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WORCESTER & THE ATLANTIC LEAGUE: THE ANATOMY OF A
FAILURE

An Interactive Qualifying Project Report

Submitted to the Faculty

Of the

WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

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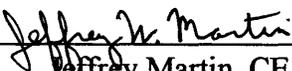
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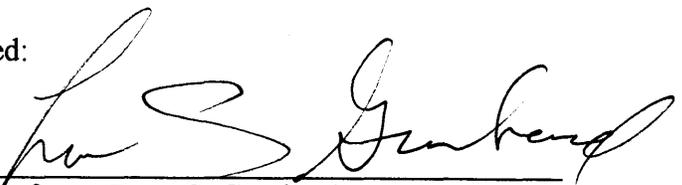

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Executive Summary

The objective of this IQP project was to perform a case study describing the city of Worcester, Massachusetts and their unsuccessful attempt to acquire an Atlantic League professional baseball franchise. In addition to examining Worcester's unsuccessful efforts, a study was also made that compared Worcester's unsuccessful dealings to the success of another Atlantic League team, the Bridgeport Bluefish. The comparison of the two efforts was then utilized to make conclusions as well as recommendations as to what Worcester could have done differently in order to bring an Atlantic League franchise to fruition in the second largest city in New England, Worcester, Massachusetts.

In order to accomplish this task, research was done on the social impact of sports, survey analysis, as well as site and design preparation and planning. Also, interviews were conducted with Worcester city officials, Worcester Telegram and Gazette writers, and Bridgeport Bluefish representatives. The combination of literary research, as well as the interaction with experts on the issues at hand, collectively provided the background information that was necessary to draw conclusions as well as recommendations regarding where Worcester went wrong and what they could have done better to acquire an Atlantic League franchise.

Abstract

This project uses a case study describing how and why Worcester, Massachusetts was unsuccessful in acquiring an Atlantic League (AL) professional baseball franchise. Worcester's experience was then compared to the success of another AL team, the Bridgeport Bluefish. Background research was done on the social impact of sports, survey analysis, and site and design preparation and planning. The authors interviewed city officials, Worcester Telegram writers, and Bridgeport Bluefish representatives. Comparison of the two efforts led to conclusions and recommendations suggesting other alternatives for Worcester that would have successfully brought an Atlantic League franchise here.

1. Introduction & Statement of Purpose

1.1 What we are doing

This project will conduct a case study demonstrating why the Atlantic League baseball organization was unsuccessful in fielding a professional baseball team in the City of Worcester, Massachusetts. We plan to contrast this attempt with the success that the Bridgeport Bluefish, of Connecticut, have developed in their few short years with the league. The gathering of information will be provided by the contact through the Atlantic League organization, the Worcester Telegram and Gazette, and members of the Worcester City Council as well as the Worcester Business and Development Corporation. Social surveys, survey analysis, and facility location and planning will also be researched in order to provide information for background materials.

1.2 Why it is important

The topic of our IQP project is important because it deals with many economic and social issues that surround the success of bringing a professional sports team into the City of Worcester. Many obstacles surrounded the Atlantic League's attempt to provide Worcester with a professional baseball team. Eventually because of these obstacles, the Atlantic League and the City of Worcester were unable to come to an agreement that would lead to professional baseball being played here in Worcester, Massachusetts. While Worcester was unsuccessful, another city, Bridgeport, Connecticut found much success in fielding an Atlantic League franchise. Looking at these two instances, it is important that a comparison is made that examines the distinct steps of the processes in order to determine where Worcester made its mistakes in dealing with the league. Upon

examining where Worcester went wrong, the IQP project team will be able to provide the City of Worcester with insight on how to obtain successful business organizations in the future.

1.3 Worcester, a city with baseball tradition

Throughout history, Worcester has had a strong baseball tradition. In 1880, Worcester had a professional baseball team, “The Worcesters”, known as the “Brown Stockings”, who played at Agricultural Park, a local park in the city (Kush, 1999). In addition, Worcester is the home of former Boston Red Sox catcher Rich Gedman, as well as current Hall of Famer, Jesse Burkett, who has a Worcester Little League organization and ball field named in his honor. As well as Worcester being the birthplace of former Major League greats, it is also the city where former Boston Red Sox great and current Hall of Famer Ted Williams hit his first New England home run, which occurred at The College of the Holy Cross’ Fitton Field (Kush, 1999). And like Burkett, there is also a Little League organization and ball field named in his honor. Not to mention, J Lee Richmond pitched the first ever Major League perfect game, right here in Worcester. Throughout history, baseball tradition has flourished in Worcester and it will continue to flourish and strengthen in the years to come.

1.4 The Atlantic League’s interest in Worcester

The Atlantic League is a professional baseball organization that has recently expressed their interest in bringing a professional baseball franchise to the City of Worcester. According to the league’s studies, Worcester is a prime area to develop a new

ball team, with one of the largest untapped baseball markets in the country (TEAM, 1999). The population concentration of Worcester is as follows, 1 million people within a 25-mile radius, 6 million within a 50-mile radius, and more than 9 million people within a 75-mile radius (U.S. Bureau of Economic Statistics, 1996). In addition, 46% of the 13 million people living in New England are from Massachusetts (U.S. Bureau of Economic Statistics, 1996). The high concentration of people in Massachusetts, as well as the Worcester County area makes Worcester a prime location to develop a new Atlantic League franchise.

1.5 History and background of the Atlantic League

1.5.1 Mission Statement

According to the Atlantic League website, <http://www.atlanticleague.com>, the mission of the Atlantic League of Professional baseball Clubs, Inc. (“AL”) is to bring a high level of professional baseball and affordable family entertainment to selected communities not being served by the Major League or Minor League teams. In addition to bringing affordable family entertainment to those cities not being serviced by Major or Minor League baseball teams, the “AL also intends to return players to the Major Leagues and to save Major League Baseball development costs. Continuous player development is an important aspect of the playing experience in the AL. The league continues to provide intense competition for the individual player to get the opportunity to show his skills and maybe get a shot at the Big Leagues. The AL also provides the Major Leagues with potential stars of tomorrow while eliminating the current subsidy

paid by the MLB to Minor League teams with Major League affiliation
(<http://www.atlanticleague.com>).”

1.5.2 Personnel

In order to accomplish their goals, the AL assembles only those general managers and personnel with proven track records. All AL managers, coaches, and player development staff have had Major League experience. Several of these individuals include:

Frank Boulton: Atlantic League CEO and owner of 3 AL teams, former VP of the Eastern League of Professional Baseball.
(<http://www.atlanticleague.com>)

Bud Harrelson: President of the AL with 34 years of experience with the New York Mets as player, coach, scout, and Field Manager. (<http://www.atlanticleague.com>)

Rick Cerone: Owner of the Newark Bears, Major League Experience with the New York Yankees and the New York Mets, current commentator of the Major League Baltimore Orioles. (<http://www.atlanticleague.com>)

Jim Frey: GM of the Somerset Patriots, former MLB player and Field Manager for the Kansas City Royals and the Chicago Cubs and current Senior VP for the Major League Chicago Cubs.
(<http://www.atlanticleague.com>)

Joe Klein: Executive Director of the AL and former GM for the Texas Rangers, Cleveland Indians, and the Detroit Tigers.

(<http://www.atlanticleague.com>)

1.5.3 Stadiums and standards

The Atlantic League was founded five years ago and began play in 1998. There are currently 8 teams competing in the 2000 Atlantic League season. The team's stadiums are located in Aberdeen, MD; Atlantic City, NJ; Bridgeport, CT; Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania; Long Island, NY; Newark, NJ; Somerset, NJ; and Nashua, NJ. And arriving in the 2001 season, a new stadium is currently in progress in Aberdeen, MD. According to the Atlantic League website, <http://www.atlanticleague.com>, new AL ballparks must meet or exceed the "AAA" level ballpark standards. The ballparks must not only meet specific standards, but the surrounding community must comply to certain standards also. The surrounding community must "...demonstrate market size sufficient to support a minimum ballpark size of 5,000 to 7,500 seats"

(<http://www.atlanticleague.com>).

The information on the following AL ballparks was obtained at

<http://www.atlanticleague.com>.

