**Elizabeth Park and Recreation District**

**Special Meeting of the Board of Directors**

**MEETING MINUTES**

September 17, 2024 - 5:30 pm

Meeting to be held at:

Casey Jones Pavilion - Casey Jones Park

4189 Highway 86, Elizabeth, CO 80107

I Call to Order / Roll Call / Pledge of Allegiance

Kurt called the meeting to order at 5:32pm and led the pledge of allegiance. Other Board Members present included Dondi Connelley, Doug Severinsen, and Aleta Jeffress. Also in attendance was Kevin Whitacre, Kelly Swigert, Josh Howell, and Gabriel Walton with the Elizabeth Stampede. Mike Barney was also in attendance.

II Approval of Agenda

Kurt reviewed the agenda and then Kevin and Mike shared their desired topics of discussion for the meeting. Dondi then motioned to approve the agenda and Doug 2nd. All approved.

III Communications to the Board

- Citizen Comment (citizens may address the Board on any topic for up to 2-minutes – additional time may be granted at the discretion of the Board President)

Mike asked that everyone individually share a little about their background and what brought them to their respective board positions. All attendees shared their reasons for becoming involved with either the park district or the Stampede and expressed a desire for positive relations and strengthening relationships between the two organizations.

IV Discussion with Elizabeth Stampede

 - Review Draft MOU

 - Rodeo Grounds Planning and Improvements

 Mike asked the group if there was a preference for the order of topics to discuss, and the consensus was that reviewing the master plan and proposed rodeo grounds improvements was the preferred first step. Mike then presented a summary of the Casey Jones Master Plan, sharing the process for developing the plan, and reviewing the recommendations / proposed improvements for the rodeo / event arena and grounds. Mike expressed that the plan is a dynamic document and that current and future conditions will continue to require adjustments and revisions.

After the presentation, Gabriel stated that the Stampede group has some financial resources they want to use to help pursue the improvements though they want to have confidence that Casey Jones Park will continue to host the rodeo in the long-term to validate the investments in infrastructure. He said it was really beneficial to hear directly from the District Board Members that they do support the event and want the relationship with the Stampede to continue indefinitely. All Board members commented affirmatively and expressed that Casey Jones Park is the best home for the Stampede and that the park master plan reflects their desire and commitment to ensure the event remains at the park for the long-term. Gabriel then requested that the long-term commitment be expressed through the MOU to the extent possible. He also shared that he is excited about the other proposed park improvements such as the fieldhouse, which will benefit the Stampede events in the future.

Kurt encouraged the Stampede group to use the master plan in soliciting sponsorships and pursuing fundraising opportunities to illustrate the future possibilities and stated that the Board would be happy to entertain naming rights proposals for park amenities to help raise money for capital improvements. He acknowledged that although the District has a great master plan for the park and rodeo grounds, identifying and securing adequate funding to pursue the improvements is the greatest challenge. Doug commented that ultimately, residents will need to approve a bond or ballot initiative for the District to be able to fund many of the proposed park improvements such as the recreation center.

There was then some general discussion about the most important needs for the rodeo grounds and the Stampede group expressed that the bleachers were the priority for them at this time. Gabriel stated that they have to spend about $10K each year to make repairs to the bleachers and keep them safe for use. He acknowledged that this approach is like putting a band-aid on the problem and that new bleachers were needed. Kevin shared some financial information about this years event and stated that costs had spiked by about $80K this year for a variety of reasons including additional expenses related to parking operations as a result of less parking being available on site. There was then some discussion about event parking and the impacts of additional future park improvements, with Kurt sharing that the master plan shows 700 on-site parking spaces being available upon buildout. Kevin commented that he recalled being able to park about 900 vehicles prior to recent park improvements. The Stampede group emphasized that the bleachers are currently the largest hurdle to increasing event revenues, and that by adding seats, they will be able to raise more funding for site improvements.

Gabriel asked the Board how they intend to pursue funding for improvements in the master plan and their priority for projects. Kurt stated that the recreation center remains a priority for the Board at this time, though residents will need to vote to approve funding that would be needed to pursue this project. Mike shared that the District is currently developing a District wide master plan that will help identify the community’s interest in and commitment to funding the recreation center and other park improvements identified within the Casey Jones Park Master Plan. Gabriel then offered assistance in seeking grants to help fund improvements, and shared that the Stampede is a non-profit organization that may be eligible for funding that the District may not be able to access.

The groups then turned to the existing draft of an MOU between the two organizations. Mike shared a more recent red-lined draft with the Board which he stated he had received from Kevin just prior to the meeting. Kevin began by stating that the recently installed Wifi infrastructure needed to be added to the MOU. Mike asked for clarification on intent and where in the MOU this needed to be added. Kevin stated that it needed to be added in the “ownership of property, assets, and improvements” section. Gabriel explained that the Stampede had paid Maverix for the infrastructure including control boxes, routers, and cabling, either through cash or in exchange for sponsorship opportunities.

Kurt stated that he wanted the arena footing to be addressed in the MOU, specifically stating who is responsible for arena maintenance and grooming. He asked Mike what maintenance is performed by the District. Mike shared that the maintenance team does not currently do anything in the arena itself and that the District does not have a tractor of sufficient size to take on this task. Kurt then commented that whereas the rodeo arena footing is listed as an asset of the Stampede, they should be responsible for grooming and maintenance. Gabriel agreed and stated that the Stampede group does prefer to perform all arena grooming and that they do not want other groups to be grooming the arena for fear of potentially damaging nearby assets or improperly grooming the footing. He and Kevin acknowledged that grooming has not been consistent this summer due to the cancellation of the Gymkhana program. Everyone agreed that the MOU should include language about responsibility for grooming and maintenance of the arena and outline the expectations for frequency of occurrence.

Kurt then pointed out that the date for the community rodeo has changed since the last draft of the MOU and should be updated to reflect the change. He also asked Kevin if the Stampede includes the bleachers in their property / liability insurance coverage. Kevin shared that the current value of the bleachers on site do not warrant property coverage though the liability portion is covered through their event insurance policy.

Gabriel requested that a discussion on event permit fees be scheduled prior to the end of the year so that the Stampede can adequately budget for these costs and commented that the fees were a surprise this year. Mike clarified that the fees had not increased from the previous year and commented that the permit fees should not have been a surprise. He stated that the permit fees can certainly be included on the agenda for the next meeting between the two organizations.

Aleta then asked Kevin how much the Stampede receives through sponsorship support. Kevin replied that about 25% of the event costs are covered through a combination of purchased sponsorships and the donation of services for the event.

Aleta then asked if we had a target date for completing and executing the MOU. After some discussion, it was decided that the MOU should be completed and executed before the end of 2024. Mike and Kevin stated that they would work to edit the document as discussed, have legal counsel review the final document, and have it ready to be signed and executed by the end of the year.

Doug suggested that the two groups plan to meet quarterly going forward to maintain communication and continue relationship building efforts. Everyone present supported this plan and it was mentioned that additional meetings / work sessions can be scheduled if specific topics arise that need to be addressed. Mike said he would work with Kevin to develop an agenda for the next meeting in December, which would include the execution of the MOU as well as a discussion on permit fees, along with any additional topics that are identified between now and then.

V Other Matters

VI Adjournment

There being no further business, Aleta made a motion to adjourn the Special Meeting at 6:49pm. Dondi 2nd and all approved.