



June 25, 2018

The Honorable Mayor and City Council
City of Dubuque
50 W. 13th Street
Dubuque, Iowa 52001

RE: Five Flags Civic Center Assessment and Study

Dear Mayor and City Council Members,

The City of Dubuque Five Flags Civic Center Commission has been involved with the Five Flags Civic Center Assessment and Study being performed by Conventions, Sports and Leisure International (CSL) since it began. The Commission most recently heard a presentation from CSL at a regular commission meeting. After the City Council work session presentation by CSL the Commission then hosted a public input meeting which was well attended. Input was also sought via the City's website for those who could not attend the meeting.

We have thoroughly reviewed the final Assessment and Study Regarding the Future of the Five Flags Civic Center report that is now before you at our June 25, 2018 meeting. That meeting also had a public input component.

Background

The process with CSL began with a kickoff meeting with the public. CSL led the meeting. This meeting allowed citizens weighed in at the beginning of the process and ask questions about the process and share thoughts from the beginning. CSL was also provided at this time any feedback the city had been provided by citizens about their ideas for the Five Flags Civic Center prior to the study kicking off. CSL also had in-depth tours of all parts of the Civic Center facility including the theater and all back of house areas.

CSL requested information from city staff and community partners including but not limited to Five Flags event reports, financial operating statements, rental and service rates, contact agreement with SMG, service provider agreements, agreements for the Grand River Center, community event facilities, perceived competitive event facilities and destinations, Five Flags users past and present, potential event users, Travel Dubuque information related to hotels and attractions, new and planned new projects in Dubuque, key competitive destinations and associated event facilities in the state, regional and national marketplace, lost/turn away conventions, sports and hotel nights,

bookings, recurring events, annual reports and marketing reports, plus local/regional/ state socioeconomic/demographic data and more.

A Steering Committee was established with members of the Civic Center Commission serving on that committee. The Steering Committee met at various times throughout the process. Meetings were set up and held with City of Dubuque personnel to gather information and details about the community and the Civic Center. The consultant also met with a variety of organizations including but not limited to Travel Dubuque, Dubuque Main Street, Dubuque Area of Chamber of Commerce, Greater Dubuque Development Corporation, arts and culture representatives and more.

The next step was for a push for lots of public input into the study and assessment process. This was a very important part of the study outlined in the RFP. CSL worked with staff and others to develop a survey to gather as much input as possible from the community and users of the facilities. Many organizations assisted the City in promoting the survey as a means for all persons to give input. There were 1086 responses to the survey. This was representative of nearly 3100 people if one considers the households of the responses. CSL shared that in other studies they have performed throughout the US in similar markets the typical response rate to a survey is 500-700.

Betsch and Associates and FEH was subcontracted by CSL to work with the site and the input received as well as consider the possible scenarios related to the footprint and potential layouts. The work shows what is possible and if future steps were taken they are just representative and would need much more refinement and public input. They worked to identify capital needs of the current facilities and costs related to those capital improvements as well as construction costs and capital costs needed even in new or renovated facilities. Their collective work is a part of this Assessment and Study report.

This report contains the phases that you see below:

Phase I. Current Status Assessment

- Task 1. Study Kickoff and Initial Project Planning
- Task 2. Local Market Conditions and Visitor Industry Assessment
- Task 3. Analysis of Existing Five Flags Civic Center Operations
- Task 4. Industry Trends Review
- Task 5. Competitive/Comparable Facility Analysis
- Task 6. Market Surveys

Phase II. Expansion Study and Assessment

- Task 7. Market Supportable Program Analysis
- Task 8. Event/Use Levels Analysis
- Task 9. Conceptual Renderings and Design Charrette
- Task 10. Preliminary Construction Cost Analysis
- Task 11. Financial Operations Analysis
- Task 12. Economic Impact Analysis

