

Water Park, Baseball, Soccer or multiplex is planned to be built over neighboring stadium. Is this a good thing for you ?

> Posted by Scott Wyman on June 14, 2010 09:30 AM

A national water park company could get the go-ahead Tuesday for its plans to take over Fort Lauderdale stadium and neighboring Lockhart Stadium.

City commissioners plan to discuss the \$110 million proposal by Schlitterbahn Development Group. Its plan was the only one of four reviewed by the Federal Aviation Administration that the agency said could be acceptable for the property next to the Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport.

The other three proposals are for a baseball facility, a soccer complex and a multiple sports center. Any use needs FAA approval because it originally owned the land and insists it be used for aviation purposes or that fair market rent be paid to the agency.

The future of Fort Lauderdale Stadium has been up in the air since the Baltimore Orioles moved its spring training operations to Sarasota in December. The FAA had dashed Orioles' hopes to replace the stadium and has hampered the search for new suitors for the site since.

The stadium has been rented on a short-term basis to a professional soccer team while long-term plans are decided. Traffic Sports, the owner of the Miami FC soccer team, has a deal to manage the stadium for the next year and use it as a practice facility.

Schlitterbahn has water parks in Kansas and Texas and also has been involved in the development of a water park in Dubai and the expansion of Atlantis Paradise Island in the Bahamas.

The company specializes in creating a computer-controlled endless river with adjustable wave action. The company describes its main feature, the Master Blaster, as combining the "thrill of a rollercoaster with the fun of a water slide."

Schlitterbahn's proposal to the city includes renovating Fort Lauderdale Stadium to allow for virtual golf, baseball and softball simulators. Lockhart Stadium would be upgraded to be a tournament-sized multiuse field that would meet the standards for the National Federation State High School Association and the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

In its proposal to the city, the company said the sports village could be used for intramural team sports and local recreational teams as well as a concert venue. Schlitterbahn also cited previous experience working with FAA-controlled property in Galveston, Texas.

City officials have noted that the Schlitterbahn plan requires no investment of tax money and that the firm is open to paying fair market rent to the FAA. Link > http://weblogs.sun-sentinel.com/news/politics/broward/blog/2010/06/fort_lauderdale_to_discuss_pla.html

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