Aberdeen, MD: Several forces have worked together for the construction of the ballpark in Aberdeen. Forces include: the City of Aberdeen, the Maryland Stadium Authority, professional baseball player Cal Ripken Jr., and Maryland Baseball, LLC. Together they have generated \$ 25 million for the construction of Ripken Stadium and the Ripken Youth Baseball Academy. Ripken Stadium will be a 6,000-seat stadium, complete with Club Box and Luxury Box seating and accommodations. The construction of the stadium began in the early summer of 2000 and is projected to be finished in the spring of 2001. Ripken Youth Baseball Academy will have 6 "mini-replica" baseball

fields, each modeled after a Major League field: Camden Yards, Memorial Stadium, Fenway Park, Wrigley Field, Yankee Stadium and Ebbets Field. Other attractions of the academy include dormitories, batting cages, a cafeteria, and recreation and training facilities. Residing on site will also be the headquarters of Babe Ruth Baseball, an organization that has over 1,000,000 youth baseball players nation- wide.

(<http://www.atlanticleague.com>).

Atlantic City, NJ: With the cooperation and funding of the city of Atlantic City and the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA), the state of NJ was successful in landing an AL team. Together they made the construction of the \$ 15 million, 5,900-seat stadium possible. Stadium luxuries include Suites, picnic areas, armchair seats with cup holders, and an arcade, and merchandise store. The principal owner is Frank Boulton, and Ken Shepard is President/GM. Combined, they bring a combined twenty years of minor league baseball to Southern New Jersey.

(<http://www.atlanticleague.com>).

Bridgeport, CT: The Ballpark at Harbor Yard was financed by the City of Bridgeport and also by the Governor of Connecticut. Both parties appropriated \$ 7 million toward the stadium, which was completed in May 1998. Owners of the Bridgeport Bluefish include Mickey Herbert, Ken Paul, Mary- Jane Foster, Jack McGregor, and the Bridgeport Waterfront Investors. McGregor was once the founder and owner of the Pittsburgh Penguins National Hockey League. The GM of the Bluefish, Charlie Dowd, brings 10 years of baseball experience to the table, including 7 of those years as the GM of other minor league teams. (<http://www.atlanticleague.com>).

Lehigh Valley, PA: While the other AL teams have found reasonable success, the Lehigh Valley Black Diamonds have not. The team has not established the required fan base to maintain a team in Lehigh Valley. From analyzing the attendance records, it is quite evident that the team can no longer afford to put a baseball team on the field. In the listings of the individual teams attendances, the Lehigh Valley Black Diamonds are not even listed. It is believed that the 2000 season will be the last for the Black Diamonds and they will fold next year. (<http://www.atlanticleague.com>).

Long Island, NY: The \$22 million, 6,013-seat EAB Park is the home of the Long Island Ducks. The team is owned by the founder and chairman of the AL, Frank Boulton. In addition to the Long Island Ducks, Mr. Boulton has had experience with several minor league baseball teams including: the Prince William Cannons, the Albany-Colony Yankees, the Wilmington Blue-Rocks, and the Atlantic City Surf. Mr. Boulton is also entering his third season as the principle owner and operator of the Professional Soccer League's Long Island Rough Riders. Co- owner and current Field Manager of the Ducks, Bud Harrelson, has also had significant Major League experience. He was a member of the World Champion New York Mets in 1969 and the National League Champion Mets in 1973. After retiring as a player he continued his baseball career managing and coaching the Minor League Mets organization as well as the Mets in 1990 and 1991. Mr. Harrelson is also involved in the ownership of the Class A Kansas City Royals farm club, the Wilmington Blue Rocks. (<http://www.atlanticleague.com>).

Nashua, NH: The Home field of the Nashua Pride is Holman Stadium, the historic place where Roy Campanella and Don Newcomb began their professional baseball careers. The Atlantic League has taken it upon itself to make some

improvements to the stadium, including armchair seats and upgraded concession areas. (<http://www.atlanticleague.com>).

Newark, NJ: The Newark Bears have a total of \$22 million for the construction of their new ballpark and soccer stadium sports complex. \$19 Million has been appropriated by the City of Newark and the other \$3 million has been appropriated by the CRDA. The owner of the Newark Bears is the former Major League catcher Rick Cerone who has spent time with the New York Yankees and the New York Mets. (<http://www.atlanticleague.com>).

Somerset County, NJ: The Somerset Patriots fans have the opportunity of enjoying the brand new 6,360 armchair seat multi- use facility located in Bridgewater, NJ. The sport complex is equipped with 20 luxury suites and the alcohol- free family section seating. The stadium also boasts of an astonishing full color scoreboard that will keep the fans informed and involved at all times of the game. Somerset County appropriated the funding of the stadium and the Patriots organization has a formal lease agreement with the county. The Director of Operations for the Patriots is Jim Frey. Mr. Frey has had experience as a former player in the Major Leagues, as manager of the Kansas City Royals and the Chicago Cubs, and also as the Senior VP of Baseball Operations for the Chicago Cubs. (<http://www.atlanticleague.com>).

1.5.4 AL Relationship with Organized Baseball

Major League Baseball and the National Association constitute Organized Baseball and are bound together by the Professional Baseball Agreement, which has recently been renewed by both parties (<http://www.atlanticleague.com>). The AL

provides Organized Baseball maximum flexibility within the framework of the agreement. The development office of the AL is interested in signing 6 year professional players, of which there were over 1,000 in the Minor Leagues during the 1997 season (Report on the Atlantic League, 1999). In order to maintain their objectives, the AL intends to continue their on- going relationship with the MLB and Organized Baseball (Report on the Atlantic League, 1999).

1.5.5 2000 Season's Attendance

Team	9/13/00	Total Att.	Gms.	Avg. Att.
Long Island	6,285	436,361	71	6,146
Somerset	4,049	365,310	69	5,294
Bridgeport		314,202	73	4,304
Newark		225,391	71	3,175
Atlantic City		163,624	70	2,337
Nashua		142,061	70	2,029
Aberdeen	366	23,732	43	552

Attendance information was obtained at (<http://www.atlanticleague.com>).

1.5.6 Facts and Future Predictions

The facts and predictions are obtained from Norman Peters' 1999 Report on Atlantic League.

1998 Attendance: 475,000

1999 Attendance: 1,116,997

2000 Projected Attendance: 1,800,000

1999 Schedule: 120 games

2000 Schedule: 140 games

Peters believes that the AL will grow to a total of 12 teams and will be formally affiliated with Major League Baseball. New markets being explored include Worcester, MA; White Plain, NY; and Hartford, CT (Peters, 1999).

1.6 Methodology

We intend to conduct our research through the utilization of several different resources, including: text books and published articles, information obtained from interviews with city officials, representatives of the Bridgeport Bluefish, and writers of the Worcester Telegram and Gazette. Additional information will be obtained from members of the Worcester Business Development Corporation and Touch “em All Markets LLC representatives. We will then use this information to make a comparison between Worcester’s unsuccessful attempt to field a professional baseball team and Bridgeport’s much more successful attempt that brought a team in Connecticut to fruition. Upon making the comparison between the two cities, we will then make recommendations to the City of Worcester regarding where the process went wrong and what could have been handled differently in order to make professional baseball in Worcester a reality.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The social impact of sports

Sports have a great impact on the daily lives of individuals and groups. Whether or not they want to believe it or not, sports affects individuals even if they are not interested in the sport. Sports clearly have “direct and indirect influences on adults and children alike throughout North America and the rest of the world as well” (Yinger & Cutler, p.80). Conversations relating to sports can be found everywhere and the majority of North Americans encounter sport in some form nearly everyday of their lives. The newspapers most popular section is the sports page and because of this businesses are willing to pay high advertising cost to place ads in this section.

There are three distinct patterns in sports that tell how sports affect the individual (Cutler p.81). The first pattern reflects culture and society “where society is made up of sets of social relationships and culture compromises the meaning developed through social relationships”. The second reinforces social inequalities and the third is a vehicle for resistance or social conflict.

Sports can be viewed from many points of view and the topic is described in four ways (McPherson, Curtis & Loy, p.34). Participation or involvement is the first type of view. The second way is that of a physical activity, getting exercise out of the sport and helping to keep you in good health. A third way that sports are described is as a social institution, as said above people like to talk about sports everywhere and this has helped establish this view. The final description of sports is as a cultural product.

