

San Jose releases details on sale of downtown land to Oakland A's

By Tracy Seipel, San Jose Mercury News

After years of gobbling up land for a downtown ballpark, the city of San Jose is ready to sell about five acres of prime downtown real estate to the Oakland A's for \$6.9 million -- almost a quarter of what the city originally paid for the land and \$7 million less than it's worth on the open market.

The major league discount is detailed in new documents released Wednesday that give the A's exclusive rights to the land if they build a new stadium near HP Pavilion and Diridon Station.

"I think the price is a fair price when you consider that we want a ballpark, and the A's will have to pay for the ballpark with their money," San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed said. "And let's not forget that if we get a ballpark on the land, we get money and 1,000 jobs or so."

But critics of the stadium idea call the proposed land sale a "public relations gimmick" to benefit the team and Lew Wolff, the 75-year-old co-owner of the A's and a prominent developer with deep ties to downtown San Jose.

"If the city opened up the land to all comers, let's see what they could get," said Marc Morris, a spokesman for Better Sense San Jose.

But city leaders say they're determined to make sure that Wolff can purchase the land as soon as Major League Baseball finally clears the way for the A's to move to San Jose, the City Council puts it on the ballot and voters approve the land sale.

Over the past decade, the city's redevelopment agency paid \$25.1 million for the six parcels of land, including the costs of relocating businesses that once operated there.

But according to a 2010 appraisal by Colliers International, it's worth far less today: \$13.9 million if developed into shops and offices.

Wolff has said the A's will not purchase the land unless Major League Baseball allows the A's to relocate to San Jose. So the city is offering Wolff a two-year option for \$50,000 that could be extended for a third year for \$25,000.

The San Jose City Council is expected to vote on the proposed option agreement and other details related to the proposed land sale at its Nov. 8 meeting.

A 2009 economic analysis, paid for by the city, described the economic benefits of a baseball park. It said the development of a 32,000-seat stadium where 81 home games would be played would pump \$130 million a year into the local economy. The analysis also said the stadium would create 2,100 full-time, part-time and seasonal jobs in San Jose -- 980 of which would be new jobs.

Two other parcels -- about 5.5 acres owned by AT&T and a Los Gatos family -- are needed to complete the proposed 13.4-acre site. (The final three acres are streets.)

The biggest question mark, however, is whether baseball commissioner Bud Selig will allow the A's to move to San Jose -- a decision that has been two-and-a-half years in the making. At the heart of the issue is whether Selig will agree to break the territorial rights to the South Bay now owned by the San Francisco Giants. Even if Selig agreed to let that happen, three-quarters of the league's team owners would have to ratify his decision.

And even then, because the city's land would be sold for less than its market value, San Jose voters will have to approve both the ballpark and the sale of the land to the A's, City Attorney Rick Doyle said.

Doyle said the city could use its powers of eminent domain to acquire the last two privately owned pieces of property to complete the ballpark site. But Reed -- who said the city had talked with one of the owners, AT&T, about a month ago -- doesn't think the city will have to take that route.

AT&T spokesman John Britton on Wednesday reiterated that the AT&T land is not for sale. But, he said, "the company is always re-evaluating its real estate portfolio. ... And if Mr. Wolff calls, we're willing to listen."

Washington praises 'Moneyball,' A's GM Beane

By DAVE SKRETTA, AP Sports Writer

Ron Washington was on the coaching staff in Oakland when general manager Billy Beane was pioneering the Moneyball concept of building a major league team.

Beane relied heavily on advanced statistics rather than old-school scouting, a process Michael Lewis chronicled in the bestselling book, "Moneyball." The book has been turned into a major motion picture starring Brad Pitt as the A's general manager.

Given the success Washington has had with the Rangers, who can win their first World Series by beating St. Louis in Game 6 on Thursday night, perhaps they made the movie about the wrong person.

"No," Washington said flatly.

"You know," he continued, "I was in Oakland when all of that happened, and to me it was a great movie about a general manager that was hamstrung as far as dollars go, and he had to find players and put them together under a formula that he thought would work."

Washington said he's a "big fan" of Beane, who gave him a chance to be a major league coach, and later a glowing review to Rangers general manager Jon Daniels. That allowed Washington to land his first job as a big league manager.

"As I always say, the things that you accomplish in life, it always comes from other people extending themselves to help you," Washington said, "and he's certainly been a big part in my career since I finished playing baseball."

HOMER-LESS HAMILTON: Josh Hamilton was rifling through his bag Wednesday afternoon, trying to find the right bat to sign for a fan. Hitters are superstitious about this kind of thing, always making sure they don't give one away that has a few more hits in it.

Rangers pitcher C.J. Wilson leaned over from the adjacent locker and jokingly told Hamilton that he wanted an autographed bat, too — one that he used to hit a home run.

"It's been a while," Hamilton said. "Not sure I can find one of those."

The slugging outfielder hasn't hit a homer since going deep off the Mariners' Anthony Vasquez on Sept. 23, a stretch of 19 games and 79 at-bats. That includes all five games against St. Louis in the World Series, which Texas leads 3-2 going into Thursday night's rain-delayed Game 6.

The extra day off should give Hamilton a chance to rest his ailing groin.

