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Results of stadium study to be presented to Fredericksburg EDA

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The preliminary results of a study to assess the economic potential of a multi-purpose baseball stadium in Fredericksburg will be presented to the city's Economic Development Authority on Monday.

William Mykins and Ryan Conway of Washington-based Brailsford & Dunlavey will make the presentation during the EDA's monthly meeting in City Hall. The EDA voted last month to spend up to \$18,000 on the study.

Fredericksburg officials have been looking into the possibility of bringing minor league baseball to the city. The stadium could be used for baseball as well as concerts and other events.

Celebrate Virginia South has been identified as the most likely site for a stadium, and there has been some discussion about putting it on the 38-acre site that was once intended to be home to the National Slavery Museum if a deal can be worked out with all stakeholders.

City officials have been studying possible financing sources for the roughly \$25 million stadium, a price that wouldn't include the land.

The Virginia General Assembly this year added Fredericksburg to the list of localities allowed to retain a portion of sales and use taxes generated by a stadium to help pay off the bonds issued to build the facility. That would probably be part of the financing plan should city officials decide to go forward on a stadium.

The study commissioned by the EDA is seen as a way to help local officials decide whether to pursue a stadium. Brailsford & Dunlavey conducted a similar study for Winchester, which has also been considering a multi-use stadium and has been mentioned as a possible landing spot for the Hagerstown Suns, a Washington Nationals affiliate that is now negotiating with Hagerstown, Md., officials on a new stadium.

Hagerstown Suns majority owner Bruce Quinn said last month in an email that he sees a lot of potential for a team in Fredericksburg due to its history, large population and ability to retain a portion of the sales tax revenue generated at a stadium. He said if a stadium were approved he would welcome an invitation from Fredericksburg City Council to participate in a public or closed session meeting, but said no such invitation has yet been received.

The Fredericksburg EDA on Monday will also take up a proposal to allocate \$15,500 to the Virginia Outdoor Center as compensation for the upcoming closure of Fall Hill Avenue near the business' entrance. That part of Fall Hill is scheduled to be shut down between July Fourth and mid-April of 2014 while a replacement bridge is built over the Rappahannock Canal. The VOC funds would come out of the bridge project's \$3.1 million budget.

The EDA will also discuss a city application to join the Virginia Enterprise Zone Program for 2014. New or expanding businesses in an enterprise zone can be eligible for reimbursement for job creation or capital investment.

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