

**SPORTS AUTHORITY OF THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT
OF NASHVILLE & DAVIDSON COUNTY**

**Minutes of October 14, 2020 Meeting of the Women's Professional
Sports Ad Hoc Committee
Cisco WebEx Conference
10:30 a.m.**

Committee Members: Cathy Bender (Chair), Margaret Behm, Dan Hogan

Board Members: Kim Adkins, Don Deering, Jad Duncan, Melvin
Gill, Frank Harrison, Emmett Wynn

Staff: Monica Fawknorton, Quinton Herring, Melissa Wells, Margaret
Darby (Legal)

Advisory Committee Members: Adam Nuse (Sounds), Ashley Stokley
(Titans), Michelle Kennedy (Predators), Scott Ramsey (Nashville Sports
Council), Council member Nancy Van Reece, Ian Ayre (Nashville SC)

Visitors: Dan Barrett (CAA/ICON), Bryan Slater (CAA/ICON),

Chair Bender called the meeting of the Women's Professional Sports Ad Hoc Committee to order at 10:30 a.m. and welcomed all in attendance. Chair Bender reviewed explained that this meeting was being held electronically via WebEx to protect the public's health and well being during the COVID-19 pandemic. There were no objections. **Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Authority unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the August 25, 2020, meeting of the Women's Professional Sports Ad Hoc Committee meeting.**

Chair Bender stated that the purpose of the committee meeting was to discuss the "Next Steps" recommended by the consultant, CAA/ICON. In August the Ad Hoc Committee met to receive CAA/ICON's report; now the committee is ready to address the consultants recommended "Next Steps" which include: (1) engaging in discussions with any potential ownership groups that may emerge as a result of the initiative; (2) holding discussions with each of the identified teams (NWSL, WNBA, and possible the NWHL) to more specifically discuss expansion and relocation plans, timelines, interest in the market, venues in the market, etc.; (3) scheduling meetings with appropriate political subdivisions, private partners, and local universities to discuss study findings and understand preliminary interest in potential partnerships; (4) completing specific market analysis and estimates of operating performance for one or all of the franchises in the identified

leagues, pending completion of the tasks above-analyses should include focus groups, web-based survey, and corporate interviews to understand specific league/sport preferences (5) identifying possible suitable venue solutions for one or all of the franchises based on completion of the tasks above-depending on franchise/venue combination, develop estimate for capital investment required; and (6) re-engaging leagues, ownership groups, and political partners with plans for venue investment/modification (as applicable) and estimates of operating performance.

Chair Bender recognized Margaret Behm who shared that the report identifies two important points: (1) the need to identify ownership groups that may be interested in pursuing these types of opportunities and (2) the need to develop a plan to identify venue solutions. In addition, she suggested the committee discuss the need to hire a consultant to deal with the next steps and the process for doing so. Monica Fawknotson advised that should the committee determine additional consulting services are needed, a detailed scope would need to be developed and the committee should be aware that the procurement process can be lengthy- possibly four to six months.

Michelle Kennedy discussed concerns about the timing of moving forward during a pandemic, and advised proceeding with caution. She also suggested using this "downtime" to identify a consultant and to address the specific need.

Scott Ramsey, Nashville Sports Council President, recommended adjusting the priorities of the identified "Next Steps. He shared that major leagues can have a significant vetting process (for example, the process that Nashville SC experienced), and some of the leagues may have interested parties that are looking at possible expansion or relocation. Dan Hogan added that this could be a good time for research but that it's important to keep the effort moving forward.

Margaret Behm suggested that a scope be developed, and that the request to hire a consultant be presented to the full Board, possibly adjusting the order of the priorities included in the report. Scott Ramsey suggested that having the facilities in place should be a top priority and Ian Ayre added that having information on operating cost would help determine the most appropriate venue.

Cathy Bender noted her concern about the timing, and Dan Barrett (CAAICON) agreed that the timing is critically important adding that teams

are expanding and relocating. When the report was first prepared, the plan was to release the report and publish it through the media, in order to generate momentum. In light of the pandemic, Barrett stated that the plan should be revised with the priority of (1) identifying owners; (2) finding out what the leagues want/need in a venue; (3) finding local partners, (4) having a lease in place; and (5) looking at the market. He went on to say that, in this, there are other things that can be done, such as survey work, identifying leagues, and team preferences. This preliminary work will help narrow the focus. Conversations with the MLS ownership groups are also a logical next step. Going to specific venues, and political and private partners is premature at this time. Barrett noted that one of the keys to success with any expansion franchise is having the ability to ramp up; marketing before you start playing is a key requirement and providing enough time for relocation is key. If the process started today, it would probably be a minimum of a 2022 scenario. Given conditions now, it is important to not come out prematurely; rather do the behind the scenes steps. Mr. Barrett asked for clarification of the procurement process under their current contract, he also advised that in other areas, they have worked under private funding as well as government funding.

Margaret Darby advised that when CAA/ICON was awarded Phase 1, it was shared with the committee that if phase 2 was approved, a formal procurement process could be needed because of the amount of the low bid and the Procurement requirements. The current contract cannot be amended.

Margaret Behm emphasized the need to follow procurement procedures. She made a motion that the Authority hire a consultant to help with the next steps. The next steps will not need to be in the same order as listed in the report. The Committee can then reconvene to discuss how to move forward. Dan Hogan suggested a community survey be a part of the motion. Margaret Darby advised that the amount of the bids would determine the Procurement requirements.

Dan Hogan clarified that the motion is to recommend to the board to hire a consultant to provide guidance through the six priorities as defined in the Executive Summary in whatever order is deemed appropriate and also separately to perform survey work identifying the community's interest and enthusiasm as to which of these particular franchises need to be engaged. The committee voted to support the motion which was duly made and seconded. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

