

Ice arena report flows to Hills city council

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

It has taken a year, but a final draft by a citizens committee studied the feasibility of building an indoor ice arena is about to go before the city council.

The committee, made up of interested residents, ice sport enthusiasts, professionals and city officials, studied the demand for an arena, what type of arena and what activities it would house, the cost and expected revenues and whether it would be a public, private or joint venture. Although

they differed on several points, members retained a desire to see the project through, and many plan to help sell it to the city.

But there are some unanswered questions that could spell trouble for such a project. Cost is one.

"If we have a \$2 million gap, it will sound like somebody is trying to make money on this," said city councilman Terry Sever.

Sever and some other committee members thought that the recommended range of costs for an arena of between \$6 million and \$8 million would "scare" off coun-

cil members who might otherwise back a new arena.

"If we come up with a recommendation higher than \$6.5 million, it will be a very tough sell," he said.

Robert Picard, a former NHL hockey player who owns a sporting goods business in Farmington Hills, agreed with Sever.

"You have an expert right here (Jack Vivian, a University of Michigan assistant professor and director of the school's sports facilities research laboratory), who says we can build a nice arena for

that price," Picard said.

But most of the committee members, including chairman and incoming Mayor Larry Lichtman, said they preferred to offer the council a range.

"Having a range is a way to illustrate to the council what the costs are," Lichtman said.

But Sever answered, "I think it confuses them."

Most committee members did agree that until there was more specific detail about the exact building design, it would be impossible to determine the exact cost. And even so, building costs can vary.

"You could spend an extra \$100,000 the first week because of bad soil," said builder Pete Jonna.

Businessman Roy Lindhardt said the committee should not

quibble over the figures too much.

"Let's get on with it," he said.

"We're arguing over a bunch of things that can't be resolved."

Committee members did agree to leave open the question of whether a proposed arena should be privately or publicly owned and run. Several committee members, including Lindhardt and Sever, said they had initially only been interested in a privately owned and operated arena, but now see it as something that could be publicly run without draining the city budget.

Committee member Dennis Fitzgerald, who is also chairman of the Parks and Recreation Commission, settled for the compromise of leaving the private option intact, but not without a protest.

"Why should we do the work and then offer it to somebody else

to make money on?" he said.

A mission statement and final changes to the report will be made and given to committee members before it is presented to the council, most likely at the Jan. 24 regular meeting, Lichtman said.

Lichtman said he also plans to push for a study session with council and committee members before the final recommendation is given to the council.

Timing is critical because interest rates are low and if the council can make a recommendation to go forward, a ballot question seeking public approval to build an arena could be on the August primary ballot. Although public approval would not be required for the city to use revenue bonds to finance an arena, the council has already said it would put any such question before the voters.

Botsford Inn lines up country dancing nights

Country-western dance checked into the historic Botsford Inn in Farmington Hills on New Year's Eve and will remain lodged there every Friday night far into 1994.

The historic ballroom with its wooden, spring-design floor, will provide a smoke-free alternative to the crowded, smoke-filled environments of popular clubs on weekends.

Each Friday, country-dance enthusiasts may choose any of these options: lessons only, dancing only, or lessons and dancing. Prices will range from \$5 to \$8 per person.

"I know excitement will mount as people throughout the metropolitan area learn of this opportunity at the Botsford," said Creon Smith, new owner of the Botsford Inn.

"Wherever country dance lessons are offered, enrollments are bulging because people are clamoring to learn the line dance, Texas two-step or Dallas two-step. This will be a great chance to learn western dance and have fun with this great activity."

The instructors are Elaine Kallio and William Lee, known as "The Cowboy and The Lady."

Kallio has been giving western

dance lessons in recent years for Farmington Community Education, in Plymouth-Canton, at the Farmington Community Center, and at the Northville Recreation Center. Lee, who learned western dance in a studio, has been teaching for 12 years.

Each Friday night at the Botsford Inn, 2800 Grand River at Eight Mile, Kallio and Lee will teach line dancing and the Texas two-step, and will direct students in learning to master maneuvers such as reverse returns, promenade, whipl, belt loop and pretzels.

"The beat of country music is more recognizable than ballroom and social dancing and is easier to dance to," said Kallio.

The Texas two-step is similar to the fox trot except the dancers move in a counterclockwise direction and the music is different. Line dancing, as the name implies, involves dancing the same routine while standing in line. Line dancing does not require a partner like the two-step dancing does.

"It's our hope that many people will make it a Friday night habit to come to the Botsford Inn and enjoy an evening filled with fun, laughter and dancing. This is

great recreation that all ages enjoy," said Kallio.

