

>>MARK SHARPE: YEAH, I'M ROUNDING, YEAH.

>>MIKE MERRILL: THAT'S A COMBINATION OF BASICALLY THREE COMPONENTS. ONE IS AN ESTIMATED DEBT SERVICE CHARGE TO FINANCE THE \$40 MILLION FOR THE FACILITY AND TO ACQUIRE THE LAND BECAUSE THE LAND IS CURRENTLY OWNED BY THE WATER DEPARTMENT, AND THE WATER DEPARTMENT, UNDER ITS COVENANT TO BONDHOLDERS, HAS TO GET FAIR MARKET VALUE FOR ANY LAND THAT IT DISPOSES OF, SO THAT'S PART OF THE COST. THE SECOND COMPONENT IS THE OPERATING AND MAINTENANCE COST OF THE FACILITY, WHICH WAS A FIGURE THAT THE PARKS DEPARTMENT PUT TOGETHER BASED ON ITS OWN EXPERIENCES OF OPERATING EXISTING FACILITIES AND --

>>MARK SHARPE: WHAT -- WHAT -- I DON'T WANT TO INTERRUPT HERE, BUT WE'RE COMPARING THE OPPORTUNITY FOR US TO COMPETE WITH DISNEY WORLD SPORTS COMPLEX, AND I KNOW THEY'VE GOT A SIGNIFICANT OPERATIONAL BUDGET.

>>MIKE MERRILL: UH-HUH.

>>MARK SHARPE: DO YOU HAVE ANY -- ANY IDEA HOW MUCH THEY SPEND ON THEIR OPERATIONAL COSTS TO MAINTAIN A FACILITY SUCH AS THE ONE THAT THEY'VE MAINTAINED, RECOGNIZING THAT WE'RE PROBABLY COMPARING APPLES TO ORANGUTANS, BUT WE ARE STILL TALKING ABOUT BEING ABLE TO PERHAPS COMPETE AND BRING EVENTS THAT MIGHT BE GOING TO ORLANDO DOWN TO THIS FACILITY NEAR PLANT CITY.

>>MIKE MERRILL: LET ME TELL YOU WHAT THE DIFFICULTY WAS IN DOING THIS. AND LET ME FIRST JUST MAKE SURE EVERYBODY UNDERSTANDS WHAT THIS IS. THIS IS NOT A FEASIBILITY STUDY THAT YOU'RE SEEING ON PAGE 37. IT'S NOT AN ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY. THIS IS A WEEK'S WORTH BASED ON NOT ALL OF THE INFORMATION I WOULD LIKED TO HAVE HAD. IT'S AN ANALYSIS BASED ON INFORMATION THAT WAS PROVIDED BY THE PARKS DEPARTMENT ON OPERATIONS. IT WAS BASED ON A LITTLE BIT OF INFORMATION FROM OTHER COMPETING FACILITIES. THE PROBLEM - - AND LET'S TALK ABOUT DISNEY. THE PROBLEM I HAD IN GETTING INFORMATION IS THAT MOST FACILITIES LIKE THIS ARE PRIVATELY OWNED.

>>MARK SHARPE: RIGHT.

>>MIKE MERRILL: AND WHEN THEY'RE PRIVATELY OWNED, THEY DON'T GIVE YOU THE INFORMATION. THAT WERE THREE FACILITIES

THAT WERE PUBLICLY OWNED WHICH I WAS ABLE TO GET INFORMATION FROM -- ACTUALLY, TWO OF THEM. ONE IS KINO PARK IN -- IN ARIZONA, AND THE OTHER WAS THE NATIONAL SPORTS COMPLEX IN MINNEAPOLIS -- OR IN BLAINE, MINNESOTA. WE HAVE A CALL IN TO AN OPERATION IN PEORIA, WHICH THEY HAVEN'T GOTTEN BACK TO US ON. I CAN'T GET NUMBERS FROM DISNEY BECAUSE IT'S PRIVATELY OWNED, AND MOST OF THESE FACILITIES ARE EITHER PRIVATELY OWNED OR PRIVATELY -- PRIVATE-PUBLIC PARTNERSHIPS, SO -- I MEAN, I KNOW WHAT THEY SPEND IN BLAINE, BUT THAT FACILITY IS MUCH BIGGER THAN THIS, AND I, AS I STATED IN THE REPORT, AM RELYING ON THE PARKS AND RECREATION NUMBERS BECAUSE I DIDN'T HAVE ANY OTHER NUMBERS TO WORK WITH. SO I HOPE THAT ANSWERS YOUR QUESTION.

