



Five Flags Civic Center Advisory Commission Meeting October 25, 2021

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Tyler Daugherty, Bryce Parks, Mackenzie Blau

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Nicholas Huff, Rod Bakke

STAFF PRESENT:

HR Cook, Jesse Gavin, Jacquelyn Pfohl, Julie Husemann

OTHERS PRESENT:

Marie Ware

MINUTES APPROVED; VOTE:

Commissioner Parks motioned and Commissioner Blau seconded, to approve the minutes of July 25, 2021 meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

UPDATE BY HR COOK ON SHUTTERED VENUE GRANT APPLICATION:

General Manager Cook explained that Five Flags had previously been awarded \$250,000 in funding through the federal government's Shuttered Venues Grant program. A new round of grants are currently being considered, and Five Flags Center is once again eligible based on first quarter revenues. The new grant could total up to \$125,000. Cook is optimistic about its approval. He notes that any money received would go toward employee salaries (including filling the vacant Operations Manager position), continued COVID-19 mitigation efforts, and upgrades to concessions equipment. The venue has also received \$50,000 in grant funding from the state of Iowa, and applied for up to \$20,000 in additional marketing funds related to COVID-19 reopening. In addition, the facility is seeking a Historic Preservation Grant from the State that would pay for production of a documentary about the history of the Five Flags Theater, as well as equipment for the documentary to be shown to guests walking by the theater façade.

UPDATE BY MARIE WARE ON STEPS RELATED TO CITY COUNCIL TOP PRIORITY GOAL – FIVE FLAGS CIVIC CENTER DIRECTION:

Leisure Service Manager Ware notes that despite the letter sent by the Commission over the summer, the City Council still plans to wait until after the new year to take any action on a potential expansion of Five Flags Center. At this point, she plans to have a work session with the Council sometime in January to review all of the previous feasibility studies. No action can be taken at a work session, so any decision the Council would make would have to come at a later meeting. A possibility is that the Council will ask for an update on construction costs, and funding was carried over from Fiscal Year 2021 to pay for such a study if requested. Commissioner Daugherty asked what the turn around time might be for a new study. Ware says that is hard to estimate. There was discussion and clarification about which current Council members are up for re-election this fall, and which have come on to the Council since the expansion discussions began.

UPDATE BY HR COOK ON FACILITY BOOKING FOR UPCOMING WINTER AND SPRING SEASONS:

Cook introduced new staff members Jacquelyn Pfohl and Julie Husemann, who have been hired as Event Coordinator and Financial Director, respectively. Husemann then reviewed the financial report for September 2021. She noted that the facility came in slightly over budget for the month, primarily due to an overlap between herself and her predecessor to allow for training. Cook notes that Five Flags' budget is in a better position coming out of the month of

September as compared to previous years, but added that the current budget forecast has some uncertainty surrounding it due to continued COVID issues. He expressed optimism about the chances of confirming a handful of large and potentially very profitable shows in the 3rd and 4th quarters, as well as up to a dozen smaller performances. Noted that several of those smaller events have confirmed, but not yet been announced to the public. According to Cook, the entire industry is seeing ticket sales slow down and a larger number of ticket holders who choose not to attend events. There is also increased hesitancy among parents until the COVID vaccines become more widely available for children. That uncertainty has caused some shows to delay plans to go on the road until things are clearer.

Cook then went over some recent capital purchases by Five Flags, including several hundred new chairs and portable basketball goals. He explained that with Retro Rewind holding its final event in January, it will open up a weekend for a possible sports tournament or other home-grown event. Capital improvements that have been requested include a new boiler for the theater, upgrades to concessions equipment, and Sport Court flooring, which would also be used for potential sports tournaments.

Cook announced that Five Flags has renewed its sponsorship agreement with Atlantic Coca-Cola, which has provided the venue with new pub tables, digital menu boards, and portable bars. He explained that the facility is currently in discussion with KWWL about renewing its sponsorship agreement.

Cook explained that Five Flags is now seeking a new Food and Beverage Manager and noted that the venue continues to be short-handed among both full- and part-time staff, but added that use of volunteer groups has help fill in the gaps.

Cook also extended well wishes to Commissioner Bakke, who recently suffered a significant leg injury.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No public comment at this time.

**ADJOURN;
VOTE:** Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Parks, seconded by Commissioner Blau. The motion passed unanimously.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, January 18, 2022.