

OPINION

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BAGLEY'S VIEW » "MAGA MIND"



Speed is good in basketball and hockey — not in spending taxpayer dollars

Speed is essential to success in basketball. In hockey, even more so. But the great haste involved in planning a multi-billion-dollar, sports-focused remodel of downtown Salt Lake City — one that will draw many millions in public financing and have a significant impact on existing facilities and cultural landmarks — is less exciting than it is troubling.

It now falls to Salt Lake City officials — Mayor Erin Mendenhall and members of the City Council — to take as much care as they can, and invite as much public input as can be managed in a compressed state-imposed timeline, to make sure the taxpayers aren't getting fouled and other downtown institutions won't be high-strung.

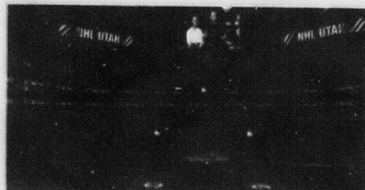
Those watching the National Basketball Association's Utah Jazz, or the city's yet-to-be-named National Hockey League franchise, have a general understanding of the rules of those games.

The fans also know that their only influence over the game will be to cheer or boo at appropriate moments, for all the difference that may make.

And to pay for that privilege. The rules governing the creation of the new downtown sports and entertainment district were cooked up, mostly behind closed doors, or in the expensive courtesy seats at the Delta Center, as the leaders of the Utah Legislature and Gov. Spencer Cox were beguiled by Ryan Smith, new owner of the Jazz and the man who brought the NHL to Utah.

It was a pleasant surprise to find out that lawmakers were determined to keep the NBA and NHL downtown. That they did not want to be a party to settling one or both teams in the southern suburbs.

Given the apparent joy legislative leaders sometimes take in dismissing the elected leaders of the Capital City — taking power away from them to form inland port facilities and a proposed Major League



The Delta Center is photographed during an introduction for the Utah NHL team on April 24, 2024.

Baseball project — that was good news indeed.

For all the fuss and muss that is and will be involved in the basketball and hockey projects, those economic engines belong downtown.

The result was SB272. That law empowers Salt Lake City to create a district of not more than 100 acres surrounding the Delta Center for redevelopment and to impose, without a public vote, a 5% hike in the city-wide sales tax to help pay for it.

That sales tax hike is expected to raise some \$54 million a year, well more than \$1 billion over the 30 years of its authorized life.

The Smith Entertainment Group (SEG) has told the City Council that it will need \$900 million of that to fund its plans, which include not only major upgrades to the Delta Center but also a neighborhood of restaurants, bars, retail and housing, and will kick in \$3 billion of its own.

SEG wants control over the land that now houses the Delta Center and Salt Lake County-owned facilities including the Salt Palace Convention Center, the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art and Abravanel Hall, home of the Utah Symphony. It wants rapid zoning approvals and no limit on the height of buildings it may create there.

And it expects to seek a kickback — more genteelly known as tax-increment financing — of the increased property tax revenue generated in that zone.

The fact that SEG isn't necessarily claiming all of the new sales tax revenue does raise hope for needed upgrades to the concert hall and convention center. And help to restore downtown. The ethnic enclave that was largely razed to make room for the convention center 60 years ago.

As word of the plans burbled out, many were seized with a panic that Abravanel Hall might be torn down. SEG and city and county officials have since rushed — "rushed" being the key word in so much of this — to reassure us that Abravanel will remain "on site." Though the 45-year-old hall may be remodeled or totally rebuilt.

Public mistrust and rapid-response rumor control are the inevitable byproducts of a process that is marked by both speed and secrecy. The formal application SEG filed with the city was originally stamped "confidential" — only to be shaken loose by a diligent Salt Lake Tribune reporter.

The state law enabling all of this sets September 1 — this September 1 — as the deadline for SEG and the city to reach a deal. Such a hurried

project will likely have some blank spots to be filled in later. Hopefully with more public participation.

As of now, the only formal opportunity for Salt Lake City residents to weigh in will be at a public hearing set for May 21, with council approval of the sales tax hike coming as soon as July 2.

The clock is running. Time for the people of Salt Lake City to get in the game.

Utah auditor is right to stand up to legislative overreach

Another example of Utah lawmakers acting in haste was detailed last week when Utah State Auditor John Dougall complained that a new law aimed at keeping transgender persons out of what legislators think is the wrong public restroom has become a pointless headache for his office.

The law that limits people to public restrooms that match their gender assigned at birth was rushed through in the opening days of the 2024 session. It was a solution in search of a problem, opposed by a large majority of Utahns, and drafted to burnish the election-year anti-LGBTQ credentials of a few far-right legislators.

Without asking Dougall what he thought, lawmakers ordered violations of the law to be reported to the auditor's office. Once the auditor had dutifully created an online means to do that, it was immediately flooded with more than 4,000 complaints. All of them, Dougall said, likely hoaxes.

Dougall, who is now running for Congress, had the courage to call out lawmakers, fellow Republicans, for what he rightly called another example of "an invasive and overly aggressive Legislature that too often fails to seek input from those most affected."

Complaints about violations of the latest potty patrol bill would be more properly directed to the bill's sponsor, Morgan Republican Rep. Ken Birkeland, at kbirkeland@ksutah.gov.

OUR VIEW

By the Tribune Editorial Board

Perfection is overrated. Moms should aim for 'good enough.'

Mother's Day can be a day of joy and acknowledgment for some women. For others, it serves as a painful reminder of what they lack: fertility, a child, a mother's presence or a positive relationship with their own mom. Further, those who have children are sometimes reminded of their own perceived deficiencies as they hear others speak of these self-sacrificing, flawless, angelic maternal figures.

I'm a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner in Utah, and I primarily work with hopeful, pregnant and postpartum women; many of them struggle with the idea of not being good enough as women and as mothers.

America Ferrara's monologue in "Barbie" addresses the not-good-enough narrative succinctly when she says, "You have to never get old, never be rude, never show off, never be selfish, never fall down, never

fail, never show fear, never get out of line. It's too hard!" This description of womanhood, and by extension, motherhood, oozes perfection, altruism and expectation. And no one is benefiting from it.

Good enough is enough

In 1953, Donald Winnicott, a psychoanalyst and pediatrician, coined the term "the good enough mother," not in relation to perfectionism but in regards to child development. He



JONI LYBBERT

wrote, "The good enough 'mother' ... is one who makes active adaptation to the infant's needs, an active adaptation that gradually lessens, according to the infant's growing ability to account for failure of adaptation and to tolerate the results of frustration."

Photo by LYBBERT, BS