



CITY OF WILLIAMSBURG

Office of the City Manager

January 09, 2020

Neil Morgan
York County Administrator
224 Ballard Street
Yorktown, Virginia 23690

Scott Stevens
James City County Administrator
101 Mounts Bay Road, Building D
Williamsburg, Virginia 23185

Mr. Morgan and Mr. Stevens:

This letter intends to invite your participation in the formal discussion and planning for a Historic Triangle Regional Sports Facility.

Since 2014, the concept of a regional field house has been under review by our localities. The Williamsburg Hotel & Motel Association (WHMA) who, as a collection of lodging owners, feel such a complex would improve overnight stays and provide indirect revenue benefits has long advocated for these efforts. The 2018 passage of SB942 provided the Historic Triangle with an additional half percent of sales tax for regional tourism promotion and a half percent of sales tax for locality use. The City of Williamsburg committed its share of the realized new revenues to an annual grant program aimed at increasing tourism product and in turn improving tourism trade inside the City and region. 2019 was the first year of the grant offering and the City received 22 applications, invited 11 of those to proceed with the application, and awarded \$2,239,153 to seven projects. One such project is the WHMA application for the design and construction of a regional field house. This project received \$250,000 in FY20 and is earmarked for further funding of debt service costs for design and construction in future years.

The City has identified a series of steps that allow the project to be methodically planned and concurrently evaluated for success before the full commitment to construction. These steps include:

- (1) Chief Administrative Officers, appropriate Parks and Recreation staff, tourism staff members, economic development staff, and a representative from WHMA (Historic Triangle Sports Advisory Committee) meet to discuss and define the required local programming elements such as number and specifications for hard courts, recreation fields, aquatic features, play areas, training elements, therapy spaces, medical service areas, meeting space requirements, and performance venue needs. This step shall include consultation with the public school divisions and W&M to review and provide input on other strategic needs that should be considered as a part of a regional facility.
- (2) Jointly the CAOs will select a sports tourism consultant and an economist to evaluate the defined local programming schedule for applicability and success in drawing sports tourism events to the facility annually. This initial analysis shall include both direct and indirect revenues, attendance estimates, market competition review, and suggested recruitment strategies.
- (3) The locality governing bodies will be briefed and further development steps approved.
- (4) HTSAC will convene to review contending sites inside the City of Williamsburg for the location of the regional sports facility and rank them in order of preference. This step shall include consulting with local public school divisions and W&M on the ranking of sites and providing input on logistical concerns. Additional action items will include revising earlier projections for revenue and competitiveness to include analysis of the sites selected in order of preference and developing construction and operational costs for the sites selected. A final component of this step will be developing a partnership agreement outlining the roles of each participating entity and the financial commitments required.
- (5) The locality governing bodies will be briefed and construction steps approved.
- (6) HTSAC will negotiate control of the selected site (as needed) and issue a design/build RFP for the facility.

The success of this project is dependent on regional support. The City's commitment to funding for the project is designed to satisfy half of the estimated debt service for the project following the decision to proceed with construction. It is hoped that the regional Tourism Council would provide the second half of the capital costs. The largest obstacle to completing the project is the anticipated operating costs. The City acknowledges that the facility itself is unlikely to make a profit or satisfy its expenses through directly generated revenues. However, the indirect revenues generated in each of our localities will offset our financial commitments toward operating the facility and help to reduce the burdens of accepting the capital costs. The City intends to request that York and James City County agree to a partnership wherein they contribute to the annual operating needs of the facility to include the routine maintenance and required staffing to be competitive in attracting major sports tourism events.

The process outlined above provides for a regional review of the sports complex project, gives input opportunities to non-municipal partners, allows for key decision points before financial commitment, and serves as a final review of this regional project under consideration for five years. I would like to invite you to serve on HTSAC with me and ask that you dedicate the staff time and resources necessary to see the steps outlined above, further defined and completed such that a final decision on construction is arrived at by July of 2021.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Andrew O. Trivette
City Manager
City of Williamsburg

AOT/ms

CC: W&M Presidnet Katherine Rowe; Colonial Williamsburg President Cliff Fleet; WHMA Executive Director Ron Kirkland

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Neil A. Morgan



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January 17, 2020

Ms. Mary Bunting
Hampton City Manager
8th Floor, City Hall
22 Lincoln Street
Hampton, Virginia 23669


Dear Ms. Bunting:

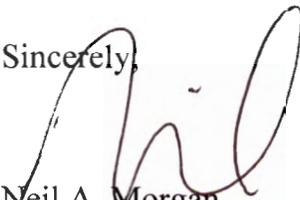
This letter intends to express the County of York's support for a casino gaming facility inside the City of Hampton.

The Board of Supervisors and I, as the Administrator, recognize that, should the Commonwealth act to allow casino gaming statewide or in select localities, a Peninsula location should be sought. Because Hampton is a desired site by the industry, the Board of Supervisors and I support the efforts of the City of Hampton to be selected as a site for such a facility.

It is our hope that the addition of this product to our region's growing inventory of entertainment venues will result in improved tourism for Hampton Roads and for York specifically. We are also grateful for Hampton's willingness to create a regional project fund from the resulting gaming taxes. This type of revenue sharing agreement would provide yet another opportunity for strong regional collaboration. We look forward to working together to help Hampton be successful and, at the same time, continue our work to improve the tourism offerings of all of Hampton Roads. Please feel free to share this letter with elected officials and casino gaming industry leaders as evidence of our support of your efforts.

This letter should not be construed as the County of York taking a position on the current General Assembly debate concerning whether casino gaming should be allowed in the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,


Neil A. Morgan
County Administrator

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A Hampton Roads Community