



Five Flags Civic Center Advisory Commission Meeting Monday August 4, 2014



Approved by Commission

PRESENT: McKenzie Hill, Bryce Parks, Tyler Daugherty, Rod Bakke

STAFF PRESENT: Marie Ware, Don Howes

OTHERS PRESENT: Ben Jacobson of Telegraph Herald

**MINUTES APPROVED;
VOTE:** It was moved by Parks, seconded by Daugherty, to approve the minutes of the July 28, 2014 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

FUTURE OF FIVE FLAGS: Commission Chair, Hill, began discussion to find bullet points to support a feasibility study for Commission members to discuss with City Council Members before their Goal Setting sessions.

Commissioner Bakke began the discussion. Bakke discussed the history of the building, he has served for nearly 30 years. In first decade Five Flags was the true entertainment center of Dubuque, 98% positive comments. In second decade, problems came through and were handled. In third decade a lot of questions were asked of the future of Five Flags, was there any planning, more venues creating competition. Community members have asked him "How far will tax payers go to keep lights on and doors open?" Bakke stated that his goal is to find how we can create a viable and sustainable event center. Five Flags management and staff have continued to work to keep the strong reputation with clients and community. Bakke then offered the idea of a survey to the community to understand needs/wants.

Commissioner Parks continued the discussion, Parks has been a commissioner member for 10+ years. Parks started with despite the curve balls the building has been thrown, Staff continue to work and stay within budget. When community members asked about tax dollars, they are not paying more, they have been paying the same because the building makes budget each year. He recapped the renovation in 2004-2005 that set the building up for Hockey, meeting rooms were made smaller, larger concession stands were created, the main floor was set up for ice and Hockey. Around this time the Grand River Center was finished and the contract with Five Flags was changed stating Five Flags could not compete for flat floor shows in Dubuque. Then in 2010 when the Mystique Community Ice Center was built, the contract with Five Flags was changed, the building could now compete for flat floor shows, but not for ice users. The buildings ice, hockey, and skating equipment was transferred to the new building. These hurdles thrown at the building showed a lack of planning for the future of the building. Parks stated that the building itself is in great condition and has been maintained. Bakke agreed and they both spoke of the asset of Five Flags Staff maintaining the building and working to find new ways to utilize the building. Parks continued to discuss while the building is in great condition, the scale is no longer appropriate to touring acts. The building is about $\frac{3}{4}$ the size it needs to be to fit larger concert performances,

sports, or other events.

Commissioner Daugherty continued the discussion, a new commission member for around 1 year, Daugherty brings fresh energy and ideas to the commission. Daugherty describes Five Flags Center as a Jack of all trades. Then questions if that is what it should be. He points out the strengths of the Five Flags in location and staff. Then discusses information he brought based on Youth Sports and the concept of Five Flags focusing on being a venue for tournaments. Discussion was held on the growth of youth sports and the economic impact it would have on downtown Dubuque. Commissioners discussed a focus of Five Flags on youth sports and larger concerts.

Director of Finance, Don Howes added to the discussion that NCAA is now requiring seating for 6-7,000 for national tournaments. And larger touring bands require a minimum of 7,000 seats. While discussing the capacity for these events is good, building cannot focus on only sports and concerts. Five Flags is a Civic Center, we hold regional Bull Riding, High school and College Graduations, and many other community events. Five Flags needs to stay a multipurpose facility to guarantee events continue to be held in Dubuque. The feasibility study would help determine what the community needs. Perhaps it is a focus on capacity for sporting tournaments and concerts, maybe it is a full kitchen to prepare catering for conventions and concerts. The feasibility study could also show that some of the CIP items that have been pushed back to future years are more of a priority. If a feasibility study is held in FY15, it could be 3-5 years out before the changes could be made. Some CIP items could be finished in less time if needed. Howes quickly discussed the ideas of a new exterior Message Center or Marquee and lighting, changing to LED would create a large savings in utility costs. If an overall renovation is started, these CIP items might fall within the renovation.

Commissioner Daugherty brought the group back together that while the commissioners may have individual goals in the end, they all agree the feasibility study is the start. Commissioner Hill focused the group to the goal of the meeting, creating clear talking points to deliver to City Council members.

Commissioner Hill asked Marie Ware the correct process for meeting with City Council members. Marie Ware, director of Leisure Services, recommended the commission put together a 1 sheet page to give the council members and schedule small informal meetings at a coffee shop or other location to discuss the talking points. Ware also reminded the Commission of the funding given by SGM corporate specifically for a research study. When the new contract between City of Dubuque and SMG was approved, SMG gave \$100,000. \$70,000 of this is in a Marketing fund that will help promote events and the building over all, while \$30,000 was given specifically for a research study. This money can be used as a match with city funding or other possible grant funding.

Commissioner Daugherty motioned the Commissioners meet with City Council members to discuss the importance of doing a feasibility study for Five Flags Center before the planning sessions held August 25-26, 2014. Commissioner Bakke seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Daugherty will put together the 1 sheet information and distribute to Commissioners. Discussion was held on who would meet with the different Council members. Commission members will schedule meeting times directly and will follow up with Council members after planning sessions.

Commissioner	Council Member
Rod Bakke & Tyler Daugherty	Ric Jones & Joyce Connors
Rod Bakke	Karla Braig
Tyler Daugherty & McKenzie Hill	David Resnick
Bryce Parks	Roy Buol, Lynne Sutton, & Kevin Lynch

**ADJURN;
VOTE:**

It was moved by Parks, seconded by Daugherty, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed unanimously.

NEXT MEETING:

Next quarterly meeting held in the General Manager's Office on Monday October 27, 2014 at 3:30PM. Five Flags staff will place an email "Thursday before" to remind commissioners of the meeting.