

CITY COUNCIL  
INFORMATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, May 20, 2009

ALDERMAN PRESENT:

Patti Martinson, Deb Hadcock, Karen Gundersen Olson, Lloyd LaCroix, Malcom Chapman and Aaron Costello.

STAFF PRESENT:

Jason Green, Marcia Elkins, and Katie LeClair.

(NOTE: For the sake of continuity, the following minutes are not necessarily in chronological order. All referenced documents are on file with the Master Minutes.)

Council President Hadcock opened the Informational Committee Meeting at 12:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 300 Sixth Street, Rapid City, SD 57701.

TOPIC: Presentation by Chad Tussing – Outdoor Campus-West

Council President Deb Hadcock opened the meeting, introduced the agenda, and welcomed Chuck Schleuter and Chad Tussing of South Dakota Game Fish & Parks (GF&P). Schleuter took the floor and gave a brief introduction. Schleuter stated that in the early 1990's they worked with Sioux Falls on an outdoor learning center. He stated that while they were working on the Sioux Falls complex they discussed building an outdoor learning center in Rapid City. Schleuter stated that they are excited about the complex and their staff is excited about the office space. He stated that Tussing would discuss the learning center and introduced Tussing.

Tussing took the floor and stated that they (GF&P) are looking to expand their education programs, then began his PowerPoint presentation. Hadcock asked what Tussing's position with GF&P was and Tussing replied that he was the Education Services Coordinator. Tussing displayed a map which showed where the outdoor learning center will be located in Rapid City—a 33 acre piece of land adjacent to the City of Rapid City's wilderness park. Tussing discussed the various features of the location: diversity of habitat, mixed grass prairie, hard wood trees, evergreen trees, two spring fed ponds, and springs. Tussing stated that they are excited to use that site to teach people about the outdoors. Tussing discussed the types of programs that will be available and the trails that will be available at the outdoor learning center. Tussing showed artistic renderings of where the outdoor learning center will be and what it will look like.

Costello asked if the yellow line was the property boundary. Tussing confirmed that it was, with the exception of the Hills Material Building which was included in the boundary in error.

Tussing showed an artistic rendering of what the property will look like from the prospective of entering the property from Sturgis Road. Tussing discussed that they (GF&P) want to give people a true outdoor experience. He stated that guests will cross a bridge over a pond to enter the building. Tussing discussed the two main proposes of the facility: a regional headquarter with staff offices and research lab; and outdoor education center. He stated that the education

programs will focus on four different areas: fishing, outdoor skills, hunting and outdoor education. Tussing stated that this approach is consistent with what GF&P is doing in other parts of the state. Continuing, Tussing gave examples of what will be offered at the outdoor campus throughout the year. He stated that the programs offered may change based on community need. Outdoor education could include education on habitats, aquatic ecology, scout patch programs, conservation ethics, fish and wildlife management and wildlife biology. Outdoor Skills could include education on family camping, Dutch oven cooking, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, orienteering, GPS/Geocaching, and canoeing/kayaking. Hunting could include education on basic/beginning hunting, hunt SAFE, BB guns, instinctive shooting, turkey hunting, deer & elk hunting, and archery. Fishing could include education on beginning fishing, fly tying and fishing, rod building, fish ID, fish cleaning, and ice fishing.

Tussing stated that the educational programs are offered free of charge [with infrequent exceptions]. He stated that a fee for materials only could be charged on the rare occasion cost of the materials/supplies for the class is high. Tussing gave the example of fishing rod building: the cost of the materials for the rod is high, so in this instance they have charged for the cost of the equipment—only. Tussing stated that for classes like fly tying and fishing, the cost of the materials is so incidental that they do not charge for the class.

Tussing showed a large overview map of the facility. He discussed, again, that visitors would park then cross over the bridge to the main office. He stated that from this entry point people could go out to the trails, go to classes, or enter the building to ask questions of staff. The next slide showed what the footprint of the building will look like. Tussing discussed that the classrooms could be used as one room or could be sectioned off into two or three rooms. Tussing continued, stating proposed time line for the building: construction will begin fall of 2009 with ribbon cutting, open house and major programs begin in fall 2010. He stated that there is a lot of interest in this project and it is moving along well.

Tussing stated that one of the common questions is “How much this will cost?” Tussing answered the question, and stated that the land was purchased for \$1.1 million. He also stated that donations were received in the amount of \$325,000. Tussing stated that the total cost has not been determined yet, however, the current estimate is approximately \$10 million. Tussing stated that the facility will be funded by hunting and fishing license sales, not by tax dollars. Tussing stated that the GF&P Commission is very supportive of this project and they have set aside several million dollars for this project over the past several years.

Tussing asked “Where do we do from here?” He stated they are looking at the programs that do not duplicate or compete with existing programs in the area. Tussing stated that they (GF&P) are always looking for ideas for program topics, for people interested in using the facility, and for volunteers. He stated that the Sioux Falls facility relies heavily on volunteers.

Tussing stated that he is the prime contact for the program and provided his contact information: Chad Tussing, phone (505)773-2514, [chad.tussing@state.sd.us](mailto:chad.tussing@state.sd.us), or [www.outdoorcampus.org](http://www.outdoorcampus.org). Tussing opened the floor for questions.

Hadcock asked for paper copies of the presentation. Tussing stated that he did not have copies with him; however, he could make copies and send them.

Chapman stated that the County Extension, the Boy's Club, Girl's Club, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts would seem like natural partners for the outdoor learning center. Tussing agreed. Chapman asked if the program will be hiring new employees or if they will be transferring people out here. Tussing stated that they have one person on staff currently, a full time naturalist, and they are looking to hire two additional individuals.

Martinson asked for more information about the research lab and if it would be accredited. Tussing stated that it would not be accredited or associated with a university. He stated that the lab would be for internal data collection such as chronic wasting disease, testing during the hunting season, and mountain lion research.

Gundersen Olson stated this has been an interesting process and that GF&P seems eager to partner with Rapid City. She discussed possible partnerships between the City of Rapid City and GF&P. She stated that she will urge her colleagues to take advantage of every possible partnership opportunity to make sure the site is well used by local residents and the city as a whole.

LaCroix thanked Tussing for the presentation. LaCroix stated that the bridge over the pond to get people into the mindset of their surroundings was insightful.

Schleuter took the floor and discussed the building at the outdoor complex. He stated that they are looking to do an outdoor experience and the building will be a "portal" to the outdoor campus. Schleuter stated that most of the classes will take place in the outdoor setting. He stated that the building is secondary to the outdoor experience. Schleuter stated that they have been very fiscally conservative in their approach to building this building. He stated that they have put a lot of thought into space management. Schleuter stated that the building is secondary to the outdoor experience and the staff that will facilitate the experience.

Hadcock asked if they had contacted the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB). Tussing stated that they had been in contact with the CVB. He stated that they have had a representative from the CVB involved in some of the advisory development meetings.

Gundersen Olson discussed Laurie Root, a wildlife biologist with GF&P, and stated that if all of their staff is as enthusiastic as Ms. Root she can see that children everywhere will be excited about the education they will receive through this facility.

Hadcock thanked Schleuter and Tussing. Motion to adjourn was made by Chapman and seconded by LaCroix.