

OPEN Briefing from the Director Neighbourhoods and Communities, regarding Fraser Park Sportsville

Date of Briefing: 7/10/2020 – 4.05pm-5.11pm

Attendees

Elected Members: Mayor Barry, Deputy Mayor Lewis, Cr Brown, Cr Dyer, Cr Edwards, Cr Hislop, Cr Milne, Cr Mitchell, Cr Shaw, Cr Sutton, Ms P Hanna, Chair, Petone Community Board

Staff: Ms J Miller, Chief Executive; Ms A Blackshaw, Director Neighbourhoods and Communities; Mr K Puketapu-Dentice, Director Transformation and Resources; Ms A Welanyk, Director Transformation and Resources; Mr M Sherwood, Head of Parks and Recreation; Mr D Newth, Financial Accounting Manager Tara Fevre, Senior Community Recreation Programmer, Rachael Thomas, Senior Management Accountant; Mrs H Clegg, Minute Taker

Attendees: Fraser Park Sportsville (FPS) Board members: John Strahl (Chair), Colin Stone, Peter Hegarty, Jason Stapp, Wendy Edwards, Sarah Boyes, Phil Steere, Hannah Keat.

Liz Le Prou, General Manager, FPS.

Julian Todd SportNZ, chair of the Fraser Park Working Group (FPWG)

Conflict of Interest Declarations:

Cr Shaw is a member of the Fraser Park Working Group

Cr Hislop is a manager for a sponsor of the Squash Club.

Apologies / Absences

Elected Member Apologies: Cr Bassett, Cr Briggs, Cr Rasheed

Elected Members Absent: None

Key Objectives of the Brief

The purpose of the briefing is to update members on the workings of Fraser Park Sportsville (FPS).

Discussion

The Director Neighbourhoods and Communities advised:

- A report was being drafted for presentation to the November Council meeting, providing details of the findings of the Fraser Park Working Group (FPWG) along with a request for funding.
- The report will also provide up to date advice at that time, including options for moving forward, to allow for informed decisions to be made.
- Lessons have been learnt from the entire FPS process.
- The Centre was in a better position than it was in July:
 - collaboration between clubs is occurring;
 - good use of facility by clubs and community;
 - hard work being undertaken by volunteers.

Mr John Strahl advised:

- congratulated Councillors for requesting the briefing and the staff for providing such comprehensive background information.
- It was beneficial to look back, to learn from processes and move forward, and to avoid making the same mistakes in the future.
- FPS was a complex project, both construction and operations.
- FPS represents collective effort by 1000 club members, ratepayers and hundreds of sponsors.
- Clubs are now engaged and supportive.
- Better communications are occurring between all parties.
- Learning from the past to ensure a sustainable future for FPS.
- He is proud to be associated with the local and regional asset.

Mr Julian Todd advised:

- He was grateful to Council and CFT for asking Sport NZ to chair the FPWG.
- He acknowledged the positive nature of the FPWG meetings, at which all members were engaged, open, honest and future focused.
- FPWG had collectively reviewed what had transpired – not to point fingers, but to understand what and when decisions were made, and found there was no single large issue that created the current state.
- All parts of the process had implications down the track.
- SportNZ has undertaken a review of all sportsvilles/sports hubs (@115) around the country over the past 18 months, and found many had similar issues throughout construction and operations phases.
- A new SportNZ guide will be published coming out in the next 2 months aimed at assisting Councils to avoid pitfalls. He added there was nothing unique about the issues of this project.
- FPWG had objectively presented a range of options for operations moving forward, with benefits and risks included. He stressed it was not an exhaustive list, and that the current financial situation of the facility was understood. Detailed work had been undertaken to present the budget contained in the papers. Numbers were honest and were a true reflection of all the information available.
- Next steps were focussed around “how does this building better interact with the wider FP environment?”
 - There is a need for good conversations.
 - Original business case saw this building as being a regional facility – then conversations must include wider partners.
 - Only code with a national proponent is squash.
 - Many founding clubs have been on the whole journey (10 years). Embrace them.