>>MARK SHARPE: WELL, I THINK THE ONE PART THAT WAS TELLING AND VERY HELPFUL -- AND LISTEN, YOU KNOW, I'M SOMEBODY THAT I APPRECIATE PEOPLE THAT HAVE A VISION AND WANT TO GET OUT THERE AND TRY TO MAKE OUR COMMUNITY STRONGER, BUT -- AND I KNOW IT'S -- YOU KNOW, SOMETIMES, LIKE EVEN AT THE HOUSE, MY WIFE AND I ARGUE ABOUT THINGS, AND I JUST KEEP ASKING QUESTION AFTER QUESTION AFTER QUESTION. I CAN TELL SHE'S GETTING MAD AT ME, BUT THE QUESTIONS NEED TO BE RAISED. MY CONCERN IS I THINK A ONE-WEEK FEASIBILITY STUDY, FOR ME, IN PARTICULAR, IS NOT REALLY ENOUGH TIME TO MAKE A GOOD JUDGMENT ON SOMETHING THAT IS AS COMPLEX, AS COMPETITIVE, AS DIVERSE -- I MEAN, WE TALKED ABOUT -- I HEARD IN JUST A FEW MINUTES -- AND I REALLY WANTED TO SIT DOWN AND TALK WITH JIM ABOUT, OKAY, DIFFERENT FINANCING OPTIONS? WHAT ARE THEY? HAVE WE EXPLORED EVERY ONE OF THEM? HAVE WE LOOKED AT -- AND, YOU KNOW, I'M THINKING, AGAIN, IF DONE PROPERLY, I'VE HEARD FROM PROPONENTS THIS COULD BE A PHENOMENAL -- PHENOMENAL OPPORTUNITY, AND I APPLAUD THE CHAIRMAN FOR HAVING THE GUTS TO -- TO -- TO WORK OUT A PROJECT SUCH AS THIS. BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE ARE FACILITIES, THERE ARE STADIUMS THAT SIT IDLE. THERE ARE BASEBALL STADIUMS THAT SIT IDLE. I HEAR ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITY TO BRING AN NCAA SOCCER CHAMPIONSHIP TO -- TO HERE -- TO THIS REGION, AND I ASKED HOW OFTEN THAT TAKES PLACE, AND, WELL, ONE OF THE COMPETITIONS IS EVERY TWO YEARS. WHAT IF WE DON'T GET IT? AND HOW MUCH DOES IT COST FOR US TO BID? I MEAN, I KNOW PEOPLE ARE OUT THERE BIDDING FOR THESE EVENTS. SO I DON'T WANT TO KEEP -- I DON'T WANT TO KEEP ASKING -- I HAVE SO MANY QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT THIS, I AM GOING TO WAIT TO HEAR WHAT OTHERS HAVE TO SAY, BUT I WOULD JUST LIKE TO HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO REALLY DELVE INTO THIS.

>>MIKE MERRILL: RIGHT.

>>MARK SHARPE: AND -- AND I WOULD LIKE FOR YOU TO HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE MORE THAN A WEEK TO DO A FEASIBILITY STUDY TO REALLY LET US KNOW WHEN WE'RE GETTING READY TO COMMIT A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF MONEY TO A PROJECT THAT IF ALL OF OUR BEST -- I MEAN, I READ A LOT OF ASSUMPTIONS, AND YOU KNOW, BAD NEWS BEAR IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU MAKE ASSUMPTIONS. IF THOSE ASSUMPTIONS PROVE WRONG, WE RUN GREAT RISKS.

>>MIKE MERRILL: WELL, I DON'T WANT MY PREVIOUS COMMENTS TO BE CONSTRUED AS -- AS THROWING A BLANKET OVER THIS DEAL. I JUST SIMPLY WANTED TO MAKE SURE THAT ON THE RECORD EVERYBODY KNEW WHAT THIS IS AND WHAT IT WASN'T.

>>MARK SHARPE: I DON'T SEE IT AS A BLANKET.

>>MIKE MERRILL: HAVING SAID THAT, IN TALKING WITH THE FOLKS AT THE NATIONAL SPORTS CENTER IN BLAINE, MINNESOTA, AND DOING OTHER RESEARCH, THERE IS A LOT OF POTENTIAL FOR THESE KINDS OF FACILITIES.

>>MARK SHARPE: SURE.

