

Members

Rep. Robert Bischoff, Chair
Rep. Ron Liggett
Rep. Phyllis Pond
Rep. William Ruppel
Sen. James Merritt, Vice-Chair
Sen. David Ford
Sen. Katie Wolf
Sen. Allie Craycraft



INDIANA STATE FAIR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: August 11, 1999
Meeting Time: 9:00 A.M.
Meeting Place: Indiana State Fair Grounds, Board
Room, Administration Building
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 2

Members Present: Rep. Robert Bischoff, Chair; Rep. Ron Liggett; Rep. William Ruppel;
Sen. David Ford; Sen. Katie Wolf; Sen. Allie Craycraft.

Members Absent: Sen. James Merritt, Vice-Chair; Rep. Phyllis Pond.

Call to Order. Rep. Robert Bischoff, Chair of the State Fair Advisory Committee, called the meeting to order. After the introduction of the committee members, Rep. Bischoff asked for a report from the Center for Agricultural Science and Heritage, also known as the "Barn."

The Center for Agricultural Science and Heritage. Betsy Kranz, Executive Director of the Barn, reported the following. In 1992, Lieutenant Governor Frank O'Bannon brought together a group of agriculturalists and asked them to consider the future of agriculture. One product of the meeting was the concept of a center for agricultural science and heritage. As society moves into an informational age, such a center would be in a position to help the agricultural industry move forward. Ms. Kranz expressed her appreciation of the General Assembly's support of such a center.

In October 1998, an historical barn located on the northwest side of Indianapolis was disassembled. In October 1999, the "Barn" will be completely reassembled to serve as the cornerstone for the Center for Agricultural Science and Heritage. The outside of the Barn is complete; however, additional work is required inside. The Barn has already been the site for several functions. The Barn will now move forward with its programming efforts to support the

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agricultural industry.

Ms. Kranz introduced Cress Hizer, Chief Executive Officer for Indiana Agribusiness Associates. Mr. Hizer expressed his belief that the Barn will help agribusiness see the future. He stressed that the purpose of the Barn was to preserve the past but to also look toward the future. He encouraged the committee to continue to support the Barn. He envisions many events being held at the Barn year round, noting that it complements the State Fairground facilities. He also indicated that the Barn is not just about agriculture but also about economic development, education, and community awareness.

In response to a question from Rep. Bischoff, Ms. Kranz indicated that tours of the Barn will begin at a later date. The Barn will host a twine cutting event on October 8. On October 9, the Barn will host a Normandy Festival to present the completed building to the public. It will be a day of agriculture and a public festival for agriculture.

The construction of the Barn was completed in phases. The final phase is the hay mound, which is yet to be completed. The Barn hopes to have public programming; however, it will not be open to the general public initially until the staff has expanded to the point where they can accommodate the public on an ongoing basis.

With respect to revenue, in 1994 the Barn became a not-for-profit organization and began fund raising in the private sector. In 1995 the Office of the Commissioner of Agriculture issued a value-added grant to the Barn that was matched with a loan from the State Fair Commission. The grant was to be used to hire staff. Ms. Kranz was hired beginning with the first quarter of 1995. The grant was also available the next year.

After the second year, the Barn was able to match the grant with private funding. Operations were funded privately until 1997 when the General Assembly appropriated \$1.625 million for site development and preparation. That funding is still in use. With the funding, the Barn administration has demolished two vacant buildings and installed a fence so that parking would be secure for state fair events. The administration has also conducted several feasibility studies, both for programming and for the site to ensure that what they are planning is appropriate for both the industry and the community. With respect to private funding, they have reached 14% of their goal with the Farm Bureau contributing the lead gift. Ms. Kranz will be moving her administrative office over to the Barn after the fair. The Barn will be connected to a much larger education center that they envision.

She foresees that private sector funding will continue as people see the value and comprehensiveness in their programming and intent. They are trying to become self-sustaining. They have considered developing an agricultural-business complex. Agricultural organizations have approved the concept and a feasibility study is underway which considers the physical space for such a project and whether the Krannert Building can serve that purpose. The study is also examining the benefits of such a complex and how and when it could be developed.

