

Outdoor Aquatics Committee

Sturgis, SD 57785

Final Report and Recommendation Proposed Outdoor Aquatics Facility

In the late summer of 2020, the City began seeking comments regarding the construction of a new splash pad next to the Community Center. Several members of the public began asking for further outdoor aquatic recreation beyond a splash pad. In response to these concerns, the City posted openings for an Outdoor Aquatics Committee. Every person who completed an application was appointed to the Committee.

The Committee began meeting every other week to discuss the potential splash pad. The City explained that there was \$200,000 budget for a splash pad and an additional \$760,000 would be available if the Marcotte property were sold. The City's goal was to construct a splash pad and to leave additional space so that when further funding was available additional outdoor water park facilities could be constructed.

The Committee originally began discussing the City's concept. However, the committee believed that such a long-term timeline for potential growth of an outdoor water facility was not sufficient. The Committee began discussing the possibility of immediately constructing a medium sized, zero-entry pool with diving boards in addition to the splash pad. The initial construction estimate ranged from \$1.7-\$2.2 million. In addition, the Committee discovered that most similar small outdoor facilities required additional annual subsidies from the community of \$30,000 or more. The construction cost and ongoing subsidy in combination with its limited appeal led the committee to search for other solutions.

The Committee then researched the potential for a larger water park. The construction costs began at \$9 million and quickly escalated based on the amenities that would be included. Similar facilities in our region also require significant subsidies annually from the community.

The Committee then researched a concept that has proven very popular in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Indiana and throughout the Upper Midwest but thus far have not been constructed in our four-state region. The Committee has held significant discussion with professionals and operators of man-made lake facilities that combine a variety of amenities. These discussions have led the Committee to recommend the construction of a man-made lake that will allow for a variety of amenities including:

1. Lake – more swimming area than any outdoor pool
2. Zero entry sand beach
3. Splash pad
4. Miniature Golf
5. Floating inflatable adventure courses
6. Waterslides
7. Playground
8. Celebration, concession and shower/restroom facility
9. Walking trails
10. Joint use parking for the Adventure Park and Softball fields

The investigation of the Committee has led a preliminary budget to construct this facility for approximately \$3.6 million. This is proposed to be funded through the following:

2021 Splash Pad Funding	\$ 200,000
Additional General Fund Request	\$ 285,000

Land sale proceeds	\$ 700,000
Land Development TIF proceeds	\$2,000,000
<u>Grants, Committee Fundraising</u>	<u>\$ 365,000</u>
Total	\$3,550,000

The Committee's proposal accomplishes all of the original goals:

- Appealing to numerous demographics, age groups
- Affordable construction
- No ongoing need for taxpayer support
- Unique outdoor aquatic entertainment

The preliminary operating plan shows that a very minimal gate and rental fee is able to cover the operating costs for the facility. The review by experienced operators has revealed that the preliminary operating plan has a fee structure that is far lower than the average market. As such, the Committee fully believes that once constructed the facility will not require continued taxpayer subsidies.

The Committee has held three public meetings, in which the concept has been presented to the community and other interested people. Several questions were raised regarding water quality, flood planes and financing. The Committee answered all of the questions to the best of its ability. It is now requesting that a final plan be prepared by a professional group that could completely respond to any concerns.

The Committee has also greatly investigated the proposed location of the fairgrounds. The Committee has met with the "Save the Dirt" group. The group has agreed that the proposed location is fitting with the historic purpose of the area as a community gathering spot. In addition, they have agreed to assist in the development of historical markers and other ways to integrate the history of the site into the project. The Committee's proposal coincides with the recommendations of the 2013 Fairgrounds Use Committee. In six years, the fairgrounds has been used for fewer than 30 days, this proposal would be a significant increase in the public's use of the land.

One of the most controversial aspects of the proposal, is the inclusion of housing in a portion of the proposal. The Committee has made this recommendation since the private development would finance 76% of the cost of construction of the proposal. Given the Committee's goal of not greatly impacting the City's budget, this is the only way to fund the construction. Even with this funding, the Committee is committed to fundraising \$365,000 towards this project. Without the housing component, there is no realistic way to pay for the project.

The proposal has received numerous letters of support (some are attached) and has received the endorsement from the Hotel/Motel BID Board, the Sturgis Area Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Foundation Board.

The Committee requests the City support the proposal by:

- Hiring a professional design firm, who would work with local engineers to finalize the Sturgis Aquatic Committee's concepts, this would include completing the following:
 - a. An initial lake design, inflatable obstacle course design and construction estimate
 - b. Answers to questions – water quality, flood plane, water availability
 - c. Complete an operating business plan

During this time, the Committee would proceed with the fundraising to ensure that there are matching funds for any City contribution towards this project.

March 22, 2021

The Sturgis lakeside Adventure Park would be perfect for us who live here, not just something for the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, something for those of us who live here year-round!

Something for us raising our families here!

All the quality family time we would get, plus not having to drive to Lead to their splash pad or to Spearfish for their water park & Splash pad, but finally something in our own back yard! I am beyond excited for our children and the amazing fun and childhoods they would get to have with having something so amazing right here, so close!