>>MIKE MERRILL: AND I LEARNED A LOT JUST BY TALKING TO THE OPERATIONS GUY IN MINNESOTA WHAT MISTAKES THEY MADE EARLY ON, YOU KNOW, WHAT SUCCESSES THEY HAD IN THE WAY THAT THEY PUT BUSINESS TOGETHER, AND I THINK THAT THERE IS A LOT OF OPPORTUNITY. THE ONLY THING I -- I JUST NEED TO TELL YOU-- ALL IS THAT, YOU KNOW, I HAD A WEEK TO DO IT, AND BECAUSE I WAS COMING AT IT WITH THAT KIND OF LIMITATION, I TOOK THIS PARTICULAR APPROACH, WHICH WAS INSTEAD OF TRYING TO IDENTIFY, YOU KNOW, WHAT ARE ALL THE POTENTIALS OUT THERE, I CAME AT IT FROM THE POINT OF VIEW, WHAT IS THE BREAK-EVEN COST?

>>MARK SHARPE: RIGHT.

>>MIKE MERRILL: YOU KNOW, WHAT DO WE HAVE -- WHAT DO WE HAVE TO COVER? AND, YOU KNOW, THAT'S NOT TYPICALLY THE WAY YOU DO AN ECONOMIC -- FULL ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY STUDY. YOU LOOK AT THE MARKET, YOU LOOK AT THE DEMOGRAPHICS, YOU LOOK AT COMPETING --

>>MARK SHARPE: WHO WOULD BE ABLE -- WOULD YOU BE ABLE TO

DO A FULL ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY STUDY?

>>MIKE MERRILL: SURE.

>>MARK SHARPE: OR OUR COUNTY STAFF WOULD. WHAT ABOUT A FEASIBILITY STUDY THAT EXAMINES IN DETAIL -- I SAW THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM GET UP HERE AND SPEAK IN SUPPORT OF THE PROJECT. YOU KNOW, I KNOW THAT WORKING WITH THE SCHOOL, ONE OF OUR LARGEST CHALLENGES WASN'T JUST HAVING - - WELL, IT WAS HAVING ACCESS TO PARKS, BUT IT WAS ALSO HAVING ACCESS TO FUEL TO GET US TO THE PARK AND GET US THERE IN A TIMELY FASHION. AND IF YOU'RE A SCHOOL IN TOWN 'N COUNTRY OR IF YOU'RE A SCHOOL IN SOUTH COUNTY YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO COMPUTE THE DISTANCE IT TAKES TO GET TO A FIELD, WHETHER IT'S TO COMPETE OR EVEN PRACTICE. I'M NOT SURE THAT WE'RE LOOKING AT THIS AS A PRACTICE FIELD. I WOULD BE INTERESTED IN SEEING -- ED -- I SAW THE HEAD. I WASN'T SURE, WERE YOU NODDING OR JUST NODDING OFF?

[LAUGHTER]

>>JIM NORMAN: LAUGHING.

>>ED RADICE: COMMISSIONER, I WAS 69 TWO WEEKS AGO, BUT I STILL CAN STAY AWAKE TILL 7:00 AT NIGHT SOMETIMES, EXCEPT WHEN I'M HERE.

[LAUGHTER]

BUT, NO. WHAT -- WHAT I FOUND OUT THROUGH THE YEARS OF WORKING WITH -- WITH TEAMS AND SPORTS LIKE THAT, THE PRACTICE FACILITIES HAVE TO BE LOCATED CLOSER TO WHERE THE FOLKS ARE, BUT PEOPLE WILL TRAVEL FOR SPECIAL GAMES AND EVENTS. THEY'LL GO FOR THE EVENTS OF AN AAU TOURNAMENT OR A GIRLS' SOCCER TOURNAMENT OR WHATEVER ALPHABET YOU WANT TO USE. AND SEE, THAT -- THAT'S THE BEAUTY OF THIS SITUATION IS THAT THIS FACILITY -- AND WHAT I'VE LEARNED THROUGH THE YEARS AND WHAT YOU'LL -- CAN SEE FROM THE FIGURES THROUGH THE TAMPA SPORTS COMMISSION IS THAT THE SPORTS COMPLEX IN NORTHWEST HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY HAS BEEN ABLE TO GENERATE A LARGE ECONOMIC IMPACT THROUGH AMATEUR KIDS' TEAMS. PEOPLE THAT HAVE EIGHT- AND NINE- AND TEN-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN THAT GO TO BASEBALL GAMES, SOCCER GAMES, LACROSSE, WOMEN'S SPORTS, THINGS OF THAT NATURE, THOSE PARENTS ARE GOING TO TRAVEL WITH THEIR CHILDREN. WHAT HAPPENS IS WHEN WE GET THE OLDER INDIVIDUALS, THE 18-, 19-YEAR-OLD, YOU DON'T GET THE CROWDS.