



SPORTING CHANCE CENTER

Operated By
Southern Arizona Community Sports, Inc.
A 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization

July 5, 2021

Submitted via email: cob_mail@pima.gov

The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors
c/o Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
130 West Congress
Tucson, AZ 85701

Re: Comments on Consent Calendar Item #12 for Meeting to be held July 6, 2021

Dear Chair Bronson and Members of the Pima County Board of Supervisors:

I am providing this input in connection with the Board's consideration of Consent Calendar Item #12 for the meeting to be held July 6, 2021, generally described as the Kino District Business Plan and Master Developer Partnership Agreement (MDPA) with Knott Development, Inc.

I understand that this submission can be read into the record as part of the audience or public comments section of the meeting and appreciate the opportunity.

By way of background

- I am the founder and executive director of Southern Arizona Community Sports, Inc. ("SACS"), a Tucson-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that conceived, developed, helped fund and now operates the Sporting Chance Center in a public-private partnership with Pima County.
- I also founded Sporting Chance Youth Basketball, Inc. (also a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization) in 1993 to promote and improve youth basketball in Southern Arizona. SCYB spawned the idea for SACS and the Center. I have been intimately involved (in a non-paid, volunteer capacity) with youth sports in Tucson for nearly 30 years.
- The Sporting Chance Center, owned by the County and operated by SACS, opened in July 2013. Based in the Flowing Wells district, it serves clients from all over the Tucson Metro area. Our non-profit operating model allows us to set our usage fees as low as possible to attract local community users while still providing enough revenue to sustain the Center as an ongoing operation.

The Knott proposal being considered by the Board includes, among other things, the construction and operation of a Fieldhouse that will house basketball, volleyball, and other indoor sports.

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Because the Fieldhouse will have many similarities to the Sporting Chance Center, we took an interest in the project to learn more about it, including its potential impact on the community at large as well as on the Center.

We have been welcomed by Frank Knott and the County to ask questions and provide input, and appreciate the time spent and information provided by both parties.

As we have told both Mr. Knott and the County (primarily Carmine DeBonis), based on what we know at this time and the commitments that have been made to us (below), we feel this project -- *provided it can be done in a fiscally prudent way for the County and in a way that addresses the concerns of the Sporting Chance Center* - would be a tremendous addition to Southern Arizona, and we would certainly support the project.

However, we have expressed some concerns to Mr. Knott and the County, including concerns about the project's business model and its potential adverse impact on the Sporting Chance Center; in particular, whether adding a new facility with nearly twice the capacity of the Sporting Chance Center will threaten the viability of the Center.

Regarding the business model, we understand that the MPDA provides for a period of validation (the "Determination Phase") during which the County will have an opportunity to evaluate the model and make decisions about its commitment.

Regarding our concerns about potential impact on the Sporting Chance Center, we are pleased to report that Mr. Knott has expressed a willingness to cooperate and coordinate with us as much as possible, and to commit to certain practices and protocols to maximize chances that both the Sporting Chance Center and the Fieldhouse will thrive. We both agree the ideal result would be a symbiotic, complementary existence.

I would like to take this opportunity to inform the Board and the public of some of the key takeaways from those discussions, including the following assurances made:

- As part of the Determination Phase under the MPDA, Knott intends to seek commitments from potential users of the Fieldhouse in order to demonstrate the viability of its financial plan. We understand that Knott will not rely on or seek any commitments from current or recent customers of the Center.
- At any time during co-existence of the Fieldhouse and Center, the Fieldhouse will not actively recruit then current or recent customers of the Center.
- Fieldhouse weekend programming will consist nearly exclusively (at least 44 weekends) of nationally marketed tournaments, designed to draw out of town visitors to Southern Arizona, as opposed to local, community based events or programming that rely primarily on local teams and users (i.e., the Sporting Chance Center mission and clients). Of course, if the Sporting Chance Center cannot accommodate the demand for local events, and Fieldhouse programming does not redirect business away from the Center, we would support local weekend programming at the Fieldhouse (although we understand that is not their mission).

- In order to maximize potential of both the Fieldhouse and the Center, representatives from both will communicate regularly to discuss scheduling of events and programming to avoid potential conflicts and also support each other if opportunities arise.

In conclusion, we have supported (and many would say are partially responsible for) the growth of local indoor youth sports in Pima County, with our sweat and treasure, for nearly 30 years and will continue to support any project consistent with that mission. The Knott project as proposed is an ambitious undertaking and could be a great asset for Southern Arizona. At the same time, the Sporting Chance Center has proven to be a wonderful community asset, recently (March 2021) celebrating the passage of the *two-millionth visitor* through its turnstiles. Therefore, we hope you understand our desire to protect it while still supporting the Board's efforts to make Pima County a better place for all residents.

Thank you for this opportunity to address and inform the Board and the public of our thoughts on this project.

Regards,



Donald J. Tringali

Founder & Executive Director

Sporting Chance Center

Operated by Southern Arizona Community Sports, Inc.

A 501(c)(3) Organization

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