



Finance Committee

Briefing on the Hands on Children's Museum

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Title

Briefing on the Hands on Children's Museum

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

None. Briefing only.

City Manager Recommendation:

None. Briefing only.

Report

Issue:

Whether to hear a report about the Hands on Children's Museum.

Staff Contact:

Steve Hall, City Manager, 360.753.8370

Presenter(s):

Patty Belmonte, Executive Director, HOCM
Steve Hall, City Manager
Meliss Maxfield, General Services Director

Background and Analysis:

In 2003, the City of Olympia worked with the State of Washington to create a regional Public Facilities District (PFD). The District encompassed all of Thurston County including the three major cities. Under State law, a PFD is allowed the use of 1/3 of one percent of State sales tax dollars for 25 years to fund the development of regional facilities that created economic and financial gain for the area served.

A four-way agreement between Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater and Thurston County spelled out the use of the State sales tax to be used to fund and develop a regional arts and conference center in downtown Olympia. After two years of work to develop a financial and an operational structure for the arts and conference center, Olympia decided to abandoned the project and consider new regional projects.

In 2005- 2006 the three cities and the County sparred over the preferred use of regional PFD funds.

In the end, it was agreed that Olympia and Lacey would share the capital funding to support the Hands on Children's Museum (HOCM) in downtown Olympia and a Regional ballfield complex in Lacey. In total, the City contributed \$8.9 M towards the museum and the HOCM organization raised \$4.4M for the building improvements and exhibits.

The choice has paid off handsomely for Olympia and the region. The Museum is a huge cultural and financial success. The partnership between the City and the nonprofit HOCM organization has led to the creation of the best children's museum in the Northwest and one of the best in the nation. Not only does the museum provide fun and interactive learning for area residents, but also it draws visitors from all over the US and beyond.

The Museum continues to raise funds to operate the facility, refresh and maintain the building content and exhibits. The City owns the Museum and is responsible for major building systems, repairs, and replacement.

Museum and City staff will update the Committee on the overall condition of the museum operations and facility. This will includes recent upgrades, early ideas on expansion and some near term repairs needed for the building.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

Everybody loves the museum.

Options:

1. Hear a briefing on the museum
2. Do not hear a briefing

Financial Impact:

None at this time.

Attachments:

Photos