

Eugene School District 4J  
**Civic Stadium Community Meeting Report**  
**February 25, 2010**  
7:00-9:00 p.m.  
South Eugene High School Cafeteria

The Eugene School District conducted a community meeting on Thursday, February 25, 2010 to:

- review the proposal to sell the Civic Stadium property,
- review the school district's decision-making timeline, and
- ask for comments on the proposal to sell the property.

Approximately 60 people attended. The meeting opened with a presentation by 4J staff members Barb Bellamy, Communications Director, and Jon Lauch, Facilities Director. Staff then answered questions and invited comments.

Attendees were invited to fill out a comment form at the meeting or on the district web site. The web comment form was open for a period 8 days, from the evening of February 25 through Friday, March 5.

### **Questions raised at the meeting**

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*Historic value and significance:*

Does Civic Stadium have historic value?

Does 4J have an obligation to consider historic significance?

*Selling the property – value, use of proceeds:*

How did \$1 in good will offering from the City of Eugene turn into \$xx million value on 4J books? Why not sell that to City for \$1 to show good will so the people could fund the purchase and/or rehabilitation?

If Civic Stadium was sold, would the money go to a school fund for interest only to be used by school district?

Why sell property in the worst economic times?

*Educational uses for the property:*

Has the board thought of using the stadium for educational purposes, such football, commencement, or other activities that use this as a community asset? Experts in historic preservation have said the property should be used in educational matter.

*Who makes the decision and what are the criteria:*

Is the decision to sell the property as the sole discretion of the board? What written criteria would determine how a decision would be made? Is there a staff recommendation on the disposition?

Can we get records of previous land use decisions so can make comments relevant to the board? Questions need to be targeted and useful for board members.

*South Eugene baseball field:*

Is there a plan for replacing the baseball field for South Eugene use?

Where would the varsity field be located?

The old field will have three teams on a multipurpose field. Where is there equity between schools as other high schools have at least two fields?

Are you consulting with SEHS baseball team?

How much do you anticipate it will cost to make changes?

Will the rehabilitation of the existing baseball stadium at SEHS included \$300,000 for bleachers?

There are no lights at the existing SEHS fields for spring sports; only other field for baseball in the area is at Roosevelt Middle School.

With the budget deficit where does the district plan to get \$300,000 to do upgrading to the other field? When would the work be done and the field ready for use?

*Civic Stadium costs and income:*

Provide more detail about the \$50,000 in annual expenses the district says it is incurring for Civic Stadium.

Questioned cost of \$50,000 to maintain field. If SEHS teams were the only users, the field would not have to be irrigated until July; electricity would not be needed year round and it would not need to be heated when not used; if the Eugene Emeralds were not using Civic Stadium, there could be drop in utilities.

The newspaper said the Eugene Ems are obligated to pay \$37,000 for work on Civic because of the lease. Did the board try to get the money? Why not use that money for the feasibility study or for Civic?

How much income does the district receive from the property?

Was there an exchange of money from SEHS for their use of the ballfield?

*Public input process:*

How was the web survey being distributed, how would information be solicited? What will you do with responses?

What and how will public input impact decision making process? Will there be input on the RFP for the sale of Civic Stadium?

*Other:*

What is the feasibility of rodeo or bull riding at Civic Stadium?

Has the rezoning process begun?

Will any money be spent before the RFP process was completed?

Has the district talked with the City regarding the condition of grandstand?

## Comments from 18 speakers

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1. The neighborhood loves Civic.
  - neighbors do not feel infringed upon by the stadium;
  - long-time neighborhood resident; the only time she complained about events at the stadium was when rodeo was there—it was horrible for the neighborhood;
  - RFP process—will provide additional time to give the community the maximum amount of time to save this resource; the community raised money and saved Spencer Butte during depression; it should be given a chance to save this resource;
  - 4J needs to covert the property to cash as soon as possible; the community needs time to recognize what needs to be done; the first value of the property—any use should be similar to what is today
  - Civic is a fabulous resource; the highest, best value is to save the resource of Civic;
  - it would be beneficial if the district could play role in ownership;
  - maximum flexibility for the property should be a goal for future uses; the list of priorities should be community amenity oriented and not an emphasis on commercial uses; community does not need more commercial uses; property has been redeveloped for multifamily housing in university area and the community does not need more; there is a need for more public land.
2. Civic Stadium is a major asset to people of Eugene for sports and represents a part of Eugene's history;
  - 4J does not have the right to make a decision to sell the property; citizens made decision to buy the property and the deed said it should be used as recreation for the city and the school district; original construction work was done by the WPA during the Great Depression; a portion of the property became part of South Eugene High School; 4J classified the property as surplus;
  - the Eugene Emeralds and the district were poor stewards;
  - if the district does not want to keep the property, it should revert to the city for the \$1 the district paid the city for the property decades ago.
3. If Civic Stadium is sold and torn down, you can't bring it back
  - if the board can't make right decision citizens should un-elect them;
  - the district should do the right thing and keep Civic.
4. Grew up going to Civic and wants her children to be able to go to the games;
  - everyone goes to games at Civic, old people, young people, parents, children and grandparents; everyone should be able to experience the enjoyment of seeing baseball at the stadium.
5. Moved here in many years ago; used to go to Civic with son; if the board is considering getting rid of stadium, it needs hear two sides of the issue;
  - the board wants to get rid of Civic but it needs to work with community to keep the resource in the community; 4J could be partner in using it;
  - the community should go out and fund raise to get \$40,000 conduct the survey and to make it happen;
  - lots of people want to see it remain there; 4J needs to make sure this resource remains a community asset and work with Save Civic Stadium and historic groups to do so.
6. As a mom with 3 kids, two of whom graduated from South Eugene High School and one of whom is a currently a student; she questions Civic Stadium being surplus
  - because there are no buses, kids drive to school—the parking lot is full; we need to get kids here to educate them;

