

AGENDA ITEM #<item_outline>

CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION FORM

FROM: Gary Suiter, Interim City Manager

DATE: April 12, 2016

ITEM: Howelsen Hill Discussion

- DIRECTION
 - INFORMATION ONLY
 - ORDINANCE
 - MOTION
 - RESOLUTION
-

I. REQUEST/ISSUE & BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

This is the fourth in a series of meetings regarding the future of Howelsen Hill (HH) and the related Joint Use Agreement with the Steamboat Springs Winter Sports Club (SSWSC). The first meeting included a presentation by staff that included: a brief history of Howelsen; an overview of agreements, including the 1987 joint use agreement (JUA); financial overview and historical capital expenditures; grants history and stipulations; capital maintenance needs and optional improvements; and alternative operating models.

The second meeting was a presentation by the Steamboat Springs Winter Sports Club that provided Council with examples of SSWSC/City collaboration on Howelsen Hill/improvements since 2000; terrain and facility assessment; SSWSC community impact; ski area basic infrastructure repairs and maintenance; ski area enhancements for the community; and improvements that support SSWSC now and 7 years out.

The third meeting was focused upon hearing from the community. More than 50 community members provided their thoughts on the facility itself, the importance of the Hill, the role of the SSWSC in the community, and many creative ideas for the future of Howelsen Hill. A summary of these comments is attached as Attachment 3.

The format of this session is suggested as follows:

- 1) A brief Power Point showing a history and summary of the HH Master Plans – John Overstreet (see Attachment 1)
- 2) A brief review of the JUA by the City Attorney, followed by Council discussion – Dan Foote (see Attachment 2)
- 3) A brief review of the public comments received at the March 8 Community Feedback session – Gary Suiter (see Attachment 3)
- 4) Financial presentation – Kim Weber (Attachment 4)
- 5) Review and agree to assumptions going forward- Gary Suiter and City Council
- 6) Agree to goals going forward – Gary Suiter and City Council

II. ALTERNATIVES:

Council has many alternatives in moving this issue forward. Staff suggests a starting point would be to agree on some goals, starting with the following assumptions:

- 1) City Council wants to continue the operation of the public ski hill (alpine and Nordic operations).
- 2) Council would like to generate additional revenue for the City to help support Howelsen Hill facilities.
- 3) Council would like the City to have more control over the Howelsen Hill facility, making it more accessible to the public.
- 4) Council will continue to provide financial and operational support to the SSWSC, at some level to be determined.

Please provide feedback on the above-stated assumptions (or create and agree to your own assumptions), and this will provide the foundation for drafting goals that will guide you on your decisions and negotiations.

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Discuss and provide staff direction, being as specific as possible.

IV. FISCAL IMPACTS:

As presented.

V. LEGAL ISSUES:

As presented.

VI. CONFLICTS OR ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES:

Based on preliminary data from geologists, soils scientists and hydrologists, soil saturation of the unstable steep slopes of Howelsen Hill is negatively impacted from the addition of more water from snowmaking. More studies are needed to address potential ways to minimize slope failures but it is unlikely you can stop landslides from occurring.

VII. CONSISTENCY WITH COUNCIL GOALS AND POLICIES

Supports the Council goal to “work with all public stakeholders to develop a community vision, strategic plan, master plan, and long term maintenance plan for Howelsen Hill. Work with SSWSC on developing a new Joint Use Agreement for Howelsen Hill in the context of the community vision and strategic plan for the ski area.”

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1. History of Howelsen Hill Master Plans
- Attachment 2. Joint Use Agreement
- Attachment 3. Summary of Public Comments
- Attachment 4. Financial Information