

Brewers exec discusses potential for entertainment district

Posted on Friday, Jun 24, 2022

An executive with the Milwaukee Brewers says an entertainment district near American Family Field could help offset a potential funding shortfall for stadium improvements.

Speaking during a recent event hosted by the Milwaukee Press Club and WisPolitics.com, Milwaukee Brewers President of Business Operations Rick Schlesinger said investing in real estate is a possibility but that it wouldn't be the only solution to this challenge.

Earlier this month, a Milwaukee County Board supervisor submitted a resolution calling for the Southeast Wisconsin Professional Baseball Park District to work with local officials to explore the possibility of creating a nearby entertainment district.

Schlesinger pointed to the Deer District in Milwaukee and Titledown near Lambeau Field in Green Bay as successful examples of similar developments in Wisconsin.

“Not only does it have to co-exist with the prime goal of the ballpark, which is to provide a beautiful place to go to a baseball game, and to provide tailgating opportunities for our fans ... but it has to make sense within the neighborhood, and it has to make sense economically for us,” he said.

Schlesinger said a stadium needs assessment report, conducted by Venue Solutions Group, is expected to be complete this summer. He expects it will highlight a

funding shortfall, but declined to speculate on a specific number as the report is still in progress. He also noted the Brewers don't want to bring back the five-county sales tax that generated over \$600 million before ending in 2020.

"We don't need the five-county tax back," he said. "There's other solutions that I think can be creative that require a lot of different analysis ... so I don't look at the retirement of the five-county tax as this horrible disaster that has now created this huge problem. The reality is, we have to be creative in how we fund what we need."

Meanwhile, he said the Brewers are seeing lower group ticket sales, noting they have "not returned to anywhere near normal levels." That's not surprising, he said, as fewer companies are holding employee outings and schools are in a similar position with limited extracurricular trips and activities.

"We would probably do, in a normal year, about 600,000 [group] ticket sales. This year, probably 400,000," he said, adding that "our goal is to make sure this is a one-year aberration."

He noted ticket sales represent the team's largest source of revenue, with between 2.5 million and 2.6 million total ticket sales for this year.

Watch a video of the event here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vy-4B6oFyOw>

-By Alex Moe