Colin Stone advised:

- He had been in the position of chair of FPS for 6 weeks.
- He acknowledged Councillors for showing an interest in FPS; Julian, a nationally recognised expert in running such facilities; and the founding member clubs, who were positive, committed and passionate.
- The Board consisted of many first term members, with a variety of talents and attributes.
- The Board was focussed on doing the best to get the facility to serve the community.
- His report highlighted important omissions and missed opportunities during planning, construction and early operations.
- The Board appreciated the financial circumstance of Council and urged members not to forget the social capital generated by the facility. He added FPS does connect to Council’s wellbeing framework.
- There were ongoing concerns with the financial status of the founding.

- The Board was requesting Council to support FPS further, and that any operating model for the facility would require ongoing Council financial support.
- The preferred option was the most pragmatic and sensible, being a continuation of the existing model as there had not been a true chance to test it yet. Some strong embellishments to the model were required, including the need to be aggressive in finding new revenue streams.

Members asked questions, which the Director, the Chief Executive, FPWG or the Board members answered.

- The November report to Council would provide details of the process to date, including clarity of ownership on project risk, management of risk, responsibility for oversight of the project, relationships and communication channels between Council and the CFT, frequency of reporting to council (it should be more frequent than once yearly) and how future operations should occur, especially highlighting roles and responsibilities.
- Some founding clubs had difficulty in calling the facility “home” - this was currently being addressed.
- There was a clear need to better engage with the wider community.
- All clubs were prepared to work to make things better.
- Founding clubs were not in a financial position to contribute more monies. However, they are not asking for reductions in the current amounts they paid.
- Acknowledged that despite grievances, the founding clubs were all still present, which was indicative of the desire to make FPS work.
- Covid-19 had had a drastic impact on the centre.
- The updated SportNZ guide to Sportsvilles would explain pitfalls to avoid, and that the process should not begin with a new building, but with ideas from all supporting clubs about ways to move forward collectively – which may result in a new building but equally may not.
- Clubs were heavily engaged at the start of FPS, but as the complex construction process got underway, they were not involved. That should not happen again.
- Sports development for each club needed to be identified and provided for.
- The operational model was untested and was operating in a building designed for more than just club level sport. There were high fixed costs for the building.
- Lessons learned about how much could be expected from a group of volunteer clubs.
- Some Sportsvilles in NZ were highly successful, and each one was different. This meant there was no “one size fits all” approach or remedy.
- FPS need to diversify to obtain more revenue streams. Most of the facility was highly utilised.
- 2017 business case was initiated by the then Board, then tweaked and administered by an independent project manager.
- Focus went to the complex build, instead of remaining with all partners
- Work was commencing on ways to make the large spaces feel more “homely” for clubs e.g. having own photos and displays.
- Early conversations about how the facility would be used, did not get followed through to the finished facility.
- Design challenges were acknowledged, and omissions identified.
- Questions for the immediate future included how to integrate the operation of this facility with the operation of the wider park? How could the management team connect with other groups? How could the management team work with council events team, and sports teams regionally? What could be the role of the building for large events?
- FPS does not manage Fraser Park grounds.

- Gaps in documentation have been identified at various steps along the process, including at project stage and in the operational phase.
- The current operating model needed time to bed in.
- Club open days for kids have recently occurred which were highly successful.
- This facility has potential and needs time to move forward to become an important community facility.
- Acknowledgement of the time of the skeleton staff.
- The November paper to council will outline the case for the request for funding, and the potential future of the facility, including details of risk management, transparency and sensitivity analysis.
- There have been lessons learnt concerning a lack of control within the council structure, programme management and construction. Council has recently appointed an independent chair to the Audit and Risk Committee and now requires more regular reporting on projects.
- Acknowledge that other clubs in the city may view council funding of FPS as bailing out these clubs. Needs careful communications, including that council is funding the facility, and not the clubs. Also acknowledge that a lot of money has been spent on this facility, meaning other clubs in other parts of the city may miss out on funding.
- The Board was receptive to any suggestions to expand the revenue stream e.g. corporate events.
- It was reiterated that the background papers provided real information, and not “pie in the sky” thinking.

There was general agreement that Council should support FPS.

Mayor Barry thanked all for their efforts to date.

Next Steps

Director Neighbourhoods and Communities to present a detailed report to the November Council meeting, including all points raised and spoken of today, including options for the future management of the facility, and options for expansion of the revenue stream of the facility.

Briefing Materials

Attachment 1 – Lessons Learnt