

Minutes from the Club Meeting held on Monday, September 12 on the planned Mike Piper Training Centre and changes to the Sarah Ulmer Lounge

About 15 club members took the opportunity to hear from Nigel Skelt (Stadium Southland) and Jason McKenzie (Academy Southland) about the development and to ask questions. President Reece McDonald chaired the meeting.

It's planned to put a training centre on Court 8 (stairs end), covering the existing netball court. A new entrance way will be created on the grandstand side of the court with balustrades preventing access to the facility. A net is planned between the centre and the next court to prevent balls flying over.

Safety barriers are planned. It can be removed for large events if required or the equipment – of which there are only five taller pieces of gear – can be dropped for a cycling event if required.

The Sarah Ulmer Lounge will have offices and consultation rooms built, with the kitchen/bar and space beside it remaining and a similar size one built beside it to create one large or two smaller spaces.

The office currently use by Cycling Southland will be returned and turned into strength and conditioning coaches offices and a meeting space that Cycling Southland will have access to as required.

The Sarah Ulmer items, which are owned by the Stadium, have been relocated to the entrance to the velodrome; the Cycling Southland trophies relocated to outside the organisation's office, and the champions boards added to the velodrome entrance in consultation with Julian Ineson.

Nigel Skelt talked about:

- How it was Mike Piper's dream to have a training centre in the venue. The dream had been to have it in a new development in or around the squash courts but the rebuild ran short of money and it had to be shelved.
- It was decided to put it on the velodrome courts because they ran out of money; the cost now is extremely prohibitive; and funders have no appetite for a new stand-alone facility.
- Other sites that were considered included:
 - The space between the two facilities (fire engineer and fire officers agreed not possible).
 - Corporate Lounge 4 (physically wouldn't fit in the space).
 - Part of a new build with courts off the south well (too expensive).
 - Over on the old tennis courts or the old netball building (too expensive to bring up to building code and no financial appetite for new building).
 - Badminton Hall's (deemed not suitable with wooden floors).
- Alternative venues away from the stadium were considered but the setup and ongoing overhead costs were too restrictive – lighting, power, rates, insurance, etc were all covered at the stadium.

- A financial analysis on court usage created a clear picture on how often they were being used and how much revenue was being generated to pay for the ongoing overheads and costs.
- A similar project was done for the Sarah Ulmer Lounge.
- They showed the income streams were minimal and more could be recovered with this option.
- Work has been carried out with tennis and netball to explore alternative options for their sports.

Nigel said he initially resisted putting it on Court 8 (stairs end) because of the impact on court users and fire egress and pushed for Court 11 (ramp end). After feedback from Cycling Southland he looked at it again and acknowledged a mistake had been made and it went back to his board to put it on Court 8. Work on the court should begin on December 5.

Work is ongoing to address any cycling safety concerns.

Jason McKenzie said there were concerns about there being too many under-utilised facilities in the city so working and collaborating with other sports in creating a multi-purpose and multi-functional facility was a preferred option.

“It’s not perfect but for \$300,000 we can really get something special happening.”

In answer to questions, he said:

- There would be four individual training bays that could be used by different groups at the same time.
- It had been designed for all sports and peer reviewed with that in mind too.
- It couldn’t go in the stadium because of the damage it might do to the wooden-sprung floors which were needed by basketball and others sports.
- It couldn’t be exclusive, it had to be for all sports and wasn’t specific to one sport.
- The Southland Stags had been thinking about their own facility but had been encouraged to join it and get involved. Their building had not been condemned but was nearing the end of its life. Rugby Southland had contributed to the setup costs and ongoing operational costs – the only sport so far that had.
- A Head of Agreement existed about ensuring it was fit for Cycling’s use in major events.

Graham Sycamore said safety was his paramount concern. He’s met with Jason and Nigel to explore the project and offer suggestions around safety.

He noted there was a fair amount of clear training space that meant it would not be cluttered with too many machines etc, and that the equipment can be moved as required although it would be possible to host events with three courts used.

From his discussions and after seeing the plans he was comfortable that if there were any safety issues there will be ways found to fix them.

He also noted that when Cycling Southland moved to the velodrome there was soul-searching around not being masters of its destiny, and that it was a multi-use facility and that we would have to share it. However, there would not have been a covered track without that collaboration and sharing approach.

Members needed to think where we would be in another 10 years and we had to ensure we weren't going backwards.

Olympic cyclist Piet Bulling said having the facility so close would be great for cycling. In Cambridge it was shared among BMX, MTB, track, road and Tri cyclists and it helped create a positive training environment and help drove athletes to higher performance. The more involved athletes were and having different sports involved the better.

Glen Thomson said he had been guilty of not being a fan at the start but after learning more of the proposal was in favour. He believes it will make our riders go faster and that's a good thing.