There will be a cash bar. Smith stressed that dancers of all skill levels are welcome.

"I encourage everyone to come out and dance with us in this beautiful ballroom where Henry Ford first met and then danced to music with his lovely wife, Clara," Kallio said.

The ballroom contains the only springboard dance floor in the area, designed by Ford himself when the automaker owned the Botsford Inn in the 1920s.

The floor has washer-like devices at strategic locations along the floor joists so the floorboard "springs" underneath the feet of dancers. The slight movement is such that it helps prevent the legs and feet of dancers from tiring after two or three hours of dancing.

Henry Ford operated the Botsford Inn until his death in 1947. Four years later it was purchased by John Nicholson Anhut, who then turned the inn over to his son, John Anhut.

Anhut recently sold the Botsford Inn to Creon Smith, known to many as the former general manager of the Mayflower Hotel in Plymouth.

GRAND RIVER CATERED LIVING



"When you need more than a place to live, we're here to help."

Our catered living program allows many seniors to continue to live busy active lives. We help by providing a broad range of services from which to choose, including 3 delicious meals daily, monitoring of self-administered medications, housekeeping, laundry, transportation, shopping and other services.

Grand River Village's catered living program provides many older adults the opportunity to maintain a lifestyle free from institutional housing. Our affordable monthly rates provide you with your own beautiful single story garden apartment where you can live life your way, even when you need a little extra help.

**Grand River Village
OF FARMINGTON HILLS
810-476-7478**

36550 Grand River
Between Halsted & Drake
Farmington Hills
Open 9:30-5:00 Mon.-Fri.
10-5 Saturday 12-5 Sunday

Please clip and mail to Grand River Village
Grand River Village Please call
36550 Grand River Ave. (810) 476-7478
Farmington Hills, MI 48335
YES! Please send me a FREE brochure

Name(s) _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone () _____

Classic Interiors



Happy New Year

ANOTHER YEAR GONE AND DETROIT IS SELLING CARS, THE ECONOMY IS ON THE UPSWING AND WE'RE STILL HERE. WE ARE DEDICATING OUR EFFORTS TO MAKE 1994 AN OUTSTANDING YEAR.

1994 NEW YEAR SALE

SAVE 50%

Off Your Second Item
Of Equal or Lesser Value.

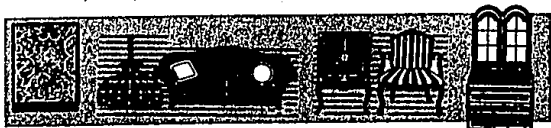
Example

The Most Expensive Piece Save 35%
2nd Most Expensive Piece Save 50%
AND SAVE 35% ON ALL THE REST
Only one 50% item per household.

Hurry This Pricing Will Apply Thru 1/10/94

- | | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| • Thomasville | • Sliffel | • Sligh Desk | • Hancock & Moore |
| • Nichols & Stone | • Dinaire | • Hitchcock | • Howard Miller |
| • Hekman | • La Barge | • Reston | • Bradford-Young |
| • Sligh Clock | • Harden | • King Hickory | • Superior |
| • Hooker | • Bob Timberlake | • Century | • Charleston Forge |
| • Jasper Cabinet | • Canal Dover | • Pennsylvania House | • Athol |
| | • Conover | • Lexington | |

Mon., Thurs., Fri. 9:30-9:00 *Tues., Wed., Sat. 9:30-5:30 *Open Sun. 1-5



Classic Interiors

20292 Middlebelt, Livonia • South of 8 Mile • 474-6300

Mon., Thurs., Fri. 9:30-9:00 • Tues., Wed., Sat. 9:30-5:30, Sun. 1-5
• All discounts are Off Manufacturers Suggested Retail Prices
• All Previous Sales Excluded • Offer Not Valid In Conjunction With Any Other Promotional Discount

WINTER Sale

THURS. JAN. 6 • FRI. JAN. 7 • SAT. JAN. 8

R. Grumet □ Marguerite □ Patricia Miles □ Tasso's Cuisine
LaBret Jewelers □ The Male Room □ Hersh's □ Peanuts
Benetton □ Mr. Alan's □ Sundance □ Chico's □ Zeza
New York Bagel □ Steven Franklin Optics □ Charterhouse
Coffee Exchange □ Stage & Co. □ Riki Schaffer Gallery
Expecting The Best □ Creative Custom Shirtmakers □ Lufinos

UP TO 75% OFF

theboardwalk

Orchard Lake Road • S. of Maple • W. Bloomfield