The types of social involvement in sports are Behavioral, Cognitive, and Affective. Behavioral involvement can be primary and secondary. Primary involves

players and secondary deals with managers and owners. The Cognitive involvement in sports is the fact that it's almost impossible to avoid knowing anything about sports. The Affective involvement has to do with fans and their emotions such as pride or worry.

There are also patterns of involvement within sports. Normal involvement consists of regular participation, Cyclical deals with sporadic participation, Divergent is obsessive participation and Withdrawal is just a complete avoidance of sport.

According to the social relationships theory relationship "whether an adolescent is socialized into the role of sport consumer is related to a few specific things". These things include the number of "significant others" who view the sport, the frequency of sport "consumption by significant others" and the amount of "interaction with significant others who want to consume the sport".

There has been an increase in sport spectators over the last few years. The reason behind this is sports have almost become a festival of sorts. The game itself is only one part, and sometimes the smaller part, of a larger social event (Levine, p.56). Other activities are much less likely to have such a strong emotional tie and atmosphere than sports is able to provide.

A professional sports league consists of independently owned franchises that operate within a league of teams that agree to play by the same set of common rules to restrict competition. This allows the league teams to produce a product and maximize profits.

There are a number of factors that affect the profitability of a professional sports team. Profits and losses are determined by a number of factors such as whether an individual or corporation owns the team. Corporate ownership of a team means that

many individuals control the team and the loss in revenue is not taken as hard as being a single owner. The opposite is also true for the profits that the team generates. Ownership or leasing of the playing facility, market strength of the franchise area and the relative economic strength of the teams area also factors that determine profits and losses (McPherson, Curtis &Loy, p.45).

Sources of revenue can be found in gate receipts, fees for radio and television rights and ancillary sales (concessions, parking lots, fees for the logos on products). Sources of expenses for the team are the salaries of the players and staff and other operating costs.

Owners and other personnel encourage greater fan involvement with cheerleaders, messages on the scoreboard, fireworks, and replays of controversial and sensational play etc. As time progresses the games have become more than just a way to pass time. They are “intended to be important episodes in the spectators’ lives and identities”.

The modern spectators are knowledgeable and committed to their sport. They demand and support events at the amateur, college, professional and Olympic levels. They pay to view the event and often are emotionally tied to the sport.

Fans that have a continuing interest in the sport are expected to invest time and money in various forms of sport involvement. They also have knowledge of the players, stats and strategies and have an emotional attachment to one or more athletes or teams. Fans experience feelings while watching a sporting event and they often discuss the sport frequently with friends and strangers.

Spinrad has suggested that spectator sports “serve as a form of vicarious combat”. He says they provide a “psychological gratification” through the identification with a

sports hero. Spectator sports also enable the individual to participate in a “sub cultural folklore through the accumulation of knowledge about a particular sport or team” (Cutler, p.88). Being a spectator also stimulates talk and arguments about current and past players and teams and allows individuals to play the role of owner, manager or coach by making strategy decisions.

2.2 Conducting social surveys

Survey research is vitally important in attempting to determine the opinions and overall feelings of a given population. For this simple fact, an individual, or in this case a group of individuals working on a project must carefully plan out the steps they intend to conduct when creating a social survey. Isadore Newman and Keith McNeil summarize the social survey process into 8 steps or guidelines in their book, Conducting Survey Research in the Social Sciences. The survey steps include: specifying the intent of the survey, assessing the available resources, defining the population, reviewing the pertinent literature, determining the data collection techniques, developing the survey, determining the sampling procedure, and analyzing the results and preparing the report. Although some of these steps may seem like simple tasks to accomplish, each step must be carefully considered in order to prepare a survey that will provide accurate results.

The first step, specifying the intent of the survey, simply answers the question: What are the basic questions I want to answer? In order to answer this question, the person or group of people planning the survey must decide on how they plan to effectively use the obtained information. But before they can decide on how to use the information, they must first decide on how they plan to obtain the answers to their

questions. Different factors must be considered for different surveys. Some of these factors include the age, gender, geographic location, etc. of those who are taking the survey. Each factor has significant influence on the questions themselves and especially on the answers to the questions and the overall outcome of the survey. Once these factors have been determined, the individual or group may move on to the next step. (Newman, McNeil, 1998).

The next step in the surveying procedure is to assess the available resources. Resources include money, time, availability of experts, etc. In the step of assessing the resources, the surveyor must realize the need to send out many more surveys than actually needed to obtain the sufficient information. The reason for sending out additional surveys is simple. Additional surveys account for the low return rate that surveys often incur. Although some people may take the time to fill out the survey to the best of their ability, some people either do not care about the issue at hand, or are simply too busy to take the time out of their day to fill it out. Also in this step, the surveyor must realize the need for assistance, whether it be funding or the help of a professional in the subject of the survey. The individual or group must plan ahead on things like the cost of printing the mass amount of surveys, mailing them out, providing return postage so that the individual taking the survey does not have to use their money to send it back to the surveyor, etc. In addition to the costs, surveys are not likely to be taken seriously unless an expert in the field of the survey has the surveyor's endorsement and supports the survey. Another important aspect of this step is determining what types of analysis are required. Simple yes and no questions can easily be analyzed, while the types of questions that require the surveyed to write their own responses are often times extremely

difficult to analyze and are often times not used just for that reason. Assessing the available resources is a very time consuming step and each aspect must be carefully thought out before moving on to step three. (Newman, McNeil, 1998).

The third step of the surveying process involves defining the population that the survey is going to involve. Common distinguishing characteristics that define a population are age, gender, race, socioeconomic status, occupation, and geographic boundaries. The surveyor has the difficult task of determining the population that they are attempting to generalize and the characteristics of that population. Different issues in the survey may or may not involve the input of contrasting populations and it is the duty of the surveyor to determine the audience for the survey. (Newman, McNeil, 1998).

Upon completing the task of defining the population involved in taking the survey, the next step is to review the pertinent literature available on the topic at hand. Although it seems quick and painless, with only a little amount of time involved, there are great amounts of information available in numerous sources. It is the job of the surveyor to find these sources and sort out the useful information from the information that has no relevance in the scope of the survey. It is a very time consuming process because the surveyor must first determine where to look for the information, then must take the time to actually go through and read everything that they found. Depending on the scope and subject of the survey, the amount of sources needed to perform an effective survey may range from just a couple to a couple dozen sources. (Newman, McNeil, 1998).

Once the credible sources have all been chosen, the surveyor must then determine their data collection technique. The data collection in a survey is typically done either by

mail or by telephone. On the one hand, surveys by mail must include a cover letter that briefly and non-technically describes the purpose of the survey. It is also extremely helpful to have the cover letter endorsed either by a stamp or signature of a person of high standing in the community who is an expert in the field of the survey.

Accompanying the endorsed cover letter must of course be the survey itself. The survey must not be too lengthy and must ask the appropriate questions, or the recipient of the survey is likely to just throw it away. Though mail surveys are used most often, they are not the only means of performing a survey. Telephone surveys are often used as well. The uses of telephone surveys is mainly due to the fact that they require limited resources and are also reasonably inexpensive. All that is required to perform the survey is a telephone, a phone book, and the survey with the questions to be answered. The telephone survey is more appropriate to use when the surveyor is looking for simple and superficial answers to their questions. This is for the simple fact that long, drawn out responses are difficult to analyze. Whether the surveyor chooses to use a mail or a telephone survey, perhaps the most important decision they will make is their choice to use an existing survey or to develop their own. The surveyor must make sure that the questions they want answered are all included in their survey and worded the way that they want them if they intend to successfully analyze the people's responses to their questions. (Newman, McNeil, 1998).

