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CLARK COUNTY
WASHINGTON

N E W S R E L E A S E

November 18, 2011

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County considers new community-based proposal for multi-use stadium supported by admissions tax at limited venues

Vancouver, WA – The Board of County Commissioners today released a draft ordinance regarding an admissions tax at several venues and events to support a multi-use stadium proposed for the Clark College campus. The ordinance follows the creation of a fully-financed community plan and provides a viable proposal to the Northwest League prior to its winter meetings.

The draft ordinance will be the topic of a Nov. 29 public hearing before the Board. The 10 a.m. hearing will be in the sixth-floor hearing room of the Public Service Center, 1300 Franklin St. The ordinance and related documents can be found at http://www.clark.wa.gov/bocc/current_issues/issues.html.

Early this year, Short Season, LLC proposed moving the Yakima Bears Class A baseball team to Vancouver. An admissions tax could be used to help pay for a 3,500-seat multi-use stadium for baseball and other events at Clark College. In recent weeks, the design of the stadium, which would be privately financed, has been scaled back to \$19.5 million.

The draft ordinance proposes a 5 percent admissions tax at major movie theater complexes, amphitheaters, the Clark County Fair, professional baseball games and golf courses. The tax would be in place for 25 years.

The admissions tax is expected to generate \$35.9 million. Of that, \$20 million would be earmarked for the stadium, with annual payments of \$800,000. The remainder would be distributed to a stadium reserve fund, the fairgrounds and city of Vancouver.

Commissioner Marc Boldt said he had not been willing to bring the admissions tax issue to public hearing unless the fair was protected and the tax would end.

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“This proposed ordinance seems to address both of my issues,” Commissioner Boldt said. “It keeps the fair whole, and that eases pressure on the county General Fund. Also, patrons would see the admissions tax end after 25 years, so the sunset clause was important for the long-term.”

The Clark County Fair Board said it was “cautiously supportive” of the proposal. The draft ordinance makes sure the fair gets back at least the revenue it generates, and possibly more, and that ticket prices would not be raised because of the admissions tax. With those concerns satisfied, “the Fair Board would no longer seek an exemption from the admissions tax,” Board Chair Sharon Crouch said in a memo to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Steve Stuart said reducing the cost of the stadium by \$3.5 million and including golf courses in the ordinance helped make the project “pencil out.” Admissions tax ordinances in other northwest communities include golf courses, and some support among the local golf community for their inclusion in this proposal made adding them as a venue the obvious choice.

“These were the changes necessary to give baseball a chance in Clark County,” Commissioner Stuart said.

Recent revisions to the ordinance and stadium proposal reflect a community-based partnership that has coalesced in the past several weeks around the multi-use stadium proposal, he noted.

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