



Sports Commission Board Meeting minutes
September 12, 2018 ■ 11:30am
Central Illinois Regional Airport

ATTENDEES: Matt Hawkins, John Althoff, Denise Balagna, Doug Damery, Ray Ceresa, Mike Wagner, Kathleen Lorenz, Steve Newman, Stan Lewis, Beth Sauser, and Brittney Sage.

I. Public Comments

- i. None.

II. Action Items

- i. None.

III. Discussion Items

- a. Sixty Six Games Esports Tournament
 - i. John Althoff noted that the Esports Tournament will be January 12th and 13th at the Grossinger Motors Arena and will feature 16 college open teams as well as 8 high school teams. State Farm will sponsor the event. John noted that District 87 has decided to provide desktops for this event instead of laptops and that CIRBN will provide internet to the computers. Steve Newman asked if this event would generate many room nights in Bloomington-Normal. Matt Hawkins answered that there will be around 90 to 100 participants and that maybe half would stay in hotels. Ray Ceresa inquired about ticket prices for the event and Matt noted that he thinks they will be \$10.00 per day for spectators. Ray Ceresa also asked if there are any regional tournaments like this going on. Matt Hawkins mentioned that the closest he found were in Chicago and Rockford.
- b. State Farm Holiday Classic
 - i. John Althoff noted that Matt Hawkins recently met with the State Farm Holiday Classic committee and that Dave Oloffson has been the driving force behind this event for years but that he will be leaving after 2019. John added that they really need people to volunteer and that other people may be stepping down as well with Dave leaving. As far as long term needs for the event, John noted that they will have to get new people on the committee. Ray Ceresa mentioned that this is an event that benefits the hotels greatly and that he will work on getting some hotel people to step up and help out. John and Matt both noted that if anyone has thoughts on potential committee members that would be great and that there are only 3 or 4 meetings per year so it would not be a huge time commitment for new people.
- c. Bloomington Criterium
 - i. John Althoff noted that two co-directors of the Criterium have stepped down and asked everyone to please let us know if they know anyone who may be interested. Matt Hawkins mentioned that they will probably be breaking down the race director role into 3 or 4 sections.
- d. Sports Complex
 - i. John Althoff noted that the town and the city are looking at financing options for the sports complex and that tomorrow they are visiting Bettendorf, IA to get ideas.

Doug Damery added that Normal is really looking at 5 things that they need to figure out before moving forward, including: 1. Where will the \$43 million come from. 2. Can they fund initial operating losses in the first years. 3. Identifying sites. SFA is ranking them. 4. We will need to get top-tier management with good staff and operations for this project. 5. They have been meeting with local sports organizations to determine need and usage. Doug expanded on number 5 and noted that they are looking at the time that different sports organizations will use the complex and how these organizations will afford to pay for different things. Doug noted that there will have to be some fees charged with a new sports complex but that most organizations have currently been getting their facility use for free. Doug added that soccer is interested in the project and that cricket is interested but would not be able to afford everything they would like to use. Doug mentioned that Normal is looking at everything they can to try to get more comfortable before taking a risk and moving forward.

Kathleen Lorenz added that there would be a lot of support for the indoor facility as it is a big money maker but that they still need to look at financing, sustainability, and operations. John Althoff asked if anyone is out talking to local entities about private financing. Doug Damery noted that they are working with a financial advisor on how to make this attractive to local entities. Matt Hawkins asked what this group (the sports commission board) can do to help this project and noted that he knows it is up to the town and city to move forward or not but that maybe we can do something to help. Ray Ceresa agreed and asked if we launch a campaign, try fundraising, or how we can get it going. Steve Newman noted that we need to figure out what roles BN Advantage and other groups are going to have. Doug Damery mentioned that we need to check into what the potential limits for the town and how that relates to the city.

IV. Committee Reports

a. Sports Identity

- i. National High School Golf Invitational:** John Althoff noted that this event would invite champions from each state to attend and that we would have a chance to host it in 2020. John added that roughly 900 boys and 600 girls would be invited and of those they would expect about 250 boys and 150 to 200 girls to show up. John also noted that graduated seniors would participate in this invitational. Matt Hawkins mentioned that there has never been a national invitational like this before and that they reached out to us because they are interested in the Bloomington-Normal area. Matt added that they will rotate the location of the event each year and that this event would take place two days after the Youth Classic.
- ii. New Sports Commission Events:** John Althoff asked that if anyone has thoughts or ideas to please let us know. He added that we made progress on the top two ideas from the last meeting. Beth Sauser mentioned that 8-man football would be a good idea. Beth added that some schools have started a league (even some larger schools) and that this idea was presented at the IHSA board meeting last month. Matt Hawkins asked Denise Balagna if pickleball is still pretty big in town and Denise mentioned that yes, there is a lot of ongoing outdoor facility use for pickleball. Denise mentioned that it is not a formal organized group so she is not sure if they would be able to host anything or not. Matt asked if our courts in Bloomington-Normal would be big enough to host a pickleball tournament and Denise noted that we would probably have to combine courts. Matt Hawkins asked if we could take tennis courts and make those work and Denise noted that yes, they've done this in the past and it works well for temporary things. Denise added that two pickleball courts can fit on one tennis court.

Ray Ceresa noted that he really liked the idea of a disc golf tournament at Highland Park. Denise mentioned that there is a disc golf tournament at Highland Park coming up in October.

V. Open Discussion

- a. Steve Newman noted that significant bylaw changes are happening in the BNACVB board and that the sports commission and McLean County will no longer have voting seats effective January 1, 2019. Steve added that it comes down to who pays the bills and that's the City of Bloomington and the Town of Normal. Steve mentioned that he does not see any difference for the sports commission as we will still be represented by Crystal Howard on the BNACVB board.

VI. Director's Report

- a. **State Farm Youth Classic:** Matt Hawkins noted that there was about a \$3000.00 profit on The Youth Classic this year. He added that we were slightly over on some things and slightly under on a few others but that they were pretty happy with the budget overall. Matt mentioned that entry fees have only been raised once since the start of The Youth Classic and they are going to be raised next year. Looking at our competition, Matt noted that entry fees can be anywhere from \$100.00 to \$195.00 while ours are at \$55.00 to \$125.00. It was voted that our registration fees will increase to be \$60.00 to \$130.00 beginning next year.

Matt noted that the dates of this event have always been a Monday through a Wednesday but that it has been voted on to change these dates going forward to Sunday through Tuesday. Matt mentioned that The Youth Classic always overlaps with the Junior Am tournament and that hopefully this will help with that and also save parents and volunteers a day that they would have had to take off work.

- b. **Midwest Nationals Wrestling Tournament:** Matt Hawkins noted that we still have to pay for advertising this fall, but that we should see a profit of about \$7,500.00 for this event. He added that Midwest Labors has been secured as our sponsor for this event for the next few years.
- c. **IHSA Boys Golf State Finals – October 12-13:** Matt Hawkins noted that we will be looking for volunteers to drive shuttle carts for this event soon.
- d. **Pepsi Ice Center:** Matt Hawkins noted that he met with members of the Pepsi Ice Center recently to discuss new events.
- e. **Comlara Park:** Matt Hawkins mentioned that he met with Mike Steffa recently to discuss new events and that Comlara Park and Evergreen Lake are open to any event that won't create wake on the water.
- f. **U.S. Figure Skating Regional:** Matt Hawkins noted that they are discussing October 2019 for dates and that he should know more sometime this week.

VII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 1:10PM.

2018 Meeting Schedule (11:30am at CIRA)

Wednesday, November 7 (Changed from November 14)