



Winter Park Summit Notes – June 4

Meeting attendees included; Chris Sachs, Craig Jarvinen, David Gorringer, Jon Oyanagi, Robb Lageson, Mike Brown, Andrew Poffenberger, John Baker, Mark McCabe, Jennifer Fink

Legislative Update from Jon Oyanagi

Jon submitted the winter recreation project for the 2016 bonding bill. This is on the preliminary list along with other Ramsey County bond requests.

Jon has met with the MN Amateur Sports Commission. They support the concept of the Winter Recreation Area. One suggestion they had is to look at ways to make the project even bigger. This would perhaps enhance the “regional significance”. An idea discussed with St. Paul Parks and Recreation is the concept of a regional athletic facility. The group discussed a multi-purpose athletic field on the current park fields and mountain biking. This is at the idea stage and needs more vetting. There is the possibility that if the partners (MASC, St. Paul, and Ramsey County) could develop a proposal benefitting all three agencies then this could be a MASC project. They also receive state funding for their capital projects.

Steering Committee Member Reports

Endurance United Update (Andrew Poffenberger reporting)

Andrew Poffenberger reported on behalf of the efforts made by Endurance United since the last meeting. Andrew has recently been named the new Executive Director of the Endurance United Organization. Andrew stated that in addition to the Make Snow East Metro Facebook page he is also exploring the possibility of creating a web site for the Winter Park project as well. Andrew is going to explore this idea further by bringing it to Kevin Johnson in the Champions/Stakeholders committee and ask them to explore this option to help determine need, purpose, layout, etc.

Operations (David Gorringer reporting)

David reported that Jake Morgan went to Hyland and worked on obtaining operational budget information. Jim Reckinger also visited Theodore Wirth and worked on getting operational budget information as well. David mentioned that the information obtained was incomplete and they are still working on trying to obtain additional information. John Baker recommended that the committee make a data practices request to get the information we are looking for.

The operational team is also looking to find out how many permits were purchased at Hyland last year. It was reported that the annual pass at Hyland sold for \$65 in 2014/ 15. A suggestion was made that the operations team create a spreadsheet and plug in operational costs and revenues. The goal would be to get a unit cost for labor. David is planning to start preparing an operations cost spreadsheet and can work with Mark McCabe on gathering known Ramsey County costs and work with their operations department to provide good details to an estimated operating budget.

Key Messages Conversation

Committee members reviewed a one page fact sheet prepared by Andrew Poffenberger along with a one page key messages document prepared by Mark Vangerpen the Communications Associate for Ramsey County Parks and Recreation. In addition to reviewing those documents and making suggested changes they held a brainstorming session to create a draft of key messages and supporting messages.

Proposed key messages include

- 1) Not a single public park winter recreation facility with man-made snow is located in the east metro area. The west metro has three public facilities with man-made snow.
- 2) The Battle Creek Regional Park winter recreation area offers world class skiing terrain facilities.
- 3) Make sure we use; urban, winter recreation area, and man-made snow in key messages
- 4) Accent the investment made at the existing Battle Creek ski trails and make the case that all that is needed is man-made snow to take this venue to the next level.

Supporting messages include

- Benefits to the community
 - Reason to build the area is that it's good for personal fitness. Could be a "blue-zone" healthy community.
 - The overall goal of the project is to create a regional destination with man-made snow in the urban east metro area for the public to enjoy.
- We have a world class trail at Battle Creek but now need snow-making to support it. (What is that facility? Snow making, ski area, parking, etc.)
- Having man-made snow ensures that there will be a ski season, which will bring in more people from the broader community each year.
- For most people in the east metro, the nearest Winter Recreation Facility is 30 – 60 minutes' drive one-way.
- We are looking to create make an investment to the world class trails that already exist. The trails are rated / certified homologated trails.
- Including the construction of entry level trails.
- Making snow provides an opportunity to extend the season which provides physical activity opportunities during the fringe season.
- The construction of this facility will support inner city youth with healthy outdoor endurance sport facilities and programming.

Operational Notes

Committee members discussed that there should there be a tiered fee structure. If this were the case the citizens of St. Paul could potentially pay a lower user fee than non-residents.

Making snow early on the front end of the season towards Thanksgiving would create the largest draw for skiers.

Project Champions and Key Stakeholders Notes

The St. Paul Parks and Recreation Community Center on Winthrop Street is a key stakeholder and potential partner for this project.

It was determined that the champions / stakeholders group would serve as the clearing house for communications.

Champions could also search for co-authors for the bill in the house and the senate.

The celebrity skier angle was discussed. Follow-up will happen to see if Jessie Diggins was contacted. Another accomplished skier was identified that is local and might be available.

General Notes

Some assessment needs to be done to determine what kind of course we actually would want to build. Committee members discussed the need to attract a wide range of users to the course so the general public can truly enjoy the space.

Committee members discussed that in all practicality the skiing area will not be financially self-sustaining.

Question was raised as to how the gap for the operational deficit will be covered? The county? Other?

Web site / Communications – What do we want to post on the web site? How can we house data on our website? Should we use a resource like WordPress to create our own web site as it is a free online tool.

Discussion Points

The winter recreation area is not expected to be completely financially sustainable however any revenue generated will be used to offset operational costs.

Establish partnerships that will provide opportunities to more diverse populations. Models of existing partnerships like this include; St. Paul Urban Tennis, First Tee, the Loppet.

Economic Impacts / Lobbying Group Notes

The Lobbying group should investigate the potential economic impact for the immediate community area with the development of the winter recreation area. Hospitality, restaurants, and local retail business gains could offset deficit from operational shortfall.

U of M students could possibly conduct an economic impact study.
Ingrid Schneider's classes?

There could be opportunities for other organizations to form partnerships and invest in the neighborhood.