I have not lived in Sturgis long (Only since 2016) and moved here with the notation that Sturgis did not have much of anything past the Rally ending or much of anything for the families who live here. In the short few years I have lived here I have been amazed at how there seems to really be a want in making this more than just a town that's alive 2 weeks out of the year, but a town that has something year round and that values the community who live here! I am beyond excited for what this adventure park would mean for our town and our kids!

Sincerely,

Alissa Dyer

Little Promises University
198 Old Stone Rd.
P.O. Box 14
Sturgis, SD 57785
(605) 561-0193

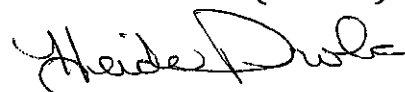
3-24-21

To Whom It May Concern,

We the management and staff here at Little Promises University are writing this to endorse the creation of the Sturgis Lakeside Adventure Park. We find this is an exciting possibility for our community. We service nearly 100 families that live in the area. Upon sharing this vision with families, we have been met with a very positive response for a family oriented attraction to be right in the middle of Sturgis. We see our community growing as we are servicing more families that have moved to this area than ever before. With the growth of new families, also comes the need for entertainment for the children. This is a facility that we believe would service children and adults of all ages throughout the year, not just for the summer season. We see Sturgis as an upcoming, quickly growing community in the Black Hills and it would be wonderful to have an attraction here rather than having to travel out of town for this type of recreation. We would utilize this facility for our own summer program. We fully support this project and will stand alongside it to help this become a reality.

Sincerely,

Heide Drolc (Owner)



Renee Blankenship (Director)



3.22.2021

To the city of Sturgis.

Why I want the Lake side
Adventure park in Sturgis

1. I bet it will be really fun
2. Most children don't play outside
So most children will play
outside.

by Noah Sapp

April 16, 2021

Luke Clement

1357 Otter Road

Sturgis, SD 57785

RE: Sturgis Lakeside Adventure Park

To whom it may concern:

I am writing this letter to voice my support for an outdoor recreation area as proposed.

My name is Luke Clement, I have been a Sturgis resident for nearly thirty-six years. My wife and I choose to reside in this town, to raise all four of our kids here and to support local businesses as we can, because we value community. I remember being a little kid when the Community Center was proposed and announced, I was ecstatic. I spent as much time as I could at our community center, playing basketball, swimming, whatever I could do with my family and friends. I ended up working at that community center for almost 7 years, my family all worked there as well. I was able to see with my own eyes the value it brought to our community. We have a large extended family residing in and around Sturgis as well, all of whom value staying active and enjoying the outdoors: this fits the bill from both fronts. This outdoor recreation area would not only add the benefits above, it would also promote family activities away from the screen. Imagine being a kid again and getting to be launched off of "The Blob" with your brothers, sisters, cousins and friends - imagine the laughs and the smiles on all of those kids faces. This recreation area would not only add value to the children and families of our community - it would help support our local businesses as well. We would have an attraction that Spearfish and Rapid City do not have, bringing other families - even tourists on their way along I90 - into our community and having lunch at a local restaurant after, or taking a walk down our little Main Street and supporting local shops while they are here. I feel this would bring families into our community, rather than pass by on their way to either of the aforementioned towns.

My family will support this when it becomes available and I know my kiddos are just as excited as I was in the early 90's when I heard we were getting our own community center!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Luke Clement", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Luke Clement

April 13, 2021

Megan Snyder
1209 Cedar Drive
Sturgis, SD 57785
706.844.6369

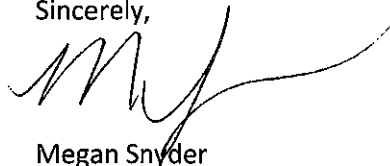
RE: Letter of Support for the Sturgis Lakeside Adventure Park

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Megan Snyder. I serve on the elementary school PTA as the co-fundraiser chair, the President of the Intermediate/Middle School PTSA (like a PTA, but includes students more in planning), I'm on the State PTA Board as the VP of Advocacy, and I'm the mother of two children, ages 11 and 9, both very active boys. They are coming to an age where they have started venturing out with their friends around the neighborhood on their bikes. The Sturgis Lakeside Adventure Park would give them someplace fun and exciting to ride their bikes to during the summer months during the day, and some place fun for us to go as a family on the weekends.

I'm so excited that Sturgis is considering building something that will provide hours of family fun for ALL ages throughout the year—something not connected to the Rally, and something for children that will remain open during the Rally. I'm an advocate for children and I'm a proponent of happiness and health. I see Sturgis Lakeside Adventure Park as a positive addition to our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Megan Snyder', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Megan Snyder

10100 Willmington Drive
Summerset, SD 57718
March 21, 2021

To the Sturgis Aquatics Committee;

I am so excited to hear about the possibility of a new Lakeside Adventure Park in Sturgis. When my grandchildren visit me from out of town we end up driving to Spearfish usually to spend the day at their water park. We would love to spend our money and time in Sturgis!