The next step of the process, if the surveyor so chooses to utilize their own survey is the development of the survey's questions. There are a few issues that must be addressed at this step, including: item format considerations, psychometric considerations, piloting considerations, and training considerations. Item format

considerations involve choosing the type of questions that will be used in the survey. There are four primary methods of asking questions in a survey. The first type of question is the open- ended question. The open- ended question allows for detail if the surveyed so chooses to give an elaborate answer to the question. This is why they are not commonly used; they are extremely difficult to analyze. The second type of question is dichotomous choice, which gives the surveyed only two answer categories, which are either True- False or Yes- No. This method of surveying is encouraged because it provides the survey with direct answers that are relatively easy to analyze. The third type of question is forced- choice. Forced- choice questioning only allows the surveyed 2- 4 options for a possible answer. Again, this method is encouraged because the possible answers do not allow for the elaboration of a person's answer, therefore eliminating the difficulty of analysis. The final question type is called scaled- choice questioning. This method of questioning contains more than only two possible answers and the surveyed is allowed to make more than one choice to a question. An example of this type of question would be to rate the importance of the issues raised in the question. This method of questioning is not recommended because it too can become difficult to analyze. What is the person's perspective on the rating scale? If they rate something very low does it mean that they don't care about it, or is it that they do not view that issue as important as the others? Analysis would be very difficult as well as time consuming, which is why this method of surveying is not recommended. Next the surveyor must make certain psychometric considerations, which are straightforward and involve determining the survey's reliability, validity, and usability. Each helps to insure that the responses to the survey's questions served their specific purpose. Reliability, validity, and usability are

all vital to a survey and the surveyor must address the survey to the appropriate audience with the appropriate questions in order for all three psychometric considerations to be met. Piloting considerations involves the attempt to increase the survey's reliability, validity, and usability through increased research on the topic. Increasing the research on the given topic is directly related to the next step, which involves training considerations. Training considerations involves being extremely familiar with the information concerning the topic in the survey and increasing that knowledge through continuous research. (Newman, McNeil, 1998).

After performing the necessary research, the next step is to determine a sampling procedure. For most surveys, random sampling is often the procedure used for one main reason. The reason is that random sampling provides a more diverse audience and therefore involves people from all walks of life; People of different ages, sex, financial security, etc. A more diverse audience with different concerns and likes and dislikes will better serve the purpose of the survey. (Newman, McNeil, 1998).

The final step in preparing a survey involves analyzing the survey's results and preparing the report. The surveyor must determine whether or not the survey has served its purpose. This holds true even if the results of the survey are different from what the surveyor had expected or even hoped they would be. Documentation must then be made and the surveying process is complete. (Newman, McNeil, 1998).

2.3 Site planning and design preparation

When it comes to building nearly any type of structure, including a minor league baseball stadium, as is the case at hand, there are a few typical goals that need to be met

in site planning (Lynch, 1962). One of these goals is functional adequacy, which deals with suitability factors such as whether there is enough light or whether the soil will support the proposed project. Among other goals that must be met in site planning are those that include enhanced communication and choice. What these goals entail is the freedom of users to choose habitat, facility, activity, neighbors, etc. and communication is as much as possible between all parties involved. Cost is another very important factor in site planning, as the cost of the project and other costs such as acquiring the land must fit under a budget, which is often predetermined. Health and comfort are two other issues that concern an owner, as well as adaptability. Adaptability is important just in case there is a possibility of expansion or other adaptations to the facility in the future. Image quality is also a goal that is taken into consideration when deciding on a site because some projects benefit from being on a site that can bring some aesthetic value to the facility. One very important aspect of a baseball stadium's location is that it is directly accessible to the transit major traffic-handling routes in the area.

When analyzing a site, the analysis must include a study of subsurface conditions, surface conditions, climate and acoustics, as well as man made characteristics such as utilities and roads. There also must be a site survey taken. A typical site survey shows at least the following features, where applicable: contours, rocks, streams, vegetation, roads, utilities, and property lines (Lynch, 1962).

A program, which is often the first step in a plan, states the primary objectives, site character, the quantity, the budgeted cost, and to some extent, the quality of the physical facilities to be provided in the new development. The program should include a schedule of the steps of preparing the site analysis.

Yet another tool in site planning is a land use diagram, which shows the general function arrangement of a plan, including types of use, densities, and links between uses. The first step in a land use diagram is to decide on the classes of activities that are subject in the project. The linkages between these classes must be analyzed, such as movement of people or goods and communication of information. Density is the intensity of activity per unit ground area that will be present on the site.

One of the most important outside factors in this project especially, is the climate around the facility. The climate however can be manipulated by the arrangement and choice of the site. Two sites just a few blocks down from each other may be very different in climate. Among the climate factors that affect the manipulation of the arrangement of the site include precipitation, wind, sun radiation, and temperature. Unfortunately, the precipitation cannot really be averted as it can in major league ballparks, where there are hundreds of million dollars in revenue to spend. In a park such as the one that is being proposed, it will be an open-air stadium, but that does not mean that the other factors can't be minimized.

For example, the wind affect can be lessened by the positioning of the park in coordination with surrounding buildings as well as trees. Wind can also be altered within the facility itself by how the structure is shaped and by the addition of plants in the ballpark (Kaiser, 1995). Sun radiation can also be lessened if there are large overhangs over the field to shield out sun-rays or the surrounding buildings and trees could affect the sun radiation on the park. The temperature can also be affected to some extent by the same methods, as were the other factors. It also can be noted that urban areas are

warmer, dustier, drier, and yet foggier than rural areas. There is also a higher noise level, added pollution and lower wind velocities in urban areas.

The design process should begin with the analysis of the two underlying parameters of site and purpose. Site analysis, which may be preceded by site selection, starts with a systematic check of factors of suspected significance and ends with an analysis leading to a concise statement of the site's essential character and its major problems and potentialities (Lynch, 1962). At the same time, a statement of objectives should be prepared.

There are a few main factors that are important in development of any facility. Those factors include subsurface conditions, topography, climate and existing patterns of land use and circulation. As previously mentioned, human goals that often appear in any statement of objectives are cost, choice, communication, health, adaptability and image ability.

The next step in the design of the facility is to prepare a detailed program and other site plans with similar objectives that should be reviewed. After all of that information is compiled and reviewed, the development of the design itself is begun. There are three fundamental patterns of location in space that were taken into account when analyzing different sites. These patterns include the pattern of activity, the pattern of circulation and the visual form of the project. It is also useful to deal with a single objective at a time when designing the facility by making different sketches of different sections of the facility to determine the most flexible and the cheapest plan possible out of all of the ideas. This method of analysis in which one part is sketched at a time, is known as modular analysis.

Preliminary plans are then developed in their technical dimension and in their design. The sketches will almost always leave some aspects unresolved, and there should be many details left to consider, including pavement textures, minor landscaping and fences on the exterior, as well as certain other features inside the ballpark itself. Substantial technical development must also be carried forward in the design process of the facility. Precise alignment of the road and walk system must be prepared, as well as the location and design of the utilities, as well as the grading plan (Lynch, 1965). The grading plan is essentially the transformation of the shape of the ground as it is at the start of the development into how it will eventually be shaped upon completion. Many of the drawings prepared in the design process will be accompanied by written reports explaining reasoning and describing features where necessary.

When dealing with a baseball facility, nearly all of the methods of design and site analysis aforementioned should be followed. The site analyzers and the designers must take into account all of the factors that could effect the stadium. There must be ample room for vendors and parking, and there must be limited disturbance to neighboring businesses and residence. These and more details go into why it is often such an arduous process to pick a good location and/or site and to design the facility with the optimal efficiency.

2.4 How sports affects people

People can be affected in many ways by sports, either positively or negatively. The residents in the city that is about to receive a baseball team first reaction might have a negative first reaction. "Unless teams are willing to finance a significantly greater

proportion of the costs for a new stadium, then the city could possibly end up an economic loser” (Chapin 1992). Some people would accept a baseball team in their city if it did not cost them anything, but in most cases that is not the case. That’s where a problem occurs because a city might simply not be able to bring a team in unless they want to seriously help finance the team. “And if the people are willing to help finance then a stadium should be located where a significantly large fan base can attend and be attracted to the games” (Chapin 1992). If the stadium were to be built in a suburban area then most of the reactions would probably be negative because the neighborhood will lose it’s sense of trust with new visitors coming in and out on a daily basis. Their privacy will seem to be invaded. Also a stadium should be located in an area that maximizes the economic returns for the municipality. That is not always the case because an area of wealth might not want people of lesser class to be migrating into their areas. Race also becomes an issue. “The team might not want to locate in a predominately black area if the owner feels that economic gains would not come of it” (Chapin 1992). If the stadium is located near no restaurants, hotels, etc. then there will be even less reasons for people to attend or for people from outside the city to travel into the city. One way to benefit from a stadium economically is pedestrian and vehicular traffic because of the travel past businesses and restaurants. Cities must use this traffic to their advantage. Again, though people surrounding the stadium might get upset again because of the noise or danger the traffic brings. It seems no matter where the stadium is located one group or more will not be happy.

