




MEMORANDUM

Date: August 9, 2024

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: Jan Lesh 
County Administrator

Re: **Additional Information for August 13, 2024, Agenda Item #14 - Southern Arizona Sports Tourism and Film Authority Intergovernmental Agreement**

Introduction

Baseball has a long and culturally diverse history at the Pima County Kino Sports Complex (KSC.) The complex has hosted the Arizona Diamondbacks, the Diamondback's Triple A affiliate the Tucson Sidewinders, Chicago White Sox, the Tucson Padres (AAA affiliate of the San Diego Padres) the annual Mexican Baseball Fiesta, the Mexican Winter League, and the Tucson Saguaros, an independent professional baseball team.

In addition to playing host to numerous professional organizations, KSC is used by youth and amateur baseball programs every year. Between the Kino Baseball League, the Tucson Invitational Games and little league baseball programs, the Kino baseball facilities are visited by tens of thousands of players and supporters each year. The proposed Intergovernmental Agreement with the Southern Arizona Sports Tourism and Film Authority builds on the strong baseball tradition that exists at KSC.

Background

In 1990, the Arizona State Legislature authorized the creation of stadium districts in certain counties. By statute a County's Board of Supervisors serves as the district's Board of Directors. The purposes of the district include but are not limited to maintaining, operating, improving and promoting spring training facilities, stadiums and the amenities that support their operation. In 1991, the Pima County Board of Supervisors created a Stadium District that includes KSC.

In 2009, the first season following the departure of the Tucson Sidewinders, Pima County entered into an agreement with the Pima County Sports and Tourism Authority (Authority) to negotiate terms and manage the operation of KSC in support of the Tucson Padres (Triple A Baseball.) The Authority was successful in its mission and that arrangement continued until the Authority was allowed to statutorily sunset and the Padres organization moved their operation to another city.

In 2021, the Arizona Senate President appointed an Ad Hoc Committee to consider the reformation of the Southern Arizona Sports Tourism and Film Authority (SASTFA.) As a result

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of that committee's work SB1710 was enacted in 2022 establishing the SASTFA. The Authority operates in six Southern Arizona counties (Pima, Greenlee, Graham, Cochise, Santa Cruz and Pinal) promoting youth, amateur and professional sports, the film industry and the economic benefits that accompany tourism.

Current Considerations

Since its reauthorization by the Arizona State Legislature in 2022, the SASTFA has been actively promoting KSC as a destination for professional baseball. Currently, there are significant upgrades to the facilities being implemented. Those include a new LED scoreboard, pitch clocks that are now required at all levels of professional baseball, upgrades to lighting and the playing field – the combined effect of which make Kino an increasingly attractive facility for all levels of competition. In addition, the recent completion of the Kino South soccer and pickleball facilities, and the much anticipated Mosaic Quarter sports facilities south of Interstate 10 all combine to synergistically make Kino and the surrounding area a destination location for all levels of sports and related activities.

The proposed Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between the Pima County Stadium District and SASTFA capitalizes on the strengths of each partner in the agreement. The KSC staff will continue to manage, maintain and upgrade the facilities while the Authority will leverage its significant relationships and history to attract professional baseball clients back to Kino where they belong.

It is anticipated that with each new potential baseball tenant the KSC and the Authority will enter into Facility Use Agreements (FUA) that will outline the responsibilities of each party to include those of the new tenant. This IGA reinstates and formalizes the relationship between the Pima County Stadium District and the Southern Arizona Sports Tourism and Film Authority. It will serve as the basis for jointly negotiated FUA's as prospective tenants and events are identified.

Recommendation

Pima County, and specifically the Kino Sports Complex, has a proud and long history of hosting all competitive levels of baseball. Our facilities are attractive, and with the upgrades that are currently in process, KSC will be positioned to once again potentially host professional baseball, up to and including the major league levels of play. I recommend the Board approve this IGA with the Southern Arizona Sports Tourism and Film Authority to formalize our partnership in pursuit of some exciting prospective opportunities that may be coming to Kino.

JKL/anc

- c: Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator
- Francisco Garcia, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator & Chief Medical Officer
- Steve Holmes, Deputy County Administrator
- Sarah Horvath, Director, Kino Sports Complex and Stadium District