Wheels Roller Skating Rink Residents Committee
Meeting #5
September 25, 2022
6:00 – 7:00 PM
DPR Administration Building

Agenda

1) UP FIT CONSTRUCTION
   a) **What:** ADA/Code required changes, maintenance and operations, aesthetics and concessions upgrades
   b) **Update:** Cost estimates for operator-suggested interior modifications (concessions) came in higher than expected, but still within allocated budget. Delivery time for required electrical equipment is 5 months.
      i) **Electrical components have a longer lead time**
      ii) **Nothing substantial to the interior has changed since last presented to the WRRRC**
   c) **Impact:** Timeline for substantial completion (and opening) extended from Spring 2024 to Summer 2024.

2) PUBLIC ART
   a) **What:** The City’s Cultural & Public Art Program is now seeking to commission a site-specific, exterior public art installation at the Wheels Roller Skating Rink
      i) The goal of the public art component is to reflect and honor the history of Wheels as an institution of the community providing family fun, athletic, and recreational activities since 1980, its meaning to the Durham community, and enhance the sense of place experienced by all visitors to Wheels.
   b) **Update:** The call for artists is now available online. Deadline to submit an online application is 11:59 p.m. ET on Friday, Sept. 29.
      i) The selected Candidate(s) will work to:
         1) *Engage the community through in-person engagement sessions and surveys.*
         2) *Develop community-informed designs for public artwork that visually connects to the site and/or interprets historical or cultural aspects of the site*
         3) Beautify the exterior of the building through site-specific public art elements.
         4) Design, fabricate and install artwork that is integrated into the site.
   c) **Impact:** This will not impact the timeline for the rink opening. This resident committee will be notified of engagement opportunities throughout the process.
3) DISCUSSION WITH SELECTED OPERATOR
   a) United Skates of America
      i) DPR Staff provided feedback from last WRRRC meeting to U.S.A.
         (1) In response, U.S.A. wanted to honor committee’s request to meet with them and discuss programming ideas and wishes.
      ii) Community programming requests/needs
      iii) United Skates provide a presentation:
         (1) Each U.S.A. location has their own identity that reflects community through murals and programming.
         (2) What is the size of flooring in other facilities? Depends on building, layout, safety – a lot of factors go into it. Not one set size for all of their facilities.
         (3) Roller Derby: Begin building a relationship between derby and U.S.A. to realistically incorporate roller derby into programming. Points of contact on the WRRRC were established.
         (4) STEM: field trips; STEM concepts related to roller skating are built into the operations of U.S.A. facilities.
         (5) Offer Roller Skating fundraisers that benefit community organizations.
         (6) Group bookings available.
         (7) Adult skating – artistic, shuffle/freestyle, style (rhythm skaters), roller derby bouts, scrimmages, practices
            (a) Work with popular DJs
            (b) Adult theme nights
         (8) Management of facilities is local. U.S.A. would love to hear from the group on local DJs, etc.

WRRC Feedback for U.S.A. and DPR:

- Feel like a lot has been decided since the last meeting, including final decisions on the floor size and temporary barrier.
  - Rich Hahn, Finance Manager investigated options for a temporary barrier and it was determined to be unfeasible.
- Some have not seen consistent relationship with roller derby and U.S.A. for practice space. Others have seen a relationship.
- What programming at Wheels is/has been important to the Durham community?
  - Hoping to step outside of the box and do things a little different. U.S.A. seems cookie-cutter and want to see something different and not as “static.” Removal of stage is missed opportunity. Offered a unique opportunity for live music and skating. Could be an amazing opportunity for events.
  - Raleigh Junior Rollers, Collision Roller Derby – create an environment where community options are available.
Could STEM programming happen on the skate floor and retain the size of the rink?
Hearing a lot about the operators’ control.
Want strong themes for events/programs, DJs, music, etc.
Asking the community what they want in programming is asking for their free labor.
  ▪ How is U.S.A. held accountable for the group’s offered ideas?
    • Will the requests be honored and implemented?
  ▪ People should be paid to give and facilitate their ideas.
  ▪ DPR explained we are asking this volunteer committee for insights into what program offerings existed previously at Wheels that they want to see again, and/or community needs from their perspective as individuals with high interest in and familiarity with the space.
  ▪ U.S.A. wants to implement the programs that are important to the community.
Commitment of percentage of time could be allocated monthly for community programming.
  ▪ Community offer more input along the way.
Idea from committee – Hire a local program manager that rotates.
  ▪ Original rink size allowed for derby practice and lessons to happen simultaneously.
  ▪ Offer skate lessons.

Community Questions:

Answered

• Does U.S.A. have their own leagues?
  o Usually outside leagues coming in from other sports to do their banquets, events, etc.
• Do they have roller skating leagues for youth?
  o Skate “clubs” rather than “leagues.” Leagues are formed outside of U.S.A., generated by individuals and U.S.A. is the home
  o If new league were to start, how would they petition for programming space – set aside practice times?
• Willing to do club nights?
  o Yes – they have adult programming and adult nights depending on what the community wants to see.
• Any locations that have a stage and have you incorporated live music into events?
  o No facilities with stages. They don’t do much programming with live music and would highly depend on the artist, safety, what size crowd they may draw, etc.
• Who can apply to be a DJ at this facility?
Unanswered

- Who is going to do the interior mural?
- Discount going to only certain groups of people?
- Are the entrances to the rink encroaching on the rink area?
- How can roller derbies host their tournaments there?
- Prioritizing community or USA making money? Not sure how the “STEM” space actually will be programmable with booths for seating.
- Will bathrooms be renovated to include full height barriers/dividers or stalls?
- Will they accept sliding fee scale?

U.S.A. Follow Up Points

- Instructional programming – like to incorporate programs with a unique feel to them and that are interesting to the community. U.S.A. noted Eddie Watson’s name to follow up on instructional programming ideas.
  - Roller fitness
  - Roller dance
- U.S.A. offer lessons but would incorporate instructors and assist with the marketing component.

4) NEXT STEPS

a) Keeping WRRRC informed:
   i) Timeline
   ii) Operations contract approval
   iii) Construction updates
   iv) Public art engagement

b) Other?
   i) U.S.A. continue to have conversations with those interested in providing programming ideas.
   ii) WRRRC can provide additional input to Mary Unterreiner via email.
   iii) After U.S.A. continues to work with interested parties on programming ideas, DPR can help facilitate another group meeting with U.S.A. to talk through programming.