- questions that other schools have only one baseball field; must have lights to play on the junior varsity field;
  - although not an attorney or judge, she understood when deed said what the use must be, the judge made the wrong decision;
  - her daughter played softball, and the school then lost the softball field; the city facility for softball was not comparable to the baseball field; the district was doing disservice to the players;
  - hopes educators and board members will make the right decision for the students; if a decision was legal but not moral it was not the right decision.
7. Member of Save Civic Stadium board; questioned if 4J is moving quickly because of deal with YMCA;
    - why was the maintenance contract not enforced with the EMS;
    - it was troubling that 4J was unwilling to acknowledge this unique resource; it was not surplus property; community deserves the respect of 4J acknowledging it was a steward of the property; the district received income and still allowed it to fall into disrepair;
    - the district should stand up and do right thing.
  8. Save Civic Stadium member—there were many, many more questions than asked tonight;
    - there was a community perspective that the property was not surplus;
    - 4J had already taken action and committed funds for use of the vacant parcel; it had submitted a requests to the city for rezoning;
    - there will be demolition costs; what has 4J done to invite others to submit RFPs for reuse;
    - Save Civic Stadium was willing to take on the daunting reuse study task; they were given 90 days for the reuse study, 82 days as of today.
  9. Grew up roller skating to San Diego Padres stadium; when the city bought property in Mission Valley for a new stadium, they wanted to tear down old field. Civic feels the same as the Padres stadium—an old wooden stadium.
    - If sold, the money should go into a perpetual school fund that 4J just can't spend, but only be allowed to spend the interest and have the money forever for school children;
    - schools in Oregon owned more than 4 million acres at one time, and were only supposed to sell it to settlers; most was sold to timber companies for \$2 an acre; it was called fraud at that time—theft of school lands;
    - the stadium is a great educational opportunity for students of Lane Country; lets keep Civic for students of Oregon in perpetuity.
  10. Owns property and has family in South Eugene area; lived in the area for 25 years, and South Eugene area for 17 years; always comes back to this area because it was a unique and special place; bought property in this area because he works downtown and doesn't want to drive and because he wanted to be close to Civic;
    - Civic adds to the character of Eugene;
    - school board has responsibility to keep Civic the in public's hands.
  11. Member of Save Civic Stadium; the district owned had Civic for a long time and should keep it for a long time.
  12. Wrote a book about the history of Civic; other people mess up the history when they talk about it (book sells at Saturday Market, the Lane County and State fair)
    - people wonder why there is discussion of Civic being torn down; tearing down the stadium generates negative publicity; when asked, he told people the zoning was open, and the site could be used for a shopping mall, apartments, condominiums, and fast food; by tearing down Civic, an historic shrine would be torn down;

- a process was started by a panel of experts who said the stadium needed to be designated historic; the site went onto the state and national historic registers; it was recognized as a unique building, one of few such baseball stadiums in the nation;
  - why can't we save it; wants to see attention put to preservation.
13. Lived here almost 30 years; 4J would do well to consider the uniqueness of Civic; it was built by the WPA and with lots of volunteerism; it is on national register;
    - refurbishing costs may be extensive and there needed to be creativity to get around the issues;
    - heard a lot tonight from 4J staff regarding procedures; Stalin, Mississippi, Alabama had procedures; the Eugene Police Department has taser procedures—procedures mean nothing if they are not right.
  14. Lived here a long time; went to school here; we honor pioneers with pioneer cemetery; we honored Ken Kesey with statute; we need to save Civic to honor it.
  15. Her children went to 4J schools; she was bothered that property Santa Clara school was on was declared surplus and zoned commercial; mysteriously the building had a fire. The site was then sold and is still vacant.
  16. A member of the Friendly Area Neighbors board; lived here most of his life; was the football manager at Civic for three years; does not understand the practicality of some things:
    - 8 new artificial turf fields were built which cost millions of dollars; they have uncovered bleachers and people wonder why people don't come to games when it rains; Civic has covered bleachers; the board questions if uses can be found for Civic; there must be a need if the district built 8 new fields;
    - money from the sale of Civic should be put into renovating the space so it could be rented and provide money to buy stadium.
  17. The \$37,000 owed by the Ems should have been spent to fix the stadium; it should now be used to pay for the feasibility study.
  18. Grew up in Eugene, lived here her whole life, worked at Civic, her heart is in Civic;
    - if the district keeps Civic, it would be a good public relations gesture;
    - if Civic is sold, when bond measures come to the voters in the future, she won't vote for them because she will question how the district uses its money; if we keep Civic for community, she will support future bond measures.

The meeting adjourned at about 9 p.m. Attendees were invited to fill out a comment sheet at the meeting or on the school district web site.