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**MINUTES  
CITY OF FORT COLLINS  
FUTURES COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Date:** August 8, 2016  
**Location:** CIC Room, City Hall, 300 Laporte Ave.  
**Time:** 4:00–6:00pm

**Committee Members Present:**  
Wade Troxell, Chair  
Kristin Stephens

**Committee Members Absent:**  
Gino Campana

**City Staff:**  
Jeff Mihelich, Deputy City Manager  
Jacqueline Kozak-Thiel, Chief Sustainability Officer  
Dianne Tjalkens, Admin/Board Support  
Tyler Marr, Policy & Project Analyst  
Jackson Brockway, Graduate Management Assistant

**City Staff Absent:**  
Darin Atteberry, City Manager

**Invited Guests:**  
Keri King, Triple Crown Sports

**Community Members:**  
Ann Hutchison, Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce  
Myles Crane, community volunteer

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**Wade Troxell called meeting to order at 4:04pm**

**Approval of Minutes:**  
Kristin moved to approve the July minutes as presented. Wade seconded. Motion passed unanimously, 2-0-0.

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**Think Tank Item 8-2016: Sports Tourism—Keri King**

Mayor Troxell, background: Field sports not able to be competitive in Fort Collins, having to leave FC to play. Don't have facilities to hold attractions here. Could be more of a destination. CO Springs is branding self as an Olympic city. Opportunities for altitude training, bike racers, and other athletes living in Fort Collins.

- Triple Crown Sports: Mission is to create premium, must attend sports events.
  - Anchor for developing teams.
- 32 states, CO is largest; founded in 1983, based in Fort Collins.
  - Franchise systems in 4 other states
  - Family owned/operated
  - Matchmaking for athletes getting into colleges

- 10 sponsored sports teams training at Timberline location (local talent)
- 60 staff, median wage \$63K
- Typical Team
  - 13 athletes, 27 parents, 2 coaches (42 total)
  - Economic impact, hotel booking, etc.
  - Travel 3x/year; vacation/travel combined (economic impact)
- Recession resistant—families maintain travel.
  - 2009 added 30 local events—families cut total events, but continued to attend premium events—priority. Combined vacation with sports travel.
  - Business and personal travel gets cut—mitigate economic downturns with sports tourism
- Demographics
  - 40M kids
  - Sports are changing—volleyball/lacrosse becoming more popular
  - \$18M economic impact—SlumpBuster in NE
  - Sparkler/Fireworks (CO)—matchmaker event (\$45M)
  - One team equals \$35K average economic impact: 40% to lodging community
    - Ex: Gilbert, AZ built Big League Dreams, but not lodging to accommodate. Mesa, AZ has lodging. Planning facility-lodging infrastructure.
- Why not?
  - Expensive facility development and maintenance
  - Don't have lodging infrastructure in place
  - Local community doesn't want traffic, etc., of tourism
  - Community prefers passive use—gardens, grass, dog parks, trails, etc.
  - Customers have high expectations of traffic movement, hotels, restaurants, etc.
  - Can't break even from charging event organizers; can't charge customers enough. Don't make money renting facilities. Subsidies.
  - Control of who gets access to facilities and dates—risk.
  - City wants to attract other kinds of destination tourism (weddings, brewery tours, etc.)
  - Sports public doesn't have time to support development/investment in infrastructure.
- Why yes?
  - Attract young audience—create repeat visitors
  - Positive economic impact
  - Becoming a destination for sports—now destination for trails and beauty
  - Keeping kids healthy with sports
  - Good for local business
  - Business travel usually on weekdays; brings tourism on weekends (sometimes all week)
  - Can lean on neighboring towns to expand facility/lodging needs
  - Bed tax can support facility development
- Ideal:
  - Multiple local user groups and private groups have access
  - Solicit existing events to move to Fort Collins—don't start new event
  - Facilities that can run multiple sports. Include indoor facilities.
  - Artificial turf—lower water use/maintenance—higher initial cost
  - Make events free for organizer/user group—attract more people with lower customer cost
  - Event organizer makes donations to keep facilities improved.

- Triple Crown is valuable asset that is underutilized in Fort Collins. Operate in this City, but have better agreements with other communities. Can generate revenue. Opportunity to partner in bigger way.



### Comments/Q & A:

- Facilities are publicly funded? Or public-private partnerships?
  - Both, but almost all public-private partnerships end up in hands of community and supported by tax base. Private has trouble with maintenance costs.
- Lodging tax?
  - 2% Douglas County, NE—to support development of new stadium.
  - AZ spring training had tax on rental cars to make improvements to stadiums. Different ways to develop revenue—get visitors to pay for what coming to use.
  - Sports authority—multijurisdictional?
    - Cities that had spring training had an authority.
  - Don't anticipate many more hotels, but can make area more of a destination.
  - Could have Larimer County sports complex—more dollars from wider swath.
- Suggest 200 acres for facility and 200 for passive. By comparison, new community park is 16 acres. What to do with Hughes Stadium: Visit Fort Collins had 32 acre proposal, which fits into one parking lot at Hughes.
  - Takes decades to develop that size infrastructure. 30-50 year horizon—scale.
  - I-25 has natural areas and buffers. Compatible use—lower impact, less development.
    - Large constituent that would like facilities. This community keeps up with citizen demand for trails, natural areas, etc. This community believes in parks system. Willing to pay for it.
- Cultural resources for county going to ballot—could do same thing for sports facilities. Make sure uses aren't just for pros or tournaments. Spring training complex has additional fields where little leagues play. Regional tax for larger facility—use it to get big tournaments to pay for it. Rest of year all have access—creates support. Biggest cost is infrastructure. Hub of tournament, but neighboring cities host games running up to it.
  - Mega-events require working with multiple cities and counties. Televised games. Support the community through that media. Working relationships with parks and rec. Triple Crown doesn't put events out for bid.
  - Has to be an anchor. Large soccer populations. Arsenal tried to create facilities, but underestimated water use needs.
    - Private enterprise that requires long term investment/maintenance.
- Big events: concerts, grass roots, local sponsorship, big races.
  - Biking, iron man, individual sports.
  - Didn't see university cities in list of examples. Multiuse stadium. Leverage university facilities. Camps and youth sports. Complementary. Glendale, CO with rugby in Legacy Park—premier rugby in US.
- Is TC involved with big sports complex/water park state investment? (Windsor, Loveland, Estes park)
  - No. Not involved.
- Organizations related to the City—working with Parks?
  - Yes. Gets more appealing to work in community and be a better partner. Receiving higher services. Event numbers go way up in the summer. This community has supported Triple Crown sports.
  - Seek input from EAC—Prime example of targeting something that is reflective of our community. Visit Fort Collins.

