

Janzen, Heather

Subject: FW: Form submission from: Write a Letter to Council

From: Web NoReply <web-noreply@Saskatoon.ca>
Sent: Monday, January 23, 2023 4:31 PM
To: City Council <City.Council@Saskatoon.ca>
Subject: Form submission from: Write a Letter to Council

--- Replies to this email will go to tsweeney@tcuplace.com ---

Submitted on Monday, January 23, 2023 - 16:31

Submitted by user: [REDACTED]

Submitted values are:

I have read and understand the above statements.: Yes

Date: Monday, January 23, 2023

To: His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

Pronouns: She/her/hers

First Name: Tammy

Last Name: Sweeney

Phonetic spelling of first and/or last name: Tammy Sweeney

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Province: Saskatchewan

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Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable): TCU Place

What do you wish to do ?: Submit Comments

What meeting do you wish to speak/submit comments ? (if known):: January 25, 2023 Regular Business Meeting

What agenda item do you wish to comment on ?: 8.5.1 Downtown District Event Centre and Convention Centre
Potential Private Partner - GPC 20230109

Comments:

On behalf of TCU Place, I would encourage the City Administration and Councilors to give consideration to three areas regarding the recommendation to operate facilities under private management with a competitive procurement process. Each of the recommendations is presented to ensure that the vision of the district, the return on investment, and the opportunity to service the city of Saskatoon now and in future are optimally served.

1. Give thought to enable splitting or parsing responses to the RFQ to specific venues within the downtown entertainment district rather than restricting the responses to singular broad oversight. We understand the benefits of joint operation, and believe in the synergies created with a united structure in terms of efficiencies, increased booked potential, and revenues. The expertise in operating a convention centre / Performing Arts Centre and an Arena are very different, as is their purpose in the community. It is understood that potential bidders may have expertise in one certain area, but not the whole. To ensure the best partner, we encourage that we leave the door open for specific expertise to come forward.

2. We encourage the City Administration and councilors to consider enabling respondents to submit a joint bid among multiple partners, each with specific expertise. Therefore the needs of the entire district may be better served by partners with unique venue experience.

3. We encourage the City Administration and councilors to consider the possibility of 3rd party management for the Arena, while retaining control of the convention centre under a Direct Authority/LGC. TCU Place is currently a member of the Convention Centres of Canada Association. Within this association there are 22 convention centres in Canada - across the country. These centres are generally balanced between profitability and economic impact drivers in the communities in which they serve. Out of the 22 convention centres, only 2 are managed by third party managers. The other 20 are generally managed under City Management or under Direct Authority LGC. There are privately run conference centres outside of this association - run similar to Prairieland. Convention centres generally exist to drive business tourism in a city through conferences - which means increased hotel spend, restaurant spend, retail and transportation spend, and more with out of town delegates. Out of town conferences offer the optimal balance of high profitability and high economic impact. Third party management is generally incented on profitability - not on economic impact, and will also want to ensure an ROA for their investment. Sometimes the booking decisions for 3rd party managers favour profitability over economic impact, because that helps them reach their goals faster. That short term profitability may come from local events, dance recitals, consumer shows etc, which do less to help other business - such as hotels. An example of this is Carmen's Banquet Hall in Hamilton. It was a venue previously run by the municipality, and converted to 3rd party management. Since that conversion, the venue is seeing far fewer conferences and more local events, and the local tourism organization is not seeing the same spend in hotels as with the previous business model. This is just one example.

Being open to a variety of options will allow Administration and Councilors to still evaluate the options and select the best one for the city's long term vision and goals.

I would also encourage council, through the administration, to inquire about and explore the following during the creation of the RFQ/RFP:

1. Ask how the RFQ / RFP's will be scored? What are the components that will be evaluated?
2. Who will be the evaluators of the RFQ/RFP? I would recommend including parties with strong industry experience outside of the administration to assist so that there are multiple perspectives considered.
3. What happens if we have a proponent strong in one area but not the other?
4. How and when will the unions be involved? While there may be opportunity to start fresh, involving the unions early will assist with any potential transition as well as support.
5. What does the transition look like for out of scope employees?
6. How will pensions be impacted?

We are at very early stages, and there is much work to be done. We understand that the procurement process will allow the City Administration and Council to fully evaluate the options and to select the best option for the city for now and for future. We encourage a flexible competitive process to allow for a variety of options to be presented and evaluated.

Thank you for your consideration.
Tammy Sweeney
CEO TCU Place

Will you be submitting a video to be vetted prior to council meeting?: No