Hamilton has been hampered by the injury for several months, and appeared particularly slowed by it during the first two games in St. Louis. He looked better in the warmer climate of Texas, but now the series shifts back north, where temperatures are expected to be in the 40s.

Hamilton has grown so tired of discussing the injury that he warned reporters Wednesday that he wouldn't answer any questions if the subject was broached. However, he did say the postponement allowed him to seek more treatment and that he'd be ready to go for Game 6 on Thursday night.

"I hit in the cage, threw in the outfield, got some treatment on things," he said. "We've figured out some things that will help, allow me to be able to be more aggressive and in less pain."

HIT-AND-RUN: The hit-and-run that Albert Pujols called for in Game 5 of the World Series was still a topic of discussion Wednesday. Pujols sent Allen Craig running and missed when he swung at the pitch in the seventh inning of a tied game, and Craig was thrown out easily.

Cardinals manager Tony La Russa defended Pujols, saying the slugger has earned the authority and responsibility to call for a hit-and-run when Pujols thinks the play might work.

"That's not the first time that we've done a hit-and-run," Pujols said. "Probably in my career I've done that 200 times since I've been here, and I don't have any problems with that play.

"Part of that trust is not that I deserve special treatment," he said. "It's just the trust that the manager has given me, just like he has to so many players here."

Pujols was trying to put pressure on Texas by getting runners on first and third.

"That's something that didn't go our way," he said. "People can throw rocks and blame everybody, Tony and myself or whatever you want, but it's part of the game. If it would have worked out, like it has in the past, then we wouldn't be talking about this because I can tell you, out of those 200 or 150 hits-and-runs that Tony puts or that sometimes he gives me the opportunity to put it on, believe me, we've won a lot of games, too. It just didn't work this time."

SAVE A HORSE, RIDE A REPORTER: Cardinals manager Tony La Russa is a well-known animal lover.

Among other things, he established Tony La Russa's Animal Rescue Foundation in Walnut Creek, Calif., has taken part in PETA campaigns and is a vegetarian.

So when a reporter asked Wednesday for the umpteenth time about Chris Carpenter's availability to pitch in a potential Game 7 of the World Series, and prefaced the question by saying, "At the risk of beating a dead horse that's probably been dead ...," La Russa was quick with a retort.

"Can we use something else besides, 'beat a dead horse,'" La Russa asked. "Can we just say, 'Beat up a writer?'"

Green finds quick success with new stance

Top A's prospect cranks go-ahead homer for Phoenix in AFL

By Andrew Pentis / Special to MLB.com

Grant Green may look like a different hitter, but his results at the plate are starting to look the same.

The **A's top prospect** smacked a 10th-inning solo homer to push the Phoenix Desert Dogs past the Peoria Javelinas, 7-6, on Wednesday afternoon.

"The first pitch he threw was a hanging curveball that I couldn't pull the trigger on," Green said of his at-bat opposite Javelinas reliever Casey Medlen (1-1). "Then he threw a letter-high fastball."

Green, who also went yard in the Dogs' 10-4 win over the Mesa Solar Sox on Oct. 5, ended a mini-slump with his first multi-hit game since last week. The shortstop-turned-center fielder was hitless in 11 at-bats entering Wednesday.

Since the beginning of the AFL season, Green has been working on a new set of mechanics in the batter's box. Phoenix manager Todd Steverson, also the hitting coach at Triple-A Sacramento, is behind the changes. The most significant -- widening his stance in the box and incorporating a pre-pitch leg kick.

Steverson "said there was more power in me," Green said. "We're going with what's comfortable and having a day like today confirms it."

Green batted .291 but lifted just nine long balls in 127 games at Double-A Midland, though he collected 20 in his first full season, in 2010 at Class A Advanced Stockton.

Through 14 AFL games, employing the brand new swing, he is batting .276 with seven extra-base hits.

Working with an early three-run lead, Peoria starter Danny Hultzen (Mariners), the No. 2 overall pick in June, retired the first 10 batters he faced before Brodie Greene (Reds) hit his 1-1 offering in the fourth for a solo home run.

Greene, who has three long balls in 10 AFL games, smacked a hanging change-up according to his teammate.

Hultzen also walked Jesus Aguilar (Indians) on eight pitches and gave up Green's two-out two-bagger before exiting. Winless through his first four outings as a pro, the left-hander struck out a career-high five. He had fanned two over his first three starts, which spanned nine innings.

Green was very impressed with Hultzen, whom he could face on a regular basis in future American League West matchups.

"He's unbelievable," said Green, who faced Hultzen for the second time. "As good as advertised. Sneaky quick fastball, and his change-up is disgusting. It just falls off the table like he's pulling a string off it."

Juan Lagares (Mets) singled home a pair of fifth-inning insurance runs. Lagares finished 3-for-5 with three RBIs.

Jed Bradley (Brewers), the Javelinas' third reliever, allowed three Desert Dogs runs in the sixth. Bradley, the No. 15 overall pick in June, yielded a two-run dinger to Ronnier Mustelier (Yankees).

Mustelier, a 27-year-old native of Cuba, also tied the game, 6-6, in the seventh with an RBI single that brought home Greene.

The Javelinas threatened in the bottom of the ninth: Adam Moore (Mariners) and Zelous Wheeler (Brewers) led off the inning with back-to-back singles, but were left stranded.

Peoria (9-10) was seeking to eclipse .500 for the second time this season.