

Jewelry District Association
Board Meeting May 12, 2015
Brown Department of Continuing Education

Pres. Salisbury called the meeting to order at 4:10. Police Report: **Lt. O'Hara**: Graffiti downtown, the "I'm so sad Guy" caused \$5,000 damage per site. Nothing crazy in clubs. Apprehended some kids shooting at people with an air gun. **Zinsky**: I was accosted in our parking area by a car with blacked out windows. Told my staff not to stay after hours. **O'Hara**: Please report these things. Eyes and ears are important.

Salisbury: Thank you. It's a pleasure to introduce Jim Skeffington who has agreed to answer questions about the proposed PawSox Stadium in the riverfront.

Skeffington: Honored to be here. Never done this before. Before I answer questions, let me say that this is an exciting moment. The site is ideal for baseball. The PawSox had a great owner with great community spirit, the late Ben Mondor. We are delighted to follow him and emulate him. And the Red Sox want more control over their minor league teams. Of the 30 major league clubs, most have at least on AAA and one AA team.

The current stadium is by far the oldest in the International League. It has structural problems. We got the best firm in the US to look at McCoy. Other teams offer the fans and players much more. Our study shows it will take \$65 million to update and that won't include the weight rooms and training facilities the Red Sox want. We were shocked at that!

The Red Sox want an urban ball park where the better experience translates to economic benefits. When we found the site, we asked, could it take a ball park? Got consultants to work with Larry Lucchino and they said it was IDEAL! It's in the heart of the business district, which is tough to find in today's New England downtowns.

It will be great, with a short right field so home runs will be splashing into the Providence River. People will see it from the highways. Come by train, walk from their offices. Ideal not only for baseball, but college football -- Brown could play all their games there. Easy walk from the dorms on the hill and the medical school. URI and Bryant could play here, too.

It will be catalytic for the economy. Bio med people say they have more interest in the city now. Not just sports. 6-8 concerts a year. Cultural events, like Shakespeare in Fenway. Brown's excited! Fenway sold out a college hockey tournament. Public skating in February for thousands. This multi-purpose aspect will sell nearby property.

Brown says they'd consider tearing down their adjoining building. We've been approached by people who want to build hotels. Stadium will hold 10,000 people. We'll have a berm so people can walk all the way around. When it's a sell out, we'll donate to local charities. The stadium will be 50 feet high. We're dedicating three acres for a park for kids and other people, with a

walk way along the river. It will draw 50% of its fans coming down from Boston. The proposal to the State got a chilly reception because of the cost. State has asked for a “code of silence” while we work it out.

Questions and comments from audience:

What about will you do about noise. “No way not to have sound.”

What’s the benefit to the state... the trade off: “It’s ideally suited! This is the best site. It will create permanent jobs.”

Baseball does not and never has added to a local economy.

Issue is discretionary money... if tickets get more expensive, restaurants and movies will suffer.

Jobs in stadium are low paying; will not support a family.

You need a new spin doctor.

New ball park will double income -- for owners.

Not a good deal for Providence.

You need to do more study and be more open with public.

General response from Skeffington: It will employ 400 people, a lot of people who need jobs. Can’t think of a better way to employ them. Bio Med industry is coming. It will not be a big money maker for us personally. And no one is going to do a deal that isn’t transparent.

More comments:

Great to keep triple A in area. Rebuild McCoy.

Light and sound on the East side where they are already flooded with light from the Brown fields. East side property values will go down.

Where will people park? “We did a study: 12,850 off-site parking spaces and street parking.”

Will you stay in RI if you don’t get the site? “We are committed to staying in Rhode Island. No one wants to see the PawSox leave.”

If site is not acceptable, will you consider other sites? “There are several exciting sites outside Rhode Island we would have to consider.”

In Cincinnati, the river location didn’t excite economy, and from half a mile away noise was still loud. Bio-Tech people don’t seem interested in baseball. We’re committed to keeping tickets affordable. Friendly. Family oriented.

Ball park will get rid of the night clubs. Look at Kennedy Plaza.

Ball park will not provide well-paying jobs. And it will reduce tax revenue. We are trying to do something to contribute to the economic development. Better to attract a million people to down town. The stadium will produce that kind of energy.

Will the ownership be meeting with the entire city council? Yes, we intend to meet with them.

Will you turn down proposals from out of state and honestly look at other sites in Providence and Rhode Island?

Meeting adjourned at 5:30

Recorded by L. D. Dana