Date: January 24, 2019
Time: 10:30 am
Location: Holliday 1st Floor Conference Room; 620 SE Madison

Attendance
Committee Members Present: Tony Emerson (Chair), Aaron Mays, Michael Lesser
City Staff Present: Nick Hawkins (Interim Finance Director), Mary Feighny (Deputy City Attorney), Liz Toyne (Council Assistant)

1) Call to Order
Councilmember Emerson called the meeting to order.

2) Approve Minutes from November 26, 2018 meeting
Councilmember Lesser made a motion to approve the minutes.
Councilmember Mays seconded the motion. The minutes were approved 3:0.

3) Discussion: Sunflower Soccer TGT Fund Resolution
Andrew Fletcher provided the committee with an updated presentation as well as a strategic business plan.

Councilmember Emerson inquired about the aging goals and whether funds would be provided through the association or through the TGT. Mr. Fletcher noted that Sunflower Soccer Association (SSA) is funding that project through use of their surplus funds.

John Ginzel - Soccer coach with Cornerstone Soccer - has been involved with Sunflower Soccer for over 15 years. Mr. Ginzel feels that Mr. Fletcher has made a great impact with bringing in communities west of Topeka and that if better facilities could be improved. Councilmember Emerson inquired about the term “home field” that was mentioned. Mr. Ginzel noted that he is part of a co-op home school group and those numbers have been growing. Mr. Ginzel noted that Sunflower is known throughout the Midwest as having some of the best maintained fields. Councilmember Emerson inquired about rent and fees to accommodate the field upkeep. Mr. Ginzel confirmed there
would be a fee associated, but those details would be worked out with Mr. Fletcher and SSA.

Kevin Beck, SSA Board President – Spoke to issue the board’s full support of Mr. Fletcher’s vision and work that he has been doing with SSA.

Terri Roberts, Executive Director of American Holistic Nurses Association, member of the Heartland Healthy Neighborhoods Steering Committee Member, and Chairwoman of the Shawnee County Parks + Recreation Advisory Committee – spoke to the TGT committee about supporting health and wellness by providing funding to SSA. Ms. Roberts is in support of the program that Mr. Fletcher presented and gave personal testimony of impact SSA programs have had with her family. Ms. Roberts feels the infrastructure is necessary for continuing to improve the quality of life for participants and their families.

Jim Allan, Allan-Coleman Marketing – Working with SSA and assisted in putting the proposal together. Mr. Allen notes that there is a continuation of growth toward the sport of soccer as well as a request for continued improvements for the infrastructure at SSA, the location is great and there is a lot of traffic, and Mr. Allen feels that improving the complex will only benefit the city.

Jerika Henderson, community member – spoke to committee members as a volunteer coach with SSA and a parent/lifelong Topeka resident and gave testimony as to the benefit of the improvements that have been made over the past few years from when she was a child playing soccer at SSA. Ms. Henderson would like to see that growth and improvement continue.

Kurt Young, Topeka Lodging Association – spoke to the committee members, noting that he would like to see SSA be challenged with showing a more definitive plan from SSA to accomplish bringing in outside revenue from guests spending time overnight in Topeka.

Christy Classi, Chairwoman of Board of Directors with Visit Topeka Inc – spoke to committee members noting that the Visit Topeka Board is opposed to sending TGT dollars to Sunflower Soccer Association. Councilmember Mays inquired if Ms. Classi felt that there were any aspects of the proposal that would bring in tourism dollars. Ms. Classi noted she did not feel that the plan showed that and did not feel it would be appropriate to send the TGT dollars to fund the renovations for teams that would be going home each evening and not spending money in Topeka.
Brett Oetting, Executive VP of Greater Topeka Partnership and President of Visit Topeka – noted that in his role with GTP, he supports the plan that was presented. However from a Visit Topeka standpoint, Mr. Oetting would not support the TGT funds being spent on improvements to SSA when those dollars are to be provided to attractions and businesses that are bringing out of town tourism to Topeka. Councilmember Emerson inquired if there were any parts of the plan that he would support. Mr. Oetting stated that he would support some of the plan such as re-grading the fields, as having nice fields will help to keep the few out of town teams that stay the night and play at SSA coming. Mr. Oetting noted that Washburn University recently stated that they will be building a $20 million indoor facility, and that perhaps that would be an opportunity for a partnership.

