

Minnesota Ballpark Authority
2008 Strategic Planning Work Session
Meeting Minutes
November 16, 2007
Rock Island Room, The Depot

Attendance: Chair Steve Cramer, Commissioner Michael Vekich, Commissioner Barb Sykora, Commissioner Joan Campbell, Commissioner John Wade, Executive Director Dan Kenney, Kathleen Lamb, Ed Hunter, Colleen Livermore, Tom Horner, Andy Skoogman, Susie Helget.

Objectives of Strategic Planning Work Session

- Define the roles and responsibilities of the Minnesota Ballpark Authority as the ballpark moves from construction to operation and beyond.
- Identify specific goals to measure the performance of the Minnesota Ballpark Authority.

1. **Budget Report**

a. **Status report on 2007 operating budget and overview of 2008 operating budget**

Chair Cramer welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked Colleen Livermore to present a status report on the 2007 MBA operating budget and overview of the 2008 operating budget. Ms. Livermore distributed a budget document and gave a brief overview of what was laid out in the document. Ms. Livermore noted that she has broken out consulting expenses in categories as was requested by Commissioners at a previous board meeting. Commissioner Vekich asked Kathleen Lamb if the amount set aside for Legal Consulting would be enough for the work that they anticipated for next year. Ms. Lamb stated that McGrann Shea will need to talk to the Hennepin County Attorney's office before the end of the year regarding who will be doing the new ballpark title work for the project. She said that if the MBA is responsible for the title work that will impact McGrann Shea's anticipated legal costs for 2008. Commissioner Vekich suggested that the MBA increase the budget amount for legal costs in 2007 rather than go back and increase the budget in 2008 after it has been approved. Chair Cramer asked Ms. Lamb to give the MBA an estimate on what the title work portion would cost for 2008 by the December MBA board meeting so that additional money can be included in the budget if necessary. Ms. Livermore noted that this 2008 budget is the one that has already been approved by Hennepin County so if the MBA wanted to increase the overall amount they would need to go back to the Hennepin County Board for approval of the new amount or decrease funds from other categories in the existing budget to account for the increase in legal fees. Chair Cramer said that his preference would be to get an estimate from McGrann Shea on the cost and then talk to Hennepin County about this potential transfer of legal work and the increased fees that will result.

2. **Status**

a. **Commissioner's evaluation of MBA performance to date – strengths and weaknesses**

Chair Cramer invited Tom Horner to the table to facilitate the work session. Mr. Horner reviewed the agenda and invited comment on the times allotted and the discussion items. He said that the purpose of this work session is to look forward and build on what the MBA has accomplished so far. He also noted that the agenda items came out of individual discussions with each Commissioner prior to the work session.

Mr. Horner asked if Commissioners felt good about the accomplishments of this body so far. The Commissioners agreed that they were satisfied with the accomplishments so far. Mr. Horner asked the Commissioners what they considered to be the strengths of the organization. Commissioner Wade said that he thought it was the people; both Commissioners and staff involved in the project. Commissioner Vekich said that this was one of the more complicated projects that he has been involved in considering that the organization was put together and immediately responsible for a half

billion dollar budget. Commissioner Sykora said that when you consider all of the different organizations and committees involved in this project, it is very complicated. Commissioner Wade noted that all of this is a credit to our State and how we as a State do business. He pointed out that from where our organization started to where we are today would not have been possible were it not for all of the combined efforts of the various entities involved in the project. Commissioner Campbell said that it is likely that the people around this table probably understand the legislation more than anyone else and due to the great diversity and collective strengths of the MBA there is not a question out there that could not be answered from someone in this group. Commissioner Wade said that we have transitioned this organization well over its first year. We have established our guidelines and parameters so that as awareness of our organization becomes more raised, we will be ready for that.