Phase III. Naming Rights and/or Sponsorship Opportunities Analysis

Phase IV. Scenario Development

Discussion at Commission Meeting

- Commissioner Huff stated that council concerns brought up at Council work session have been discussed in the final report.
- Commissioner Hill agreed and stated the consultants did a great job with report, it is encompassing and conclusive.
- Commissioner Parks discussed that the input gathered by CSL made it obvious the community is supportive to rebuild the building and spending time looking at other options would be a waste of time. Tearing it down is not an option. The survey responses, meetings, and all individuals that have spoken with Commissioner Parks support the renovation for Five Flags. They want the big one. Don't hold back. He spoke of one person from the input session that had some items they would like addressed but they were positive to move forward. The report speaks positive toward what our expectation was.
- Commissioner Bakke discussed the questions over his 30 years on the commission for based on the tax dollars used to operate the Five Flags Center. Quality of life was discussed as well as the economic impact and ripples from 4th and Main Street throughout the community.
- Commissioner Daugherty discussed council concerns with parking and the final report provides answers to the current available parking. He continued to discuss council concerns were reviewed within the final report. He shared that the report shows why doing nothing is a bad idea.

Recommendation

Commissioner Bakke motioned to recommend to City Council to receive & file the Five Flags Civic Center Study and Assessment. Commissioner Parks seconded.

By a unanimous vote of 5 to 0 the Five Flags Civic Center Commission recommends that the City Council receive and file the Assessment and Study Regarding the Future of the Five Flags Civic Center report.

Discussion

Commissioners repeated their discussion on the overwhelming support of public for the renovations. Each commission member agreed to share their favored scenario then roll call vote was taken.

- Parks; yes scenario 4
Don't go halfway.
- Daugherty; yes scenario 4
The study showed the facility can be used beyond concerts. The potential benefit we have is great. We have heard from partners like the Symphony that they would like to be involved in the project and there are other public private partnerships that can be established.
- Huff; yes scenario 4
Based on public input this scenario is what I would choose.
- Bakke; yes scenario 4
Commissioner Bakke read the following statement:
Over my 33 years here on the commission, I have talked with and heard from the

citizens of Dubuque and surrounding area – During this time, I have always been very impressed with the positive and supportive viewpoints offered for our facility. This great feedback has kept me going strong right up to today.

People do ask about the support our taxpayers have given to Five Flags. I remind them that their support has made our city a destination for visitors and a huge boost for our quality of life – both social and economic.

- What would we do without swimming pools
- What would we do without beautiful parks
- What would we do without flowers on Grandview and the Riverfront
- What would we do without our new multicultural center
- What would we do without the Grand Harbor and River Museum
- What would we do without excellent casinos
- What would we do without colleges & universities

We are the masterpiece on the Mississippi and I want to continue this distinction in the future.

A big part of our economy is centered at 4th and Main – It spreads out in the form of restaurants – bars – specialty shops, hotels, etc. We all share in their success. It spreads further all over our city and into the surrounding areas. The quality of economical life is dependent on Five Flags and all the other city destinations.

I greet visitors at the River Museum and they hail from all over our nation and many countries. I often am asked – How do you people do it? This is an amazing and historic city on a wonderful river.

Let's build on our past and insure a great future and quality of social and economic life. Nothing ventured – nothing gained.

- Hill; yes scenario 4
We speak on behalf of the citizens of the city we have heard from. It has been a year in planning. The support is a testament by and to the people involved. There is interest in citizens in moving it forward. We have the ability to support a nicer venue. People have been given the opportunity to support events and they have.

Recommendation

Based on the response from the Dubuque community and all public input, Commissioner Parks motioned for Five Flags Civic Center Commission to recommend to City Council to choose scenario four for Five Flags renovations. Commissioner Bakke seconded. At this time, discussion was held (documented paragraph above) and a roll call vote was requested. Vote was 5 to 0, motion to support scenario 4 passed unanimously.

The Commission also discussed that they would be supportive in working with the City Council on moving forward with the direction and scenario supported by the Council.

We look forward to the next steps.

Respectfully submitted,

McKenzie Hill, Chairperson
Five Flags Civic Center Commission

cc: Marie Ware, Leisure Services Manager

Attachments: Public Input from Meetings
Assessment and Study Regarding the Future of the Five Flags Civic
Center