Councilmember Lesser noted that this process has been long and there are some difficult decisions when looking at where money will be spent. Councilmember Lesser stated he is not in favor of funding the full amount of the TGT money to SSA, however would be in favor of allotting some of the fund. Councilmember Lesser also stated his concern about sustainability and noted that the records are not optimistic. Councilmember Lesser stated he would be in favor of funding some of the infrastructure projects, such as the championship field, re-crowning the fields, and the walking trail. Councilmember Lesser noted he felt the business plan was still lacking the creation of a Foundation. Some of the projects listed in the plan, such as building a maintenance shed or multi-purpose field, would be fundraiser opportunities but do not serve to bring in outside dollars and put heads on beds. Councilmember Lesser suggested that SSA review some capital campaign ideas for bringing in additional funds that would show the community as well as the committee that they are able to fund some of their projects.

Councilmember Lesser made a motion to fund the championship field, re-crowning of current fields, and a walking trail.

Councilmember Mays inquired about the possibility of laying gravel trails and if Mr. Fletcher would feel open to that idea which would allow for a cheaper option. Mr. Fletcher confirmed SSA would look into that cost, and would be okay with gravel trails.

Councilmember Mays noted that he would be supportive of building the indoor facility.
Councilmember Mays inquired about the outdoor lights and what SSA currently has. Mr. Fletcher noted that there are currently no lights. Councilmember Mays agreed with Councilmembers Lesser and Emerson that the maintenance shed was a need, but not something that would be appropriate for spending TGT funding for.

Councilmember Emerson inquired about the cost of the additional practice field at the cost of $50,000 in conjunction of building the championship field, which would allow SSA to save money by doing both projects at the same time. Mr. Fletcher noted that the more projects that are completed at the same time, the cheaper it will be in the long run as the equipment and manpower needed would already be there.

Councilmember Emerson also made a list of items that he felt would possibly be appropriate for spending funds on.

Councilmember Lesser noted he agreed that an indoor facility would make the most sense for bringing heads on beds. Councilmember Lesser noted he would like to see some capital campaigns done and more research by the organization to better support the funding requests that they have.

Councilmember Emerson recapped the meeting that some of the ideas the committee would be supportive of spending TGT Funds for would be the: championship field, re-crowning of existing fields, completing a walking trail, and an additional practice space which would total up to $604,000. Councilmember Mays recommended spending $16,000 for the outdoor work out space, as well as knocking the trail allotment down to $16,000, and perhaps that gravel would be a better way to go. Councilmember Emerson inquired then if the committee would want to go with the championship field, re-crowning of existing fields, walking trail, practice field, and outdoor meeting/fitness area would total $560,000.

Nick Hawkins noted that the funding would not be current, but rather 2032, when the cycle ends. Councilmember Mays inquired about the estimates on lighting costs for the championship field. Mr. Beck noted that roughly $180,000 would be the cost. Councilmember Lesser restated that he feels comfortable that the proposal would provide a significant amount of funding to get going, but that seeing some fundraising would be ideal.

Mary Feighny reviewed the wording for the new parameters:

- Championship Field at a cost not to exceed $200,000
- Re-crown existing grass soccer fields at a cost not to exceed $234,000
• Complete perimeter walking trail not to exceed $60,000 (as per Councilmember Mays’ recommendation)
• Outdoor gathering space and fitness area at a cost not to exceed $16,000
• Create additional practice space at a cost not to exceed $50,000

Councilmember Mays inquired about protocol for use of excess funds should a project come in under budget. Ms. Feighny noted that a provision could be written into the agreement to include what would happen with the excess funds. Brent Trout, City Manager, suggested that the committee establish the maximum amount of funding they would want to put toward SSA, as well as the specific projects with the intent that they are used for the specific project. If there are excess funds following those projects, SSA could come back to the committee and request permission to continue with additional projects at that time. Councilmember Mays noted that if the committee is allocating a certain amount of funding, they would possibly be incentivized to fundraiser for additional money as needed. Councilmember Lesser suggested approving that the funding for certain projects would be provided, however if funding is left over he wanted to stay structured in being responsible with money and not just giving the excess funds to additional projects without authorization and approval from the Governing Body.

Council member Emerson made a proposal to allocate up to a total of $560,000 (a list of the specific projects with their funding amount can be found on previous page). Mary Feighny will draft a resolution with this information which will be presented at an upcoming Governing Body meeting for the final vote. Councilmember Mays made a motion to move forward with the proposal. Councilmember Lesser seconded the motion. The motion carried 3:0 to send forward to the Governing Body for an approval.

4) Other Items Before the Committee
No other items.
5) Adjournment
Meeting was adjourned.

The video of this meeting can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/v_9ufDPyeaM