Mr. Horner asked about any weaknesses of the organization. Commissioner Vekich said that the fact that most people in the general public do not understand who the MBA is or the role that it plays could be considered a weakness. Chair Cramer noted that the fact that we are not well known could also be considered a sign of success given that when negative items come up, they tend to raise awareness of an organization. He also noted that as this project moves forward, the public will likely gain a higher level of understanding of our role. Mr. Horner asked if it will become more important for the public to know who the Commissioners are as the project moves forward. Commissioner Campbell said that it is not as important for the public to know who the individual Commissioners are but what the organizations role is.

b. Recommendations

Commissioner Vekich noted that how we report out our message to the general public is important expressing the need for our organization to be transparent. He suggested that the MBA prepare an annual report each year for the public and then offer to meet with our appointing authorities to an annual update on the project. Mr. Kenney said that on that same note we are in the process of preparing our first e-newsletter which will then be sent out quarterly to all interested parties. Commissioner Vekich suggested that we come up with some fun ways to engage the public in this project. He suggested a contest or public event of some kind.

3. Organization

a. Are internal processes effective and sufficient?

Commissioner Sykora said that there needs to be a better understanding from this Board of the processes that are in place for project decision making. Chair Cramer reviewed some of the mechanisms and groups that are in place that make day to day project decisions. He noted for instance that he and Commissioner Vekich as Chair and Vice Chair of the MBA serve on a policy board made up of the various entities involved in the project that meets monthly to discuss issues and make decisions. He added that staff and policy makers work at various levels on issues but ultimately everything comes back to the MBA board for approval. Commissioner Vekich said that some of the lack of understanding of the levels of approval and decision making comes from the cumbersomeness of the open meeting law. It is difficult for staff and Commissioners to communicate internally without raising red flags to the public.

b. Is staffing adequate/appropriate now to meet future challenges?

Mr. Horner asked if staffing and the flow of information from staff to Commissioners were adequate. Commissioner Sykora said that Board members ultimately get all of the information but they do not always get much time to grasp and understand all of it before having to vote on it. She said that these work sessions would be helpful in the future to give more opportunities to discuss issues before having to vote on them. Commissioner Wade said that staff should feel free to request meetings with Commissioners to address important issues as they come up. Mr. Horner asked if there were any issues related to staffing and their work. Commissioners agreed that they were satisfied with the staff

and their work. Commissioner Sykora said that the recent addition of Mr. Kenney's monthly update to Commissioners was very helpful in terms of keeping them current on issues.

c. Recommendations

Mr. Horner noted that Commissioners are requesting periodic work sessions to address specific important issues and events.

4. Responsibilities

a. What are the challenges of being the asset manager of a property without having operating responsibilities?

Commissioner Sykora said that one challenge is not knowing on a day to day basis what our private partners are doing related to the building of the ballpark. Commissioner Vekich said that the good working relationship that our organization is establishing with the Twins will help that communication continue to improve as the project moves forward. He noted that the job of the MBA is to watch the process closely so that the design of the ballpark is what we have agreed on and that does not change. Commissioner Campbell said that our private partner, the Twins, are not used to being as transparent as our public body needs to be in order to be accountable to the public. This will be difficult at times for the Twins as we move forward and err on the side of providing as much public information as we can.

b. What are the milestones or benchmarks for the MBA between now and opening day and how will they be measured.

Chair Cramer said ultimately the milestones involve finishing the construction of the ballpark on time and on budget. He noted that the MBA tracks that on a monthly basis at our meetings so there is a public record available for anyone who would like to have access to it. Mr. Kenney suggested that while it is important to be on time and on budget, our organization's goal should relate to the design and making sure that we create a civic asset. He said that we have already made major changes to the design that have made it a better asset to the community and that should continue to be our goal.

Commissioner Vekich said that he would like to see that everything is laid out on file in terms of construction and budget so that if something changes with the items it is immediately acknowledged and separated out. Mr. Kenney said that there is a system set up now where Mr. Hunter and Rick Johnson review the bills for the project each month before they are paid and if something is different than what has been agreed upon, the bill does not get paid until it is understood and agreed upon. It has been an effective tool in keeping the project on task consistent with the design that we have all agreed upon. Commissioner Vekich asked that Mr. Hunter bring back any high level of changes that come up to the MBA for discussion and possible action of this group.

c. What is the MBA's role on emerging issues and how are those things measured?