- Have assets like institutional partners—CSU, University Health, etc. New, interesting partnerships forming.
    - Ex: Vail clinic for orthopedics.
- If you build it they will come kind of thing? If we build a great facility, how to you get an event to come here?
  - Nonprofit and for-profit companies, sanctioning organizations, etc. that all need to be consulted before building. Industry conferences. Not a large community. Once a facility is completed, it becomes an attraction. Getting story out it easy—few organizers/many customers.
  - Lack of 60/90 (large) baseball fields. Not a lot of new growth, but still lack facility infrastructure. Expensive to build and maintain. Girls’ volleyball is growing exponentially—play indoors. Huge events. Companies that bring in floors. Big crews. Not just outdoor sports to consider. Looking for 500Ksf to host girls volleyball. Customer demands outweigh capacity.
- Kayak park has community financial support.
- Keeping family in the business. Would like to work to make this a special place with the City. Disappointed that Spring Canyon Park moved away from larger sports complex concept.
  - Community input sometimes moves projects away from original ideas. Intentional with economic development aspects. Different framing than just another community park—changes how we develop funds, etc.
  - If community wants this, will take focused effort from the City. Will need many focused on goal to move this forward. Shift from passive space to sports tourism. One of best ways to mitigate economic downturn. Partnerships, lodging and facility. No central facility to draw people—have to know about distributed facilities to use them.
- Agreements with other cities? Terms?
  - One of best is 2 consecutive 10 year agreements. 5-year rolling (renew every year). Agreements that don’t charge organizer draw more people. Most dollars spent on lodging, travel, and food and beverage. If keep event cost low, other big ticket items become more attractive. Have other agreements that are year-to-year—thinking about covering cost to maintain facilities, not how to bring in outside tourism. Think of tax benefits generated when bring tourism. Harder to get good lodging contracts now that business travel is going back up. Detriment—what lodging community does with prices. When local hotels elevate prices for an event, drive customers to neighboring communities. When have a sports commission, or Chamber involved with the City, can have a good partnership.
- 2050—technology everywhere, women’s sports has grown—instead of building new, better use facilities we already have. What is unique selling proposition of Fort Collins? What women’s sports will emerge that Fort Collins will be a good training ground for?
  - Attribute is not “big city” destination. Still feels like a town—feels slowed down compared to Chicago, Denver, etc. Well-designed town. Triple Crown has been focusing on women’s sports, supported Force team, continue to have own girls sports, adapt quickly to emerging trends. Basketball, volleyball and softball are in an upward swing—will maintain level of participation through 2050. Business model not to focus on relative market size—players migrate to higher levels. Academies and organizations attract members. Organizations like Triple Crown attract those higher levels. Not focused on the bottom level. Way to be unique is something this organization could consider more. Triple Crown has tourism from all 50 states over July 4 weekend. All dependent on level of involvement of City. Fort Collins hasn’t reached name recognition of Boulder and others. Sports tourism could change this.
- Think about what sports to target. Has to leverage what we already have, and come organically from community.

- If larger regional facility is a goal, then need discussion with county officials.
- Mayor will bring up with other local mayors. Would be sharing lodging.
- Consider where we are as a municipality. Could leadership come out of Economic Health?
- Have to consider sooner rather than later. Land use constraints. People used to going to Hughes for sports events. Or closer to I-25.
  - Leverage not pristine natural areas—add facility.
  - Adjacent to a natural area is better than adjacent to a neighborhood. Lighting/traffic.
  - Near interstate is more conducive to tourism.
    - Will still go to downtown after tournaments.
- There is need for additional infrastructure—targeting families. This is a family town/safe place. Not a wide net cast for tourist—very focused.
  - Last thing a family cuts in tough times is things done for the children, like sports.

### **DO: Next Steps**

- Regional partners: industries, health, City
  - Triple Crown as convener
  - Economic Health and Parks and Rec as partners from City
- Frame as economic development activity
  - Jackie will connect Keri with Josh Birks
  - Connect with Holly Wright as well
- Consider following up with Economic Advisory Commission
  - EAC needs expectation of action

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### **Future Agenda Items**

- September: Fort Collins Food System Panel Discussion
- October: Energy Futures
- November: Community Architecture
- December: Resilient Infrastructure

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*Meeting adjourned at 5:52pm.*