But once the stadium is located and set, there are many positives that can come out of the experience of sports. “People tend to get caught up in the competition in sports

and people challenge their human spirit” (Mihalich 1983). People love to see their team strive for a championship and perfection, so through sports people strive for it themselves. People love to be a part of something; it brings people of different backgrounds together to route for one common goal, the success of their team. But it isn't the success that matters, it's the fact that people from different backgrounds get the chance to realize how much they have in common with unknown people. There is much good that comes out these experiences. Even if excellence is not achieved, people can learn to deal with failure, because when people fail they realize how great of a human spirit they might have. Anyone can deal with success, but it takes a person with great human spirit to bounce back from failure. Hopefully the spectators and people that are part of this great experience can take something close to the above out their experience. Some people may discover new aspects of themselves while watching a competition taking place on the field. They may learn of courage, self-reliance, and that something good always comes out of hard work and self-sacrifice, even if it is not victory. “Sports may reveal someone's character and ability to control mind, emotions, and body in truly challenging circumstances” (Mihalich, 1983). And again, all these people are coming together to develop the true sense of the word community. Community deals with the cooperation and spirit of people, and that is exactly what team sports deal with.

Why is it important for community's to have a sports team to route for? As said above, many positives come from the competition of sports itself. The children of the community are given proper role models, which is very important in the structure of a young person's life. Community is achieved, while there is a family atmosphere and team togetherness. Basic qualities are learned that can go far in a young person's life,

competitiveness and sportsmanship. Also spectators can relieve stress from their jobs or work. And last but certainly not least is the enjoyment factor of the whole experience. Enjoyment of a national pastime while enjoying it in your home state gets a feeling of pride and devotion to your home team.

3. The Atlantic League expresses interest in Worcester

3.1 Chronological timeline of events

July 1999: The announcement was made that the City of Worcester and the Atlantic League were to begin negotiations to field a professional baseball organization in Worcester by as soon as the year 2001.

July 31, 1999: The first meeting between the AL and the City of Worcester was held at the 111 Chophouse Restaurant in Worcester with Worcester City Officials as well as AL representatives on hand.

August 6, 1999: Samuel DeSimone is appointed Baseball Task Force Chairman. Everett R. Shaw is also appointed to the task force as a project leader. City officials also involved in the project attended an AL game in Bridgeport, Conn. to see a successful AL franchise environment.

September 5, 1999: City Officials announce they are willing and enthusiastic about the opportunity to work with the AL and bring a team to Worcester. Possible sites are being considered, with the Shrewsbury St. location in the front- running.

March 13, 2000: Rumors are spreading that a Prescott St. location for the stadium is seriously being considered. Numerous obstacles have ruled out the Shrewsbury St. site. Recommendations from David Forseberg are expected by the end of the month.

March 19, 2000: Meetings between the WBDC and the Baseball Task Force are continuing. The number one hurdle is the site of the stadium. WBDC prefers Prescott St. site while the City of Worcester favors the Franklin St. site.

May 12, 2000: Worcester continues to favor the Franklin St. site while the AL and the WBDC prefer the Prescott St. site. Neither side is budging on their recommendations.

May 14, 2000: The WBDC has retained the services of TEAM, a limited liability consulting corporation to help with the negotiations and perform studies on the best site for the stadium. The site they recommended was Prescott St., but the City of Worcester still feels that Franklin St. is the better location based on their own studies.

May 15, 2000: TEAM announced that the Baseball Task Force site was unacceptable and would look for another city.

May 16, 2000: With negotiations over the site stalled, the AL and TEAM have pulled out of Worcester without reaching agreement. The City of Worcester sent mixed signals to both organizations as to their commitment to the project and no progress has been made.

May 21, 2000: Worcester maintains their conviction to the Franklin St. site and feel that it was either that site or no site at all.

May 24, 2000: TEAM and the AL has agreed to keep open dialogue with the City of Worcester even though the project appears to be an impossibility. City officials have been given a deadline of June 5 to respond to several requests regarding the Franklin St. location. State Rep. William McManus II is working on an amendment that would provide state funding for a stadium in Worcester.

May 28, 2000: Secondary concerns have appeared including fan support. It appears that the project is continuing to become less of a reality.

June 13, 2000: City officials are looking for alternatives to the AL because negotiations have failed. It is announced that TEAM and the AL have rejected Worcester's Franklin St. proposal because of the cost. Worcester has asked the AL to reconsider, but the WBDC has decided that Franklin St. is unacceptable.

3.2 Summary of Worcester Telegram and Gazette articles

Worcester has Baseball Tradition

Atlantic League Team Could Flourish in Jesse Burkett's Hometown

July 31, 1999

By: Bronislaus B. Kush

A meeting was held at 111 Chophouse on Shrewsbury St., where David Forseberg, the Worcester Business Development Corp., presented the idea of bringing an Atlantic League franchise to Worcester. But before a team can play in Worcester, "An owner has to be found and a stadium has to be built." Worcester has had a strong tradition of old-time baseball support. In 1880, Worcester had a professional team, "The Worcesters", known as the "Brown Stockings" played at Agricultural Park. Professional Boston Red Sox catcher Rich Gedman was born in Worcester as well as Hall of Famer Jesse Burkett. Not to mention J. Lee Richmond pitched the first perfect game ever in Worcester, and Ted Williams hit his first New England home run at Holy Cross's Fitton Field.

A few years back, Worcester was uninterested with the AL because they had no Major League affiliation. Despite no Major League affiliation, the League has continued to flourish in its first years of existence. "In its first year, the six team league drew 475,000 fans." Mayor Mariano seems to think that baseball in Worcester will be an "easy sell" because of the success of the American Hockey League's Worcester Ice Cats that have had much success over their six years in Worcester.

Pro Baseball has Old Time Support Shrewsbury St. Park Praised

August 3, 1999
By: Nick Manzello

News has been spreading rapidly that Worcester was attempting to bring professional baseball to Worcester. City officials such as Mayor Mariano, Dave Forseberg, Bill Short, and Sam DeSimone all spoke in favor of this attempt. Charlie Bibaud, a member of the state's Basketball Hall of Fame called baseball a can't miss deal. He believes that baseball would be very successful because of the success of the well-established minor league hockey franchise in Worcester, the Worcester Ice Cats.

**City Maneuvers to Keep Things Developing
Task Force to Weigh Baseball Stadium**

August 6, 1999
By: Nick Kotsopoulos

City Manager Thomas R. Hoover plans on appointing a baseball task force to work on bringing a professional baseball team to Worcester. Samuel DeSimone, head of the stadium committee, has been appointed task force chairman. Everett R. Shaw has also been appointed to help the task force as the project leader. Two months ago the announcement was made that the city intended to work with the Atlantic League in order to land a team in Worcester by as soon as 2001.

City officials and those involved in the project attended a game in Bridgeport, Connecticut to watch the Bridgeport Bluefish in action. Most returned with high hopes of obtaining an AL team in Worcester after they saw the apparent success of the Bluefish.

Also involved in the project is David Forseberg, the President of the Worcester Business Development Corp. Along with others he will be investigating the

feasibility and marketability of professional baseball in Worcester. Another main goal will be determining the site of the stadium where the team will play. Currently the most talked about site is located on Shrewsbury St. Backing is coming from the city and the neighborhood, but DesSimone advises looking at other sites as possibilities.

City Groups Connecticut Trip a Home Run

September 3, 1999

By: Nick Kotsopoulos

Mayor Raymond Mariano visited the Atlantic League's baseball team the Bridgeport Bluefish yesterday and was quite impressed stating that "there wasn't a bad seat in the house."

Mariano was one of 35 people who visited Bridgeport to get a look at a minor league team similar to the one they hope to bring in to the city of Worcester. Samuel Desimone and David Forsberg arranged the trip. The two have been involved in trying to bring a team into Worcester for the past several years.

Dennis Murphy, chief administrative officer for Bridgeport, said baseball was "the kick in the pants" that his city needed to launch its "revitalization" efforts. Charles Dowd Jr., general manager of the Bridgeport Bluefish, emphasized how much of an important economic impact minor league baseball can have on a city. He points out that one of the worst parts of the city, in terms of crime, and now they haven't had an incident in two years.

Worcester Steps up to Plate

September 5, 1999

By: Bronislaus B. Kush

City officials announced that they would work aggressively with the Atlantic League to provide a professional baseball team in Worcester. Mayor Raymond Mariano said “its time to bring baseball to Worcester”. He goes on to say “Worcester needs a baseball team. This is a perfect fit. This team will provide a message of hope to our young people. They can watch a player for Worcester progress to the majors.”