The thought of year round activities is so exciting. We struggle to find safe sledding areas, and we always enjoy a day of skating.

The fact that the committee is looking at something unique will also bring in people from other towns to enjoy something new.

I am anxious to hear about some of the additional adventure activities that can be incorporated into this Adventure Park.

Thank you for your hard work to improve the town of Sturgis and surrounding areas.

Donna Sigman

From: "Kaufman, Holly K." <Holly.Kaufman@va.gov>

Date: March 23, 2021 at 12:29:12 PM MDT

To: HOLLY HATZENBUHLER <hollyhatzenbuhler@yahoo.com>

Subject: Recreational Area

My name is Holly (Hatzenbuhler) Kaufman. I have lived in Sturgis my entire life (35 years) and love the people and the community! This is one of the reasons I chose to stay in this area and raise my family. Our youth would greatly benefit having this water and recreational area. How many of us drive to surrounding towns to use their outdoor water facilities? I know my family drives to Spearfish, Rapid City, lakes in our area, to name a few. It seems as though almost everything in Sturgis is geared towards the motorcycle rally. We have more bars, parking lots and empty buildings than most areas. How great would it be to give the youth and community this awesome gift and promote "family time". I remember growing up in Sturgis, we had an outdoor pool, some of my fondest memories were there and so much family time! I think it is time to do something in the community for the citizens and not for the pocket book of the City and another something that is rally related. This would benefit the community as a whole: the hotels, restaurants, stores, gas stations, etc. Not only would our community use it, think about baseball tournaments. In between games players could use this since it is right there or grab something to eat at one of the local restaurants and get gas at our local gas stations and stay at our local hotels. I really like the idea that this is for ALL ages! Please make this area that was set aside for recreational use something spectacular for generations to come!

Twyla Barden
Teacher, Sturgis Brown High School
Sturgis, SD 57785

To Whom it may concern:

I am writing this letter of support as a teacher, a parent and a grandparent. As an educator, I have taught in the Sturgis school system for more than thirty years. Through these years, I have heard hundreds of students mention, discuss, and comment that there was little to do to keep them entertained within the community. They have, over the years, been encouraged by many "possibilities," excited at times, about ideas formulated on their behalf, and anticipated many things that were potential positives for teens only to see them fall through and never come to fruition. These ideas have ranged from movie theaters and drive-ins to water parks, outdoor pools, and teen centers. As a parent, I took my own children to activities away from the community, not because we chose to, but because outdoor pools and movie theaters were located in other communities. We were forced to spend our entertainment dollars elsewhere. Sadly, I find myself doing the same things with my grandchildren now, again spending dollars in another community. Over the last few decades, very little has changed in this context.

As the idea of serving on a committee to determine the desires of our community when it came to outdoor entertainment, I was excited to see where it may lead, and chose to serve. What we have generated as an idea will benefit those same students mentioned above as well as EVERY citizen of Sturgis and surrounding communities who may choose to use its amenities. My students, both current and former, as well as my own children and grandchildren will all benefit from such an exciting possibility. A lake adventure park meets all the criteria for this community without breaking a budget that would invariably cause a divide in the community. It provides a cost-friendly option for those amenities families have been begging for in our community while promoting health, outdoor recreation for all ages, and offering that "possibility" that kids have been hearing about and been denied for so long. For these reasons and many, many more, I wholeheartedly support the idea of the Sturgis Lakeside Adventure Park as a real possibility for the community of Sturgis and the surrounding area. "The greatest wealth is health," and this lake amenity in our community solidifies that belief.

Sincerely,

Twyla Barden



From: Laban Clement, Co-owner of Legendary Electric LLC, Sturgis, SD 04/15/21

My name is Laban Clement. I am a home owner, parent, and business owner in Sturgis. I am married and we are raising three children. We have lived near or in the city of Sturgis our entire lives. I have a large, extended family who also chooses to live here and raise their families here, support businesses here, and invest in the community in various ways. As a former lifeguard at the Sturgis Community center (through my high school years), I had a front row seat watching how a community "center" bonds and brings people together and watched firsthand the benefits it brought for kids and families. The idea that an outdoor recreation area including a lake area could be a possibility in this town is very exciting. As our Community Center did for the last 20 years, such a project and location would be a gathering point, family entertainment site, and a benefit to all who choose to use its amenities. Our youth would greatly benefit having this water and recreational area, in the obvious healthy ways as well as the ways mentioned above. How great would it be to give the youth and community this awesome gift and promote health and the family once again?

Not only would families and individuals benefit from such as space, but existing businesses would reap the benefits as well. From hotels when the lake becomes a "destination," to the restaurants, convenience stores, and shopping locations, all will certainly gain from the existence of such a location. This is a project that we can all support and get behind, and most, if not all, residents in Sturgis will benefit from its creation. I, as well as my family and my business, encourage you to move forward with this plan for Sturgis and its residents.

Sincerely,

Laban Clement
Legendary Electric, LLC
Sturgis, SD 57785