May 14, 2019

Council Bluffs City Council
209 Pearl St Ste 102
Council Bluffs, IA 51503

Dear City Council Members,

The Council Bluffs Soccer Club is a growing 501c3 with a mission to help youth maximize their potential through a first-class soccer experience with a safe atmosphere for practice and play. The club emphasizes quality, professional training; and well-organized game competition that is developmentally appropriate for all levels of play. By providing opportunities to all players regardless of ability to pay, CBSC seeks to shape players of all ages who compete with courage and share the value of commitment to self, team, club and community.

The organization is the result of a merger between the Council Bluffs Youth Soccer Association and the Council Bluffs Futbol Club, two competing organizations that came together in 2016 to create a unified infrastructure. It is now the largest youth soccer organization in the state of Iowa and will likely grow upon completion of the Iowa West Sports Plex. CBSC serves 2,000 plus athletes and their families, primarily hailing from Council Bluffs and surrounding southwest Iowa communities in Pottawattamie County including Carter Lake, Treynor, Underwood, Neola, Avoca, Walnut, Oakland, Carson, and Crescent in addition to communities within the counties of Harrison, Mills, Montgomery, and Shelby Counties.

In 2011, a Pottawattamie County-wide Parks, Recreation, and Leisure Facilities Needs Assessment identified an indoor field house as well as synthetic turf fields as top priorities for the community. Results showed these facilities would serve a wide variety of youth sports teams and leagues needs year-round. The current market for indoor turf facilities is saturated with minimal time allocated to CBSC for its players and coaches to work on development. The needs for indoor practice space currently outpace the availability in the greater Omaha area in the winter months by 50 percent. CBSC competitive teams have previously trained at the CU Rasmussen Center or UNO Dome; however, due to schedule conflicts and not being a priority tenant, have been routinely forced out several times leaving them nowhere to train. Sadly, the UNO Dome collapsed in early March and according to an article in the Omaha World-Herald, will not be repaired.

CBSC envisions a home facility with a community feel that is animated with activity year-round. Local teams, leagues, and multiple sport clubs that need the space will be able to take advantage of all youth sports has to offer at affordable rates. Families that previously did not participate because they could not afford to pay the fees or transportation costs associated with other leagues in the region will be able to utilize a welcoming, inclusive space in their hometown and have a sense of pride in their community.

A task force evaluated a number of options for a location of the indoor facility. In the end, the decision was made to negotiate the purchase of land south of 23rd Avenue in the Mid-America

Center (MAC) entertainment district because of its proximity to the outdoor soccer fields on South 24th Street, the Iowa West Field House, and Interstates 29 and 80. This location ultimately allows for the expansion of the "sports village" concept around the MAC, layering additional animation into this important area for Council Bluffs.

Named in honor of the lead donor for the project, the Iowa West Sports Plex will be a 75,000 square foot indoor turf facility with the ability to accommodate multiple young athletes from sports including soccer, baseball and softball with potential for flag football, rugby, lacrosse, ultimate Frisbee and more. It will also be able to offer speed and agility training to athletes of all ages. The artificial turf will be the size of one regulation youth 11v11 soccer field with the ability to be separated into multiple smaller fields.

The facility task force is actively creating spaces for families to gather while athletes are using the facility. During practice times, parents will be encouraged to stay and network with other parents by utilizing the flexible spaces. The concession stand just off the entry will be open as many hours as feasible, allowing families to grab a bite to eat without having to leave the facility. The upstairs mezzanine area will have bleachers as well as bench style tables for parents to sit and work and to encourage conversation and congregation space. Outside of the field partition wall, benches will allow parents to sit, congregate and observe their players. As one parent has shared, "Some of my best friends were made on the sidelines of my kids' activities". We hope to provide a location and gathering space for future connections just as these.

Currently the club is seeking support from local foundations and philanthropic supporters. One funding opportunity is an Enhance Iowa Community Attraction and Tourisam (CAT) award. The Enhance Iowa Board requires cash contributions from the city and county where the project is located as well as cash contributions from both individuals and businesses. On behalf of the Council Bluffs Soccer Club, we welcome the opportunity to request $25,000 in combined in-kind and monetary donation in support from the City of Council Bluffs in partnership with our organization in the construction of the Iowa West Sports Plex indoor turf field complex. The Board of Supervisors has approved the requested and pledged a $25,000 cash gift. We sincerely appreciate the Planning Commmission and City Council Bluffs City Council approvals allowing this project to take shape. A communty wide campaign began in late April, with $5,465,591 secured to date and an additional $2.75 million in pending grant applications. The CBSC has a strong history of bringing people to the city as part of the annual Halloween Havoc tournament. The CB Convention and Visitors Bureau reports the economic impact for the 2018 tournament brought a total attendance 9,843 and an economic impact $1,399,379. This facility will continue to build upon this impact with the opportunty for year round programming.

This facilty will truly serve all of southwest Iowa young athletes and their families. Partnerships and investments in this mission will make the project a reality, and we look foward to the opportunity to provide additional information and have the City of Council Bluffs part of this transformational project.

Sincerely,

Arian Haddix
Secretary, Board of Directors
Council Bluffs Soccer Club


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