purpose facility (recently renamed the Adventist HealthCare Fieldhouse).

Parks Department capital budget and operating funds that maintain and operate SGRP in its entirety also serve to facilitate the successful operation of Soccerplex by maintaining infrastructure, sharing the use of Parks facilities and equipment, and other critical services. In addition, Parks staff provide special event support, maintain trails and roadways, and support multiple other partnerships and Enterprise facilities located at SGRP.

As part of the MSF's December 2000 Amended and Restated Ground Lease terms, the MSF provides 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 or 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 2019

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-2019 Activity Reports

Attached is the Executive Summary from the MSF's submitted 2019 Annual Report. This summary provides more detailed information on the opportunities and challenges faced by the MSF over the past year.

Maryland SoccerPlex
Year End Report
Executive Summary

This year was a year of change at the Maryland SoccerPlex. Matt Libber took over as the Executive Director in January 2019, replacing Trish Heffelfinger, who retired after 20 years of service. Ryan Bjorn, the long time Director of Grounds, also left the SoccerPlex in August 2019 in order to join the NFL, as the Superintendent of Fields for the New England Patriots. Mitch Litz, the then Manager of Grounds, was promoted to replace Bjorn. Ryan's departure also meant that the SoccerPlex lost everyone's favorite employee, Boyd, our bird dog charged with keeping the fields free from geese and other migratory birds.

Fields and Weather

The grass fields came in very strong in the spring after a tough 2018. Once summer hit, changes in weather, with heavy rains, brought disease to the fields. Towards the end of the summer season the rains stopped, quite literally, with 76 straight days without observable rainfall at the complex. The drought exacerbated the disease issue to the point that we found disease on Bermuda grass fields, an uncommon occurrence.

We did find some luck with the weather with only two events experience any type of cancellation not related to lightning. The Cherry Blossom tournament in March experienced a partial cancellation losing about half of the event. The Bethesda Premier Cup Boys Showcase lost most of the games on their final day due to heavy rains and freezing temperatures overnight.

Synthetic Fields

After a year of use on the synthetic fields, we started to receive steady feedback from our users about slippery conditions on the turf fields. We worked with AstroTurf, the manufacturer of our fields, to identify the problem. AstroTurf determined the cause of the slippery conditions was the synthetic grass blades falling over due to the deterioration of the organic infill. The remedy involved nearly 4 weeks of work that replaced the organic infill with synthetic rubber known as Nike Grind, which is recycled shoes. The remediation work seems to have fix the issue.

Drain Work

We continued our work to install advance drainage systems to all of our natural grass fields. This year three fields were completed, fields 6, 7, and 12. We will continue this practice with two additional fields receiving drainage systems in 2020.

Fieldhouse Floor Replacement

In November we underwent a three-week renovation in the fieldhouse to replace the polyurethane floor. The original floor was showing its age and had visible ripples in the floor. The process to replace the floor involved sanding down the current surface, pouring new material and then painting lines for basketball and volleyball over the base coat of paint. We kept the base coat beige to mimic a hardwood court but added some color with Carolina blue basketball lanes, black basketball lines and red volleyball lines. We are currently evaluating if there is a need to add pickleball lines to the floor to accommodate the growing pickleball sport in Montgomery County.

Washington Spirit

The Washington Spirit, under new ownership, played before capacity crowds for much of the 2019 season. After playing two games at Audi Field in DC, they team explored options for the 2020 season. Ultimately the team decided to split their season with 4 games each at the SoccerPlex, Audi Field, and Segra Field in Leesburg VA. The team will continue to train daily at the SoccerPlex in 2020. In 2021 the team will move all operations to Segra Field and will no longer play home games at the SoccerPlex.

International Soccer

The Maryland SoccerPlex played host the Peruvian Men's National Team in the lead up to there match against El Salvador at RFK Stadium. The team trained for several days at the Plex in what were supposed to be private sessions. However, several hundred fans found the team training site and tried to 'crash' the stadium to gain access to the players.

College Soccer

The SoccerPlex played host to three collegiate soccer programs in August. The American University women's soccer team conducted two weeks of preseason camp prior to the season. Due to construction on their campus, Georgetown University men's and women's teams held

their entire preseason training camp, as well as preseason games, at the SoccerPlex until their fields were ready for play. We remained a backup if construction was delayed or issues arose.

New Partnership

We reached an agreement with Adventist HealthCare as our official health care partner. The partnership will see Adventist provide medical education to our membership as well as community health events. As part of the agreement the fieldhouse will be renamed from the Discovery Center to the Adventist HealthCare Fieldhouse.

Continued Partners and Sponsors

We have maintained partnerships with Black Rock Center for our Sports Meets the Arts Camp. This camp allows kids to play sports in the morning and work on art projects in the afternoon. We again partnered with the Tennis Plex for a Soccer-Tennis Camp over the summer. We also partnered with several MCPS elementary schools to bring soccer programming to the schools when the school day ends.

We have retained sponsorships with Leidos, Dicks Sporting Goods, Ben and Jerry's, Firehouse Subs, Athletic House, Silver Diner, Roy Rogers, Buffalo Wild Wings, South Street Steaks, and Roy Rogers.

Out of the Darkness Walk

We hosted for the first time the Out of the Darkness Walk to raise money and awareness for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. The walk brought nearly 500 people to the Plex for a fun walk. There were support groups, medical professionals, and other vendors providing information and support for those in need. The event raised nearly \$80,000.

SAM

SAM soccer saw a noticeable increase in registrations during the fall 2019 season. This was the first significant increase in several years, with approximately a 6% increase from the previous season. Our total enrollment is around 3600 for the year, up from 3400 the previous year. We again provide more than \$45,000 in scholarships throughout the year to families that could not afford to play otherwise. We have continued and expanded our 'Fair Play Please' program with "Quiet Weekends" and sportsmanship awards at the end of each season.











Planning Board 6/11: Maryland Soccer Foundation Annual Report

Final Audit Report

2020-06-01

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| By: | Emily Mitchell (Emily.Mitchell@montgomeryparks.org) |
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| Transaction ID: | CBJCHBCAABAHAck-ykPcxSxQ7Q6MIXKDvNaFAIFTd1ke |


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2020-06-01 - 3:29:32 PM GMT- IP address: 104.47.40.254

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