



Williamstown Winter Commons, Williamstown, Massachusetts

Ice Ice Baby II

WARSAW'S WINTER WONDERLAND

Kosciusko Leadership Academy

Class of 2016

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Kosciusko Leadership Academy, class of 2008, began laying the groundwork for bringing winter recreation to Kosciusko County. Their proposal entailed a multi-use facility in a central location where the community could come together and enjoy winter activities such as open skating, curling, and ice shows/dancing. Since 2008, there has been interest by local community leaders and residents to explore the idea; however, to date, the idea has not come to fruition.

The Proposal/Need

Upon our review of the proposal from the KLA class of 2008, meeting with various principles with the City of Warsaw and other interested parties, we have determined the timing of resurrecting the idea of an ice rink in Warsaw is apropos. Kosciusko County lacks fun outdoor activities for families during the winter. Our county needs a place for residents to come together as a community to enjoy the winter season in a healthy and safe way.

Community Interest

In 2011, an information gathering survey was distributed to community residents by the Warsaw Parks & Recreation Department. Of the surveys distributed, 378 or 9% were returned. Amongst many questions asked in the survey, one question was, *“How do you feel about adding or improving the following facilities in the city park system?”* Choices were as follows: Canoe/Kayak Rentals and Launches, Ice Skating Area, Water Splash Pad, Additional Picnic Shelters, No-Leash Dog Park, Tennis Courts, Horseshoes, and Disc Golf. Of the 378 surveys returned, 241 indicated an ice-skating area would be an improvement to the city park system. An ice rink was second only to a canoe/kayak rental and launch; however only by one vote. A second question asked was, *“If you had the ability to change just one thing about Warsaw Parks, what would it be?”* Among all answers submitted by survey respondents, three mentioned ice-

skating. The OrthoWorx Young Professional Advisor's (OYPA) group recently polled their group with regard to winter recreation in Warsaw and the surrounding area. The majority of the group indicated they would utilize an outdoor ice-skating rink if one were available in our area. It is obvious there is community interest in an ice-skating rink and undoubtedly in an area that is safe for everyone to enjoy. Ice-skating on a lake is never a one hundred percent "safe" environment. An ice rink, however, would provide safety from falling through thin ice.

The Vision

A Midwest town thriving in economic growth, holding the title of *Orthopedic Capital of the World* sounds like a dream to many city leaders. It is almost too good to be true. In Warsaw, Indiana that dream has come true but with all of the great things that come with the growth, come some hurdles. The orthopedic companies and their counterparts have worked diligently to find top-notch employees in the industry. As new employees move their families to the area, some are looking for an urban style of living that takes them to cities such as South Bend and Fort Wayne to set up their permanent homes. The leaders of Warsaw would like to see this trend change.

The Warsaw downtown area is in a transformation stage. Part of that transformation is planned through the Buffalo Street Redevelopment Project. This project intends to not only bring retail to the southern end of Buffalo Street but also bring an urban style of housing. These changes are just one of the ways the city hopes to revitalize Warsaw to a new Warsaw Downtown Area. Buffalo Street will have a connecting road to the Warsaw Central Park, which becomes a hub, especially in the summer, for numerous activities.

During the winter, with the exception of the month of December, when the holiday decorations are on display, Warsaw Central Park goes dark concerning activities until spring

arrives. During the cold months, this can counter assist with what the city is doing in making Warsaw an appealing area to live in. There is, however, a resolve to make the park a central hub during the cold season.

Imagine yourself, in the month of December, taking your family to the Central Park to see all of the holiday lights, the nativity scene, meeting Santa and seeing his reindeer. You pull in to the parking lot expecting to see the beautiful trees twinkling with their beautiful lights but you are sidetracked by all of the cars in the parking lot and people buzzing around and then you see this:

“The Rink” A covered ice rink is the answer to keeping this area energetic.



South Haven Ice Rink, South Haven, Michigan

“The Rink” offers family fun within walking distance to all the stores and restaurants of downtown Warsaw. Enjoy the beauty of a winter night while skating under the seasonal

lighting. Open skating hours would be available almost every day throughout the extended winter season.

Projected Costs

Upon researching several vendors, the KLA group decided a semi-permanent ice rink would better serve the community of Warsaw and its residents. Semi-permanent ice rinks have concrete foundations; however are converted to other uses during the off-season. The cost of an 80-foot by 180-foot ice rink with refrigeration cooling system is approximately \$230,000. The cost of a steel frame pavilion with wood trusses and roof framing would be close to \$200,000. Additional costs for miscellaneous items such as skates, skate sharpening machine, lighting, sound, seating, warming stations and an ice-resurfacing machine are estimated at \$120,000. Adding to these amounts a ten percent buffer, we estimate the total initial cost to be close to \$600,000.

In addition to the initial cost for the ice rink and pavilion, there would be on-going maintenance costs such as electricity to run the refrigeration equipment. The estimated cost per month for electricity would range from \$1,000 to \$3,000 per month. The cost of electricity would depend on the weather. If we experienced an abnormally cold winter, the refrigeration equipment would not operate at all. However, on days when the temperatures spike above freezing, the refrigeration unit would draw a significant amount of energy to maintain the ice.