Funding for the team would come from mostly public sources namely the city, state and non-profit agencies. Luxury boxes and naming rights would help add private money and the league would pay rent and underwrite other costs.

City of Worcester Stepping to Plate on Diamond Issue

September 5, 1999

By: Nick Kotsopoulos

City officials and local business folks are considering bringing a baseball team into Worcester. Their objective is to have an Atlantic League team playing here as early as 2001.

After taking in a game at Bridgeport the 35 people who made the trip were impressed and said they saw some pretty good baseball in a very clean, comfortable and fan-friendly environment. In Bridgeport’s case the team has drawn more than 300,000 fans in the summer. With that kind of potential a team in Worcester could reap many benefits.

David Forsberg, president of the Worcester Building Development Corp., believes that a proposed site on Shrewsbury Street is feasible. He said that it would be a perfect

for a neighborhood full of restaurants and which also has a highway Interstate 290 running right by it.

The next problem comes with a new stadium and how to finance it. The 5,300 seat ballpark at Harbor Yard, home of the Bridgeport Bluefish, is a very nice stadium. It has a “lush green outfield and neatly manicured infield, 20 luxury boxes and the Harbor Club behind home plate, where guests can order anything from filet mignon to a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

Samuel Desimone, chairman of the city’s Stadium Committee, believes Worcester can have a team. The bottom line is whether or not the city will have to pay a good amount of money for baseball to return to Worcester.

New Site for Stadium is on Deck
Baseball Stadium Eyed North of Lincoln Square
March 13, 2000
By: Nick Kotsopoulos

Rumors are beginning to spread that a site on Prescott St. is seriously being considered for the site of the 6,000- seat baseball stadium. The long- time front running site on Shrewsbury St. is no longer being considered because of numerous obstacles, namely relocating the DPW, which would be involved in the process. Prescott St. is favorable because it is located downtown and it is easily accessible to I-290 and Routes 9 and 12. President of the WBDC is in charge of presenting a recommendation as far as the location of the stadium by the end of the month.

Pitching Stadium is Tough Ballgame

March 19, 2000

By: Nick Kotsopoulos

Meetings have continuously been taking place between the WBDC and the Baseball Task Force. The biggest hurdles appear to be stadium location and funding. City funding will most likely be required for the project to be a success. With Worcester's commitments already taking place, there is a question of whether or not there will be any money left for the construction of the stadium. The WBDC prefers a site for the stadium on Prescott St. for a 6,200-seat stadium. This site is preferred over potential sites on Shrewsbury St., Franklin St., and the Wyman Gordon property on Green Island. The city on the other hand prefers the Shrewsbury St. location. WBDC officials believe that the Shrewsbury St. site will be too small and too expensive to build a stadium on. The Department of Public Works is currently located at this proposed site and in order for the stadium to be built there the DPW would have to find a new home which could be very costly and time consuming. WBDC officials also feel that the Prescott St. location will spur further development in the downtown area that it is located and be the anchor that North Main St. needs. Accessibility to the stadium would also be improved with easy access to I- 290 as well as Rt. 9 and Rt. 12. Support from Worcester councilors seems to be warm at best and it is going to take a large investment and risk to get the project underway, with preliminary estimates floating around \$22 million.

Task Force... Stadium

By: Nick Kostopoulos

May 12, 2000

The Task Force appointed by city manager Thomas R. Hoover preferred Franklin St. to the three other sites studied. The reason or factors considered were the availability of enough land, land acquisition and preparation costs, traffic flow, parking, transportation access, visibility from I 290, and economic impact on the surrounding areas.

Christopher J. English, President of Touch 'em All Markets preferred Prescott St. English believed the Franklin St. site could not be delivered to his group quickly enough because the AL would have wanted a team for the 2000 season. Prescott St. was also the AL's preference. Sam DeSimone, chairman of the Task Force, said they liked the site because it is more centrally located and will complement other developments. He said it could be delivered for 2003.

Everett Shaw, the city's Chief Development Officer, said the proposed site is privately owned and would have to be acquired by the city. As DeSimone stated, "A lot more needs to be done, principally in the area of funding and paying for this stadium."

Stadium Crying Foul
By: Nick Kotsopoulos
May 14, 2000

The Worcester Business Development Corp. headed by President David Forseberg, retained by TEAM to help gain AL approval to bring a team to Worcester. There were four sites studied by a group that included engineers, a construction manager, and an environmental engineer.

Prescott St. could be put into play much sooner than Franklin St. On Prescott St. no businesses would be relocated and only one building demolished. On Franklin St.

however, there are several businesses that need to relocate and several buildings to be demolished as part of a larger urban renewal park.

Some at City Hall believe TEAM did not do itself a favor by designating Prescott St. as its preferred location before the Baseball Task Force had completed its work and weighed in on the matter. Forseberg then had them reevaluate the sites and they again chose Prescott.

Baseball Backers... on City

By: Nick Kotsopoulos

May 16, 2000

The article opens with "...the return of Professional Baseball to the city appears to have struck out." The business group wanted to bring an AL professional baseball team to the city pulled out yesterday, announcing it would pursue sites elsewhere in the state because an agreement could not be reached with City officials on where to put a baseball stadium.

English said, "I am disappointed..." because he strongly believes professional baseball has great potential in Worcester. It would cost \$ 22.3 million to put up a stadium at Prescott St. and \$ 26.6 million at Franklin St.

The AL stated it wanted to start play in Worcester for the 2003 season. English said "...based on all of our professional analysis, with the proper site, the Worcester market is commercially prime for location of a professional ballpark. Unfortunately the site selected by the city does not meet the league requirements or our investment guidelines." Hoover said he wanted to continue to work with the task force to try to bring

a team to Worcester. After the Task Force announced its decision, TEAM tried to persuade the Task Force to reconsider.

Forseberg said English decided to withdraw instead of meeting later in the week because the city had sent out confusing signals on the purpose of the meeting. Forseberg later said the City Manager indicated that the purpose of the meeting was to give city development officials an opportunity to sell TEAM officials on the Franklin St. site.

Forseberg added that the consultants have not even studied the Franklin St. site designated by the Baseball Task Force. He said that the Franklin St. site that was originally considered and studied by the WBDC is farther east than the one that was recommended. He also stated “ I don’t think anyone really knows what might be in the ground on site or what is under it in terms of utilities.” He also said English would look elsewhere even though he really wanted to bring a team to Worcester.

Hardball Played on Sites

May 21, 2000

By: Nick Kotsopoulos

The major obstacle was Worcester lack of a stadium for the team to play in. TEAM announced on May 15 that the task force site was unacceptable and would look for another city. Those close to the situation say the location of a parking garage may have been a key-contributing factor to why baseball struck out again in the city. Both sites took into account a parking garage, which would be hopefully financed by a state grant, but they needed to figure how to use the garage year round, which would be an important factor because that might not be possible on Prescott Street, but definitely would be used a lot on Franklin Street.

District 5 City Councilor Stephen Abraham said the task force took more than a baseball team into consideration. He said the group looked at the long-term prospects of each site and concluded that Franklin Street was best for the city. Abraham stated, “I believe the Prescott Street site is best for TEAM but you have to remember that the city of Worcester would be the one putting up the money for this stadium.”

There was seventy-five million dollars worth of private development planned in the Union Square area. The state, which issues grants for construction of public parking garages, has not been known to give two garage grants to a community at the same time and Franklin Street needs one with or without a stadium. On the other hand Prescott Street would only need one for baseball. In other words, build a baseball stadium on Prescott Street and the state likely would award a grant for the parking garage there. That would leave the city without money for a much needed garage in the Union Station area.

Everett Shaw says “We want to try and serve baseball, but we want to do it in such a way that will have the greatest impact to the overall revitalization and economic growth of the city. Economic development would best be served by the Franklin Street site.”

Forseberg, the head of the WBDC, calls the garage issue a “red herring”. He goes on to say that “the funding is there for a parking garage in that area, but the city has not built it yet. Frankly, I would be surprised if the state was receptive to a request for another parking garage grant for the same area.” He also says the Franklin Street site recommended by the task force is not the same originally studied by the WBDC, but adjacent to it.

