

As the sole dissenting vote on the special finance committee meeting to consider the Waukesha Express request for a donation toward the refurbishment of the Waukesha South H.S., I wanted to make sure some of my concerns and questions were included in the information distributed to the LSC members. Please contact me if you have any comments regarding the positions outlined below.

There are two areas of concern relative to the proposal to donate \$25,000 to the Waukesha Express Swim Team for the purpose of refurbishing Waukesha South High School. I have general concerns about the procedure by which we are considering approving this request, and the lack of a developed process for evaluating and considering proposals of this sort. I also have specific concerns about the proposal itself. Most of these concerns were raised at the committee meeting, but some have arisen after reflection.

General Concerns About this Process

I begin with the general question: Does the LSC want to go into the business of providing financial support for the renovation, improvement and construction of facilities? The LSC has not previously demonstrated a desire to support facility development with funding. If the LSC is interested in providing financial support for facility development, we should develop a plan by which we can solicit and encourage proposals for grants. I do support the notion that the LSC should assist member teams who are working toward improving or building facilities. However, without a plan in place first, we are likely to err in our generosity. Proposals should have to meet certain documentation standards for consideration. These standards should include at least an actual drawing of the planned project and documents proving the legal standing required to fulfill promises made to the LSC. Proposals also should allow adequate time for evaluation and discussion.

Since a proposal of this magnitude requires significant depletion of our reserve fund, we should be sure to allow all members to make their individual case to access these funds. There were two notifications made that other proposals would be considered at this meeting, the first at the October 28th LSC meeting the second on the web site 3 days prior to the special finance committee meeting. Neither of those notifications provided adequate time for the development of credible and firm competing plan. I say a competing plan because it is quite possible that this is a singular opportunity for this sort of funding.

Specific concerns regarding the WEST proposal

Although I would be happy to see another quality competition facility built in the area, I am not sure that the proposed facility provides a significant benefit to the LSC. Our team would certainly benefit from the opportunity to compete at a fast pool in a nearby community. The primary advertised benefit is that the pool would be available to host our state championship meets. There has been no documentation produced to guarantee either the availability or the quality of the facility.

The description of the facility provided by WEST certainly would make it one of the finer facilities in the state, but I don't see it as a significant upgrade when compared to the other facilities available. Both Schroeder and the Natatorium have more water and more seating available. The proposed pool would have a combined spectator and athlete capacity approaching 2000. I am concerned about the vagueness of this claim. We have seen no floor plan. We have been told that we would be released from our commitment if the realized pool was not 10 lanes large or was not capable of holding 2000 spectators and swimmers. Does this mean that we have the right to approve or reject the plans once they have decided exactly what they are going to build?

WEST has offered to waive pool rental fees for up to 4 state championship meets. We have seen no supporting documents from the owner of the pool, Waukesha South High School, verifying this promise. I suggest that before we commit to our donation, we secure some guarantees from the school district. All we currently have is a letter of support for the plan and an expression of willingness to work with the LSC on scheduling our championship meets.

The offer for free rental is of questionable value anyway. One of the justifications offered by the committee for being able to afford this donation is that we are pre-paying pool rental for 4 championship meets. Do we want to commit four state meets to a pool for which we haven't seen plans? The LSC doesn't automatically pay pool rental for state meets anyway. The host club is currently responsible for pool rental, unless the bid stipulates otherwise. Despite the finance committee having the foresight to budget for the eventuality that the LSC will subsidize the pool rental for our championship meets, there is no established policy to do so. If a team bids the state meet while paying for rental at Schroeder would we vote to run a LSC Championship meet at this pool?

If we are interested in helping to solve the facility shortage in the state, we should focus our effort on the development of a 50-meter indoor facility. Grants for smaller projects producing facilities that are essentially equivalent or slightly better than our current facilities do not provide significant benefit to the LSC. If we think it is important as an LSC to grant funds for the actual construction of a facility, it should be toward a facility that really is unique and world-class. A fund could be established to accumulate until a member club develops a verifiable plan for a new 50-meter facility. Aggressive funding could produce a substantial amount of money to donate to a facility. The LSC donation should have certain, well-defined strands of control attached prior to the distribution of funds. (Perhaps if a fund like this had been established when Homestead built its 50-yard pool, we could have provided enough money to make it 50-meters and provide more spectator and swimmer seating.)

I wish the Waukesha people the best of luck in their pursuit of an improved facility, but I cannot support the allocation of LSC funds toward this pool. To even consider it, we should demand more information and more guarantees. Even with that, I am not convinced that this facility is important enough to the LSC to merit this donation.

Mark Kohnhorst
Lake Country Swim Team

Email: CoachKohn@sbcglobal.net
Phone: 262-367-7657