

Open Forum Proposed Soccer Project
January 19, 2016
Auditorium, College Union
Klamath Falls, Oregon

Open forum began at 2:05 pm

Introduction

President Maples called the forum to order and thanked everyone for participating in the first of three open forums to talk about the proposed soccer field project. These meetings are for informational sharing and listening to receive your input, questions, and concerns regarding the project.

Athletic Director Michael Schell provided a brief overview and history of how the soccer project evolved. Soccer was moved to Steen Sports Park in 2002 and it has been a longstanding goal to move soccer back to campus. The bond funding became available through the Oregon University System in February 2014 for specific capital renovations in auxiliary services. This was a great opportunity for Oregon Tech to begin a path of making this project happen. Soccer has been the #1 goal within the athletics department with the hopes of facilitating the needs of track and field. When the original project went into the bid process, the bids were returned very high above the budget. The project was then suspended to consider the options. With the new governing structure the Oregon Tech Board of Trustees is required to approve any project over 1 million dollars. It was decided to move the soccer project to Purvine field and remove the addition of track and field to reduce the project costs.

Mark Dodson, President for Basin United and board member of Steen Sports Park shared that he was in attendance to answer any questions regarding the financial stability of Basin United and Steen Sports Park and to provide support of Oregon Tech and Oregon Tech Athletics in the endeavor to build the soccer field.

President Maples stated that Oregon Tech has a longstanding relationship with Basin United and Steen Sports Park and thanked Mark for his support.

Q&A and Comments

1. Associate Professor, Don McDonnell: The money for student retention, is that the bond?

Chris Maples: The bond is for athletic facilities. We are prioritizing spending within the university related to recruitment, retention, and graduation. We are going to focus on increasing retention, graduation, and diversity. We are trying to make Oregon Tech more of a home where students can connect with each other and the university.

2. Don McDonnell: Earlier in the year, at convocation, there was a grant that was announced around 2 million dollars that was going to expand advising of freshman students. Is that the same pool of money?

Chris Maples: That is a different pool of money.

3. Don McDonnell: How are we going to pay this back?

Chris Maples: This is all coming out of the athletics budget. Athletics will present to the FOAC two times before the February 2, Finance Committee meeting.

4. Don McDonnell: Is the athletics budget going to be increased by administration to cover the debt?

Chris Maples: No, absolutely not.

Marty Ledgerwood, Community member and board member of Basin United announced his support of the facility on the Oregon Tech Campus.

5. Associate Professor, Terri Torres: I would like to know with your goal of serving students, retention, and having buy-in to the university, why are you doing this now versus building a better recreation center for all students? With the exception of volleyball, all of the student athletes workout off campus.

Chris Maples: That is an excellent question. One of the things is that the building that we have here is probably one of the worst in the conference and there is no doubt that we need to provide a renovation of that space. I will tell you right now that 2 million dollars will do absolutely nothing for that building. A huge fundraising effort will need to take place to build a recreation center that serves the students and members of the community. When older buildings undergo renovations, there are serious problems that are run into that end up increasing costs.

Men's Soccer Coach, Matt Munhall: Currently we are utilizing two different gyms in town with specific strength and conditioning coaches. One of the challenges we have on campus with athletes is that the weight room is used by the general public and we are unable to reserve that space specifically for our teams. The advantage is that our athletes are receiving specialized instruction that may or may not be available through coaches. We are supporting those local gyms and do not have to maintain equipment on campus which is part of the liability of those local gyms.

6. Terri Torres: But those athletes have to travel to that gym, which is part of the rationale for why we are putting a soccer field on campus is that our athletes have to travel. I think I would like you to address what the difference is between the field that we are proposing and the field at Steen park.

Matt Munhall: The fields at Steen Park are a tremendous facility and we are grateful to have access to that facility. What our athletes would really like is the support of our campus and to be a part of the campus. The biggest challenge is that we do not get campus support out to our games, we do not get a large student body because we are off campus. We are representing Oregon Tech and our institution and when we play home competitions we don't get the support of the Oregon Tech community.

Women's Soccer Coach, Brandon Porter: We only go to outside gyms twice a week; Oregon Tech is our home facility as a soccer program. Steen is a great field and venue but there are issues that unless you experience firsthand you really do not know how tough it is to go out there. For instance, one of my players got into an accident, missed training, practice, games and school. We are trying to eliminate that problem specifically. The other issue is controlling what happens at the site.

Chris Maples: It is a public place that draws all kinds of people; ours will be public as well but with a focus primarily with just the soccer on campus. I think it would be a welcoming environment just like Steen.

Brandon Porter: Realistically, this is not about Steen in my opinion. It is about having a home facility. This is the equivalent to asking a professor to have an office on this campus and drive out to KCC to instruct a class and ask all of their students to drive out to KCC to receive instruction. To expect an intercollegiate athlete to drive off of campus to another facility that is not their home is not realistic. Purvine field used to be the soccer field and the goal is to bring it back to campus.

7. Scott Meredith: At the last meeting there was some concern about the economic impact on Steen, can you please tell us a little about that?