City auditor James Delsignore said the size of the Franklin Street site provided more flexibility for expansion of the stadium. He goes on to say that Prescott Street may be a tight fit with no room for expansion and Franklin Street would provide that.

Abraham acknowledged the other Franklin Site would be more visible from I-290, a major highway running through the heart of Worcester. TEAM noted that Prescott Street would be more visible than the original Franklin Street and that was important for advertising and naming rights opportunities. Moving the Franklin Street would give TEAM the same at either site. Moving the Stadium closer to 290 would move it closer to the proposed garage as well.

Forsberg said there would not be time to thoroughly study the second Franklin Street site like the other sites in time for the 2003 season, which was the goal of the Atlantic League. He says the stadium at Prescott Street would not require demolition but on Franklin Street current buildings would have to be destroyed. Forsberg goes on to say “we have little faith in 11th-hour strategies for Franklin Street.”

Despite TEAM’s decision to pull out of Worcester, members of the Baseball task force do not believe baseball is a dead issue. They remain hopeful that TEAM will return.

McManus Eyes State Money for Ballpark
May 24, 2000
By: Nick Kotsopoulos

The business group that wanted to bring an Atlantic League team to the city that pulled out last week because of the difference with city officials over the stadium location has agreed to continue its dialogue with the city. Christopher English has given city

officials until June 5 to respond to several requests he has made regarding the city's preferred location for a 6,000 seat baseball stadium on Franklin St. State Rep. William McManus II has been working on an amendment that would provide state funding for a baseball stadium in Worcester, as part of a bill to finance the construction of a new Fenway Park. It has been projected that a 6,000 seat ballpark in Worcester would cost about \$25 million. Mr. McManus said the amendment would not specify a location for the Worcester stadium, leaving that decision up to city officials. Mr. English said that several issues must be addressed to meet the timing and commercial viability for a possible stadium location on Franklin St. including stadium layout, site control, business relocation and building demolition, utilities and public ways, environmental concerns and parking.

Ball Games Facing Reality Behind Ballpark Dreams

May 28,2000

Serious debate is warranted on the site controversy but, at this point, a secondary concern has appeared. Nobody knows whether fans will support a team and reliable attendance projections are elusive. League attendance listed by TEAM over last year averages to 9,308 per game in ballparks holding 5,000-7000 fans. Worcester did support pro baseball decades ago, but old-timers recall there were days when players on the field outnumbered fans in the stands.

Any estimate of the financing risk to which taxpayers would be exposed is speculative because of no formal financing proposal. Under one likely scenario, the city and state contribution would cover most of the estimated 22 million dollars the ballpark would cost as well as the parking, land acquisition and infrastructure. The city

presumably would recoup at least part of the cost of the municipal facility over the course of a long-term lease, unless the franchise folded or the league went belly up. Potential benefits of this venture are speculative at best.

A New Ballgame
Questions Persist About Pro Baseball Proposals
June 13, 2000

Now that the talks between Worcester and the Atlantic League have almost come to an end, city officials are looking for alternative strategies to land an AL team. The possibility of asking for a waiver of the 35-mile radius territorial rule is once again being considered. Currently the Pawtucket Red Sox have territorial rule over Worcester that would not allow another Major League affiliated team to play in Worcester. Although this is an option, in all likelihood a MLB affiliated farm club is a long shot for Worcester.

Touch 'Em All Markets (TEAM) has given a report to the Baseball Task Force telling them why they do not want the stadium to be built at the proposed Franklin St. location. Cost is the main reason. TEAM's preferred Prescott St. site, at \$1.68 million for the assembling of the site, demolishing buildings, and relocating businesses and utilities will be far less expensive than the Franklin St. site. "TEAM envisions a \$33.8 million project (not counting land purchase), comprising a \$16 million ballpark and a 1,200-space parking garage". A key aspect of the TEAM proposal is the fact that Worcester would recover all but \$30,000 of the costs if everything went according to the plan. The main setback being the city would incur increased liability if the team failed

and folded. The issue of resolving the stadium location issue remains the top priority for all parties involved.

TEAM Asks City to Reconsider Site

June 13,2000

By: Nick Kotsopoulos

The Atlantic League has asked Worcester to reconsider its preferred site, Prescott Street, for a 6,000-seat stadium and parking garage. Christopher English, president of Touch'em All Markets, said the Franklin Street site is "not commercially viable, deliverable or affordable for his investors or the taxpayers of Worcester." The development of the site at Prescott Street would significantly lower costs as compared to the one at Franklin Street, which would require several large structures to be demolished.

Mr. English said his group is prepared to make a financial investment of worth more than 15 million. The investment would substantially reduce the cities financial risk at the Prescott Street site. The annual operating cost at the Prescott street site is 30,000. Compared to the operating cost at Franklin Street, which would start at 900,000.

David Forsberg, president of the WBDC said TEAM would be willing to consider any other possible sites proposed by the city. He says the Franklin Street site is unacceptable simply because it is "riskier and less deliverable" than what TEAM would like to see.

4. Where Worcester went wrong

4.1 Background

In July of 1999 there was plenty of enthusiasm about the concept of Worcester, Massachusetts bringing a professional baseball team to the city. The burgeoning Atlantic League, still adding at least one team a year since its inception in 1998, had been seeking locations for new franchises up and down the Atlantic coast. With no team in place in the state of Massachusetts, and with the baseball history of Worcester, it seemed a good location for an Atlantic League team. Despite the obstacles that would be eventually encountered for those trying to get this accomplished, there was generally a positive attitude towards achieving this goal.

In any project such as this there are obstacles to overcome. With a professional baseball team, there must be a suitable stadium for playing. Studying the Atlantic League attendance figures, and the demographics of the Worcester metropolitan area, it was determined that an approximately 6,000-seat stadium would need to be constructed, with room for possible expansion. Funding for a stadium and the amenities that go along with it was something that needed to be figured out. Also, a location for the stadium can also be an issue for the city if an agreement is not easily made (Kotsopoulos, 2000). There may even be people, however few, who are completely opposed to bringing something such as a baseball team to the city.

The scope of this project involves studying how another city (Bridgeport, CT) was successful in obtaining an Atlantic League franchise and following Worcester's progress in attempting to land a team while comparing the two cities' attempts.

There are several reasons why cities such as Worcester or Bridgeport would benefit from having one of these teams. The Atlantic League has been growing in attendance and interest throughout the eastern states for the past three years. A team can bolster a city's economics as well as its cultural status by bringing new business to the area as well as promoting unity within the area. Mayor Raymond V. Mariano said Atlantic League baseball would be "an easy sell" in Worcester, pointing to the success of the 6-year-old American Hockey League's Worcester Ice Cats (Kush, 1999). Mariano said the Ice Cats built up a considerable fan base, even though hockey isn't as popular as other sports in the region. He also added that Worcester public high schools didn't even have a hockey team when the organization came to town.

The first step the city of Worcester decided to take was to deal with the issue of where to put a stadium and how the stadium would be set up (TEAM, 1999). The Mayor and a contingent of 35 Worcester city officials decided to take a trip to Bridgeport, CT and attend a game to check out the stadium and to try to get a feel for what it would be like to host an Atlantic League game. The trip, which occurred in early September of 1999, was set up by Samuel R. DeSimone, chairman of the Worcester Stadium Committee and eventual Baseball Task Force, and David P. Forsberg, president of the Worcester Business Development Corp (Kotsopoulos, 1999). The two had been actively involved in efforts to bring a minor league baseball team to Worcester during the past several years. After the trip, the overall consensus between the Worcester city officials was one of optimism. Expressing his thoughts on the situation, DeSimone went on to say, "There is no doubt in my mind that baseball would be a big success in Worcester, (Kotsopoulos, 1999). Ken Paul, senior vice president of the Bridgeport Bluefish, said the

Atlantic League is targeting second-tier markets, such as Worcester, that do not have minor league markets. Dennis Murphy, the chief administrative officer for Bridgeport, said baseball was “the kick in the pants” that his city needed to launch its “revitalization” efforts. Also, Charles Dowd Jr., the general manager of the Bridgeport Bluefish, emphasized how much of an important economic impact minor league baseball can have on a city (Kotsopoulos, 1999). He points out that where the stadium was built used to be one of the worst parts of the city, in terms of crime, and there hasn’t been an incident in that area in the two years since. Worcester is also looking to revitalize its city and many feel the addition of a minor league franchise will help such as it did in Bridgeport, CT.

