

Minutes of February 8, 2023, Regular Meeting of the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners

Location: BOPARC Marilla Recreation Center, Morgantown, WV

Call to Order: President Trumble called the meeting to order at 3:04PM.

Establish Quorum: Members present included Susan Klingensmith, Amel Morris, Jenny Selin, Cal Shamberger, Jenny Thoma, and Danielle Trumble.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the January 11, 2023 meeting were approved by consensus.

Correspondence: None

Public Comment:

Frank Oliverio, President of Morgantown Hockey, strenuously suggested that the board review not only the bid received, but also the amount of money, whether it is taxpayer or bonded. He said that the city has needs, and the money needs to be used to serve those needs. Mr. Oliverio said that instead of spending \$14 million on an ice rink one could be made brand new for \$5 to \$6 million. It could be a simple steel building that doesn't cost that much compared to \$14 million to renovate a 40 year old outdoor gazebo. Mr. Oliverio said that if BOPARC is going to go through with the bid, then redo the building all together and take out the wooden beams and let people watch the actual game on the ice.

Matt Nelson, Morgantown Hockey Association, said that time and money can solve all sorts of problems, but cannot solve this problem with the ice rink. He said that the building is unfit for its intended purpose and renovating it with the current bid documents will not work. He is afraid that the hockey association will be labeled as children as they do not want this, as it does not serve the purpose of hockey, curling, figure skating, etc. With the current price we must start over and create a new facility, with \$14 million we could commit to more than one sheet of ice. Mr. Nelson urged the board to start over and involve groups such as the Pittsburgh Penguins to create a facility that will work for all users. He said that nobody in his organization have built a rink but know people at the highest level who have.

Corey Fortress, Morgantown Hockey Association, shared that he has a construction background, and there are many different ways to approach this project. He said the beams make it difficult to do renovations. Mr. Fortress said there is lots of property near the rink, and proposed keeping the ice rink open, and building a new rink in the location. He suggested taking the beams down and repurposing on another project, perhaps as the entrance to the new rink. Mr. Fortress said that spending \$14 to \$15 million dollars is gross negligence on the taxpayer's part.

James Giuliani agreed that the beams are important for historical preservation, and the architecture is significant. He talked about the space, perhaps having more ice, focusing on public use as opposed to figure skating, curling, hockey, WVU, etc. Mr. Giuliani is running for City Council in the First Ward and the ice rink is in his ward, and said residents he has spoken to are not happy with the rink. He said he heard rumors that Mylan Park is wanting to build an ice rink, and that there is a need to look into the project for that reason as well, especially to complement one another. Mr. Giuliani said that if BOPARC partners with Mylan Park, the County, and WVU, we'll get it all with the new rinks.

Todd Gookin, WVU Hockey, said that \$14 million is absurd, and they will not get anything better than what they currently have at the current ice rink. He said the last room to be put on the rink was by a WVU Hockey parent, and all improvements came from the user groups. Mr. Gookin said they need an

event type center to host events, as well as more ice and a new roof. He reiterated that instead of spending \$15 million to have the same space, we could build something across the street for half of that cost.

Don Spencer was involved in the construction of the first ice rink. Mr. Spencer said that the architect who designed the beams had never been to an ice rink, and what they were up against as a committee as they were visiting all sorts of rinks was to see what they meant to a community. The beams were part of a picnic shelter kind of mindset the architect was familiar with. He said to follow up with the suggestions and phone calls to find out what new rinks are costing today to construct and the materials most efficient for construction. He said that USA hockey has information on what rinks have been added throughout the country, and suggested looking at half a dozen of the most recent rinks and how they were constructed. His sentiments were of support, as he is a supporter of hockey and the ice rink, not only to WVU hockey, but youth hockey and the other users of the ice rink. Mr. Spencer encouraged the board to do some homework as time is important, and there is information that seems to be vital at the current time.

Financial Report: Director Wiles reviewed the contents of the financial report. She reported that everything is par for the course this time of the year. Susan Klingensmith moved to approve financial report, and Jenny Selin seconded. The motion passed 6-0.

Executive Director's Report: Director Wiles reviewed the contents of the Executive Director's report. She highlighted the Wiles Hill Community Center photos, Jenny Wilson's exhibit, camp registrations beginning the following week, and presenting an updated case statement. Jenny Selin complimented the Jenny Wilson exhibit at Wiles Hill, and said the new café looks nice, and complimented the historic exhibit, and the evening art programs. Danielle Trumble asked about the timeline of the replacement of Jack Roberts Park. Director Wiles said Assistant Director Travinski has been looking at improvements to Jack Roberts Park, Upper Marilla, and Jerome Park over the next few budget seasons. The last budget meeting with the city is on Thursday, so they will learn about capital improvements at that time. In a more succinct manner, they will have to shift some out to next year with the pool. Jenny Selin asked if picnic shelters will be replaced. Director Wiles said yes, if there are scheduled rentals BOPARC has to look and make a cutoff date. She does not expect the shelters to be upgraded next fiscal year, but perhaps in 2024.

Old Business: No items.

New Business: Bids for Ice Arena Improvement Project

It was relayed to the board that no action would be taken on this item at this meeting. Director Wiles sent an email to the user groups as Mills Group was still working on the bid documents. Since there would not be a vote at today's meeting, she hoped to schedule a special meeting next week that would be publicly posted.

Agreement for Site Analysis, Public Survey, BOPARC/Community Engagement, Concepts-Lower Marilla

Director Wiles asked the board to allow BOPARC to enter into an agreement regarding Lower Marilla Park, pending city attorney Ryan Simonton's review. Jenny Thoma asked how this differs to a recent proposal for the pool, Director Wiles said that this is the same type of process but specifically for Lower Marilla. There would be a public survey and public input to get opinions on what we want to see in

Lower Marilla and then concepts would be presented. Danielle Trumble did not get a chance to read the documents prior to the meeting and asked if there would be a problem with the project timeline to move approving this to the upcoming special meeting so the board could have time to review. No action was taken on this item, and a vote was deferred until the special meeting.

Board Comments:

Jenny Thoma expressed a continuation of a thanks to everyone putting in extra work outside of these meetings. She is looking forward to making progress on the ongoing projects and it will be exciting when they are finished. Amel Morris thanked everyone for coming out to the meeting. Cal Shamberger thanked everyone for the public input and Director Wiles for her work. He reported that he attended the Board and Commission training put on by the city. Susan Klingensmith thanked everyone for coming out and wants to see this project through. Jenny Selin said she is wanting to figure out a way to provide ice that would be great for everyone. Danielle Trumble appreciated the photos from Wiles Hill, did not attend the reception for Jenny Wilson's program. She said she will link up with Assistant Director Travinski to view renovations at Wiles Hill. Regarding the ice arena, she said that in this situation, her view was starting to fracture from a lot of the board and spoke about it at city council. She said it was a good time to stop and look at the cost versus the benefit. She said that when people are looking for design we want, on the budget we have, on the timeline we want, we are not getting those. She was not sure how she would have voted but wants to wait for the special meeting next week to get more information for the best use of taxpayer funds. President Trumble also said she looked forward to attending the MHA fundraiser in early March.

Adjournment: Amel Morris moved to adjourn the meeting, and Jenny Selin seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 3:37 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cal Shamberger

April 6, 2023

Entered Into Record:



Melissa Wiles, Executive Director