Mark Dodson: The financial impact of Oregon Tech moving to an on campus site would not negatively affect Basin United or Steen Sports Park. Both organizations are fine financially if Oregon Tech decided not to renew the contract this month.

8. What is the amount that Oregon Tech pays your organization per year?

The current contract amount to Basin United is \$12,000; it is nice money to get over a calendar year but it will not lock our doors. Basin United has a user agreement with Steen Sports Park to operate Mikes Field House and the soccer field and Basin United is the contract connection to Oregon Tech. Oregon Tech Basin United for usage of that facility.

9. Student Rugby Player: I have concerns about the soccer project and the rugby field being ripped out. Is it going to be a fully playable rugby field? As it stands, we will need to move off campus if the soccer field is built.

Michael Schell: We are still in the design phase and there are still decisions to be made.

10. Are there going to be any lights put into the plan?

Not at this time, lights will be included in the second phase of the project.

There were additional comments between the rugby and soccer players regarding scheduling, field use, turf and design.

10. Student soccer captain: All of the Oregon Tech athletes came here for our sport. It means a lot to us to get the support of the campus and I feel like we are entitled to play on campus.

Chris Maples: Our goal is not to put one sport against the other, we want to hear the issues, and what we can do to make this happen.

Michael Schell: I think that we have to work towards a solution that works for both. If we try to expand the turf to fit rugby, we are expanding the project an additional \$200,000. It would add significantly to the overall cost. There are potential solutions out there we just don't have those answers at this time. We are willing to compromise to make this project work for everyone.

11. Track player: From my understanding, track was in the picture, but because field events were affected, the track project was removed from the combined project. I would like to suggest that funding is found to renovate the actual track. That track team is in full support of the soccer project, but we would like to see a few renovations of our own.

Chris Maples: We are trying to do our best to stretch the dollars.

Michael Schell: The track was not completely forgotten about when it was separated in the project. We very much know that improvements need to be made there.

Women's basketball player: It is an amazing opportunity to play on campus with the support that we get. I want to emphasize how awesome it is to play in front of a home crowd. As a fully funded collegiate sport, I find it sad that you are unable to experience the opportunities that we have gotten to experience. It is amazing to be a role model to the children that look up to you in the community at a home facility. The soccer project has my support and the support of our team.

Marketing student: I have watched soccer all four years of being at Oregon Tech. This is a project that will benefit the community and the athletes. To have a premier facility will only help the community as a whole and bring the community together. Oregon Tech plays an integral role in Klamath Falls. Oregon Tech is one of the main reasons that Klamath Falls is surviving to the extent that it is. What the students bring to this community is irreplaceable and these students definitely deserve to have their own facility and have a home crowd.

Soccer player: I wanted to speak for the soccer team and thank everyone for their support. I have travelled around the globe to play my sport and to represent my institution. I signed for Oregon Tech approximately one year ago as a student athlete, and Coach Munhall has done his best to make this a professional soccer environment for his players. The reason I chose Oregon Tech out of all the schools in America was to come play and to study. The environment of having a soccer facility would be great. I am so used to my country where the communities live and breathe soccer and every game people support and look up to us; that community is here. There was a young community member that came to a home game and he was wearing the jersey of my home national team to support. It would just be so much better to come to a campus that

breathes soccer and breathes Oregon Tech. It would just be a great successful story for Oregon Tech.

Golf Coach, Jeff Corkill: I would ask that the board consider this facility. It would be a great improvement for this campus and the environment. This just seems like the logical thing to do.

12. Grants and Sponsored Research Director, Sara Reuter: I am not against this project but I have some concerns that the budget is not complete. You are not including lights or bleachers, I would like to see this project complete before we proceed. This project is estimated at 2 million dollars and in reality it may come in at 2.5 million dollars. I have some real concerns about an 18 year life on the turf, on the research that I have done it is more like a 10 – 12 year life. I don't think that we have all the money to do this, let's put the budget together the way it should be for a functional field and find the funding and then at least we will know what we are in for.

Michael Schell: Our intent is to do lights, we do have bleachers as an alternate in the design plan. It is not ideal, but we can move portable bleachers from the softball field. Lights are in phase II of the plan.

Women's Basketball Coach, Scott Meredith: I believe in this project for the experience of our students. Cutting travel time for athletes and coaches is a huge benefit. The fact that students could walk to the field after class is amazing. I would be really happy to go and watch these students play, all of the logistics will be worked out. The bond is there and so we should use it for a field that benefits two intercollegiate soccer programs.

Baseball player: I just want to mention that baseball would benefit from this project as well. It will be a great use for our players to host practice on this field when soccer is not using it.

Matt Miles: I have been on campus for 47 years, I have seen all the changes. The soccer facility will benefit 50 of our 250 athletes. What a phenomenal thing for Oregon Tech, to put a state of the art facility on campus. The community is moving in the right direction and it makes sense to use this bond for this project and it would be a big win for the community of Oregon Tech.

Student: We are an engineering school and I understand that we don't have bleachers let's build them. We need lights, let's get donations to put them up. I do think that we need a soccer field.

Forum adjourned: 3:05pm