The Barn has about 9,000 square feet on both floors. It is hoped that the Barn will be promoted as a good meeting place for agricultural businesses. Ms. Kranz stressed, however, that as long as the Barn is a public facility and museum, it may never be self-supporting without contributions.

The Indianapolis Ice. Rep. Bischoff asked for a report from the Indianapolis Ice. Jason Burkman, Media Relations Director for the Indianapolis Ice, reported the following. Last year was the first year that the Indianapolis Ice played at the Pepsi Coliseum since the 1993-94 season. Fifteen hundred new seats were installed at the Coliseum, a new locker room, and a party area behind the goal for companies and groups to enjoy the games. Improvements to the

lighting and air conditioning systems have also been made.

The team is moving from the International Hockey League (IHL) this year to the Central Hockey League (CHL). They decided to join the CHL, which is a younger league, in the hope that the younger league will provide more exciting hockey.

The Ice have been listening to their 2,000 season ticket holders, many of whom contact him frequently to provide input about the facility and the team. They appreciate the new seats, new party room, and the locker room. They also appreciate having more area in which to visit with the players after the game as opposed to just having the tunnel to the locker room as was the case before.

The fans would like to have a new score board as well as a merchandise area. Currently, the merchandise director sets up shop in the tunnel. The merchandise cannot be secured under this arrangement and must be moved before and after each game.

The fans would also like to see a more secured parking facility, such as a parking garage or a parking area with security. An overtime game might go until 11:00 at night, and fans would like to see more security. Sometimes they must pass through the tunnel in order to get to the parking lot in the in-field. At times the lighting in the tunnel was not sufficient.

Attendance grew about 4,700 this year. Within the next week or so, the Ice plans to have some major announcements. Hockey has a big January and February draw. They would like to draw more people in October and November. Mr. Burkman said that he liked the Coliseum, and that the Ice are happy with the progress being made. The Coliseum has always been used as a practice facility, and the Ice have always maintained lockers there.

Hockey season begins October 16 with a game on the road. Their home opener is October 23. Training camp starts October 1. The regular season ends during the first couple days in April. Playoffs follow. The latest the team could play would be the middle of May.

The Coliseum holds approximately 8,200. They hope to get around 5,500 people to attend the games. They hope to sell more group tickets to companies. This year the Ice will host 35 home games out of the 70 scheduled. Last year in the IHL they had 82 games. Tickets are \$9, \$12, \$15, and \$18. The Ice has also brought in other acts to entertain, such as the Village People and Blondie.

The Ice have been affiliated with Chicago Blackhawks for the past ten years. However, last year some problems arose that ended the affiliation. The fees for participating in the IHL were also high. In the CHL a couple players may see action in the National Hockey League every year, but primarily most of the players are right out of college. CHL is comparable to an AA team in baseball.

The games are broadcast on radio by Ken Double. Players in the CHL may reside in Indianapolis for three years whereas in the IHL the city might lose half the team each year. The average pay in the CHL ranged from \$450 to \$700 a week with a salary cap of \$200,000 to \$300,000. By moving to the CHL, the Ice were able to cut costs through lower salaries. The IHL cap is \$1.2 million with an average salary of \$28,000. Some players maintained salaries in the six figure range.

Opening Day at the State Fair. Rep. Ruppel commented that the sheep building was a great success and important to the State Fair. Rep. Bischoff commended the State Fair for the State Fair opening ceremony.

Bob Kraft commended the staff and commission for what looks to be a great state fair. He noted that for the next 12 days the focus will be on agriculture. He noted that the staff has done a great job of promoting the use of the facility for other purposes year round; however, the Bureau would like to see the focus remain on agriculture. The Barn will preserve the agricultural focus.

Next Meeting Date. The next meeting date of the committee was not set. The committee hopes to meet around the middle of September when the State Fair Board and the State Fair Commission meet to review the 1999 State Fair.

Adjournment. Rep. Bischoff adjourned the meeting at 10:00 a.m.