In summary, the initial costs are as follows:

- 80-foot by 180-foot Ice Rink with Refrigeration Cooling System = \$230,000
- Steel frame pavilion with wood trusses and roof framing = \$200,000
- Miscellaneous = \$120,000
 - Lighting/Sound
 - Seating/Warming Stations
 - Ice-resurfacing machine
 - Skates/Skate Sharpening Machine
- Buffer = \$50,000

Comparable Facilities

In conducting research for the project, we looked closely at a few ice rinks that were specific to the concept we envisioned for “*The Rink*”: South Haven Ice Rink; South Haven, Michigan, Headwaters Park Ice Rink; Fort Wayne, Indiana, and Williamstown Winter Commons; Williamstown, Maryland. All three ice rinks have a cooling system to keep the ice intact along with a pavilion over the rink to help protect it from the elements. Having a cooling system under the ice is extremely important for a few reasons; this allows use of the ice even on days when the temperature is above freezing; including days when temperatures are upwards of 50 degrees. The cooling system also encourages the ice to refreeze faster than it would if it were relying solely on the outside temperatures to freeze back when it has been warmed by the sun or used extensively. Even on cooler days, the cooling system keeps the ice at a more consistent temperature throughout the entire area of the ice rink.

There are two different ways to have a cooling system; one concept would be to have the coils lying in layers of gravel that are laid each season and the rink is constructed on top. Although this is a laborious task for those involved and it has to be done at the beginning and end of each season, it is by far the less expensive way to go initially. The other model would be to have the coils laid in concrete and the ice rink is constructed on top of it. This method has an initial higher cost; however, the labor of laying the coils and gravel every season has been eliminated.

The Kosciusko Leadership Academy (KLA) group, who created this proposal, researched a variety of covered and uncovered rinks with cooling systems in addition to rinks with no cooling system. Each ice rink the group looked into had its own story of lessons learned with regard to their operations. Obviously, the rinks with the cooling systems are much more

successful due to not having to be as concerned about the unknown and uncontrollable temperature variations. The rinks that did not have a cooling system were able to operate with great success the winter of 2014-2015; however, the following year, when the temperatures were above freezing a good part of the year, the rinks were only able to function one or two weeks out of the entire season. The rinks with a cooling system had only a few days during the season when the ice was not solid enough to skate on. Two of the rinks we focused on were the South Haven Ice Rink, South Haven, MI and the Headwaters Park Ice Rink, Fort Wayne, IN. Both ice rinks feature a covered pavilion. We discovered a pavilion has an added benefit in that along with the temperatures, the weather is not a factor. Whether raining, snowing, or sun beating down on the ice, with a properly equipped, covered facility, adverse weather conditions did not affect the use of the ice. The South Haven Ice Rink did not have a pavilion during the first two years it was in operation. After having to invest in numerous extra hours to maintain the ice after a heavy snow, sleet, or rain, the City of South Haven, decided to build a pavilion over the rink. This solved their issues of having to pay the labor to have the ice cleaned before they could open back up for business.

The Location

The KLA group looked at three different location possibilities for the ice rink. Location One: Parking lot of the City County Athletic Complex (CCAC). While the CCAC has available space, the rink would have to be constructed in a temporary manner. Being temporary, it would have to be deconstructed each spring and resurrected each winter. Additionally, the ice rink would not be covered or have refrigerant; therefore we would be at the mercy of Mother Nature as to whether one could skate on any given winter day. Finally, the maintenance involved in ensuring snow is removed from the surface would be a challenge. Location Two:

Parkview/Warsaw YMCA. This location demonstrated the same challenges as location one. The third location was Warsaw's Central Park. Central Park offers the greatest potential as a location for the ice rink. The park is centrally located in Warsaw, close to the downtown district, and offers ample real estate to house the size of structure we propose.

Other Uses/Revenue Opportunities

While the primary use of the pavilion for the months of mid-November through mid-March would be the ice rink, the concept we are proposing would have multiple uses the rest of the year. The Warsaw Parks and Recreation department could rent the pavilion for events such as weddings and corporate picnics. The pavilion would also provide a venue for the Farmer's Market, Concerts in the Park, Fall Family Fun Day and Family Safety Day.

"The Rink" would not be viewed as a revenue generator, or moneymaker; its purpose would be to serve as a "community maker and community marker". There would be small revenue opportunities in that skate rental and skate sharpening would be provided at a minimal cost. The ice rinks we reviewed rent skates for a nominal fee along with providing the service of sharpening blades for those who own their own skates. As the years have passed, the rinks found more people are investing in their own skates and use the facilities regularly during the season. There also would be an opportunity to generate revenue from rental of the facility during the off-season for events such as weddings and corporate outings.

Conclusion

With the upcoming changes that will be happening with the Downtown Warsaw such as the Buffalo Street Project, the timing of constructing the ice rink in Central Park feels like the right time. The City leaders agreed that they would like to pursue this concept at this time to see if it could be incorporated with the current plans of the revitalization of the downtown area. The

City Parks Department will need to drive this project. There is a group of community leaders and funders have shown interest in creating an ad hoc committee to work with the Parks Department to try to make the ice rink become a reality.

If the KLA group were honored with receiving the Northenor Award, the funds would be used to develop an architectural rendering of the ice rink and pavilion.

Works Cited

Warsaw Parks & Recreation 2011-2016 Master Plan, Public Opinion Survey, page 12 and page 20.

<http://www.warsaw.in.gov/DocumentCenter/View/409>

Appendix

Power Point Presentation