Ms. Lamb suggested that a role of the MBA is to simply meet the requirements of the ballpark legislation. This gives a level of assurance to the public and gives the staff direction to document things and put them into the public channels.

Mr. Kenney said that how the MBA invests their capital dollars is an issue that will need to be addressed. Commissioner Vekich and Commissioner Wade said that we need to address what our role should be on development around the ballpark. Commissioner Campbell said that the MBA will need to consider how we interface with the City of Minneapolis on development around the ballpark. Ms. Lamb agreed saying that all development will have to be approved by CPED. Chair Cramer said that this would be a good item for a work session in 2008. Commissioner Sykora said that we should consider how the bond funds will be used. She also suggested more discussion on how our organization will deal with a crisis. Commissioner Wade agreed that we should have a work session to develop a crisis plan. Mr. Kenney said that MBA staff and Himle Horner have developed a call tree

so we have a contact plan in place in the event of a crisis. Commissioner Wade said that we should engage our public relations people now to develop a draft crisis communications plan for the MBA's discussion and approval.

Commissioners agreed that the MBA needs to instill in the Twins the expectation that they need to report to us and begin to do this on a regular basis now so that when the ballpark is built we will have the reporting components already happening on a regular basis. Mr. Kenney said that he intends to bring Matt Hoy, the Director of Operations for the Twins, into our meetings to give monthly reports on concessions and other items as early as the middle of next year. Mr. Kenney also said that he has had conversations about this with Dave St. Peter and they have agreed to work together on how to keep this relationship going and the various groups communicating.

5. **Commissioners**

a. **Is a Board that serves at the pleasure of appointing authorities the best structure?**

Commissioner Vekich said that he believes that these appointments should be termed at six years on a rotating basis. Chair Cramer said that whether five Commissioners are enough is another question. Commissioner Campbell said that she has struggled with the number of Commissioners especially given the open meeting law. She said that when briefings are scheduled, there is always one person that has to be briefed on their own so there is not an opportunity for immediate conversation and interaction with another Commissioner on the topic of the briefing. She said that seven Commissioners would be better in terms of setting up committees and for briefing purposes. Commissioner Sykora said that the MBA would need to go back to the legislature to request a change in the structure of appointing authorities and that maybe after the ballpark is built would be a better time to go back to the legislature to discuss the makeup of this board. Chair Cramer said that we should also have an open conversation with the Hennepin County Board about these. Mr. Kenney noted that the construction of the ballpark will probably be when we as a board are at our busiest. He suggested we hold on this conversation for the future because once we get to the ballpark's opening we will probably go to quarterly meetings and the need to expand to seven may not be necessary.

6. **External Relationships**

a. **What is the appropriate relationship between the MBA and other public entities?**

Commissioner Vekich said that we are an agency created by the state. Hennepin County will continue to want to play a big role in this project even though the financial piece has been handed over to us now. We will need to continue to manage all of the expectations of the different entities that we report to but also realize that we are an entity all to our own and need to focus now on developing our organization. We need to continue to talk about how we do that. Chair Cramer said that negotiating the continued evolution of the County's role to us should be a priority. Commissioner Wade reiterated from earlier in the meeting that the MBA should be consistent with all of the various jurisdictions involved in the project and the authorities who appointed us by sending out an annual report and then follow up with an offer to meet in person to brief them on the status of the ballpark project.

7. **Goals**

a. **What defines success for the MBA from now until opening day and post ballpark opening?**

Commissioner Vekich said that one definition of success is making sure that the prime directives we have discussed today are in place. Mr. Kenney said that once the ballpark is built we will play a role in how the facility works in relation to downtown. Things like the streets around us not being plowed and the pedestrian walkway through the concourse are items that will be our responsibility to monitor and make sure are flowing smoothly. Chair Cramer said that we need to continue to monitor our

community participation goals and report those to the public on a regular basis and continue to work towards meeting those goals from now until opening day and after the ballpark is built.

Respectfully submitted,

Susie Helget