In July of 1999, it was evident that the enthusiasm of both the city of Worcester and the Atlantic League itself were pretty high. Atlantic League CEO Frank Boulton spoke about the virtues of the league and its potential, stating, “I would like a baseball team in Massachusetts. We’re expanding to 8 teams next season. Camden (N.J.) has already committed and I would say Worcester has a real good shot.” With both sides leaning towards agreeing to bring an Atlantic League Team to Worcester, talks about a prospective stadium location began to take place between Worcester’s heavy hitters, preliminarily estimated at around \$16 million.

Funding for the stadium would be mostly public, coming from the city, state and nonprofit agency sources. Luxury boxes and naming rights would help add private money. The league would pay rent and underwrite other costs. The upside is that the city owns the land on which to build. Land taking may be needed to provide adequate parking for 2,000 cars. Even so, supporters of the idea believe that the Worcester area is baseball country. Many believe that given the popularity of the Worcester IceCats and

the fact that there is a good baseball history in the area would equal a successful minor league baseball team. Even without direct ties to Major League Baseball, the Atlantic League seems to be on firm footing. About one-third of the league's players have major league experience.

Worcester officials struck up conversation with Frank Boulton several years ago, but those talks were put on hold when Worcester turned its full attention to trying to lure the Pawtucket Red Sox to Worcester, a venture that failed when Pawtucket retained the team. Afterwards, Worcester stayed in contact with Boulton, who continued to promote the Atlantic League to the city. He noted that once there were 14 major-league teams with 600 minor-league franchises, and that now there are 30 major-league clubs and just 165 minor-league franchises (Gearan, 1999). This statement reasoned that there is plenty of room for a quality independent league that can offer a place for undiscovered young talent to prove themselves able to climb the ladder to the major leagues. Also, with the exorbitant ticket prices of major league games, as well as the hassle of getting to a field such as Fenway Park, a well played minor league game strikes an obvious appeal, especially in a city such as Worcester, which compares favorably with current Atlantic League cities in both population and resources.

4.2 Choosing a site

In early August of 1999, city officials decided to appoint a task force to work on bringing a team to Worcester, to be formed by City Manager Thomas R. Hoover, and to be chaired by Sam DeSimone. Everett Shaw had also been appointed as project leader for the task force. In these early months, the most talked about likely site for the

proposed team was at Shrewsbury Street, with other sites to be looked at. David Forsberg believed that a proposed site on Shrewsbury Street was feasible, noting how close it is to Interstate 290 and to a neighborhood full of restaurants.

By March of 2000, rumors were beginning to spread that a site on Prescott St. was seriously being considered for the stadium (Kotsopoulos, 2000). It was decidedly time to start looking at other sites because many obstacles were being revealed at the Shrewsbury St. site, such as relocating the DPW. The possible location of Prescott St. came about because it is located downtown and is easily accessible to I-290 and Routes 9 and 12.

Throughout March, several meetings between the WBDC and the Baseball Task Force were held with the major issues being stadium location and funding. At this time, Worcester, already had other projects underway, leaving little money available to help finance a baseball stadium.

As of March 19, 2000, the WBDC and the city of Worcester stated their preference over where to build the stadium among the sites known as Franklin St., Prescott St., Shrewsbury St., and the Wyman Gordon property on Green Island. Upon a review of the sites, the WBDC favored the Prescott St. site over the others, while the city of Worcester preferred the Shrewsbury St. site as of this time. The WBDC felt that the site at Shrewsbury St. would be too small and too expensive to build a stadium on, especially because relocating the DPW would be very costly and time consuming. WBDC officials also contend that the Prescott St. will help encourage further development in the downtown area, as well as noting its proximity to the surrounding major roads.

During the months following its formation, the Baseball Task Force studied the four prospective sites in detail in order to approach a decision as to where is the best place for the city of Worcester to build a 6,000 seat baseball stadium. Factors that were considered in the analysis of the four sites included availability of enough land, land acquisition and preparation costs, traffic flow, parking, public transportation access, visibility from I-290, and economic impact on surrounding areas (Kotsopoulos, 1999). After the thorough research into all of the sites, the task force came to the decision in early May 2000 that the best location for a stadium, in the interest of the city of Worcester, was the Franklin St. site (Kotsopoulos, 2000).

However, Christopher J. English, the president of Touch 'Em All Markets (TEAM), the ownership group seeking a city in which to invest an Atlantic League franchise, had a different opinion on the matter of stadium location. English and his group members, in agreement with the Atlantic League, felt that the Prescott St. location would be a better fit for a stadium than the recommended Franklin St. site. One major factor for the reasoning of TEAM was the delivery of the stadium (TEAM, 2000). They knew that a stadium for the Franklin St. site would not be available until 2003, while the Atlantic League was looking into Worcester as a possible franchise location by 2001, and the Prescott St. site very possibly could have been delivered in time for the 2001 season. Sam DeSimone, chairman of the task force, said that they arrived to their decision because of Franklin St.'s central location and the fact that it would be a complement to the area's current and future developments (Kotsopoulos, 2000). He also admitted that the stadium could not be delivered at that site until 2003, and that, at either site, a lot more work would have to be done in the area of funding and paying for the stadium.

4.3 Prescott St. vs. Franklin St.

By April 2000, it was evident that if Worcester was to obtain an Atlantic League franchise, it would either be located on Franklin St. or on Prescott St. The Worcester Development Corporation arrived upon its decision for a location by employing a series of experts to study each of the sites and their surroundings. The group of experts included engineers, a construction manager, and an environmental engineer. Regardless of the opinions of everyone involved with the project, Prescott St. quite simply could be put into play much sooner than Franklin St. Another advantage to the Prescott St. site is that only one building would have had to be demolished and no businesses would have had to be relocated to make room for the stadium and its complementary facilities. On Franklin St., there are several buildings to be torn down and several businesses to be relocated as part of a larger urban renewal project.

With the disagreeing sides, it seems possible that not all of the members involved were being completely cooperative and/or honest with each other at all times. One such instance of this occurred when TEAM designated Prescott St. as its preferred location before the Baseball Task Force had completed its study and weighed in on the matter. Many at City Hall in Worcester noted this as a big mistake on the part of the TEAM group (TEAM, 2000). As a result, Forsberg had TEAM reevaluate the sites and they again chose Prescott St.

Neither side was content with the choice of the other. On one hand, there was the Atlantic League and the proposed owner group, TEAM LLC. They had numerous reasons for choosing the Prescott St. location. On the other hand, there was the City of

Worcester and the Baseball Task Force formed by City Manager Thomas Hoover. They also had a number of reasons for choosing their preferred site at Franklin St. Both sides claimed that they had performed thorough, in some cases, 'exhaustive' research into the four preliminary sites upon making their decisions (Kotsopoulos, 2000).

As the debate remained at a deadlock, it culminated into a series of press statements that made it seem no longer a possibility that Worcester would obtain an Atlantic League franchise, after all. In a statement issued on May 11, 2000, the Baseball Task Force simply made it clear their factors that were included in its selection process. Included among the factors used by the task force were the following, as described in its press release: availability of ample acreage; land acquisition and preparation costs; suitability of topography; traffic flow; parking; public transportation access; pedestrian access; economic impact on the surrounding areas; visibility from I-290; and delivery timetable. On the same day, Christopher J. English released a press statement on behalf of TEAM LLC, announcing the Baseball Task Force's formal decision to reject TEAM's preferred site to construct a stadium in Worcester. In this statement, English goes on to express his disappointment, and note that the Franklin St. site did not meet the timing requirements of the Atlantic League and his investors. He also noted that, at this point, his group still had hope that the task force and the City Manager will eventually reconsider and go with the Prescott St. location.

Shortly thereafter, on May 15, 2000, TEAM LLC released another statement, this one announcing that it would be pursuing alternative sites for an Atlantic League team within Massachusetts. Still no agreement was reached until this point between TEAM and the City Manager, because each side had become completely convinced that the site

they had chosen was the only site that works for their own best interests. In the statement, TEAM contended that Prescott St. offered the best chance for success, noting that the area offers many amenities conducive to baseball, one willing seller, no job loss, adjacent city owned land, manageable environmental clean-up, one building to be demolished, and the most cost effective project budget of the two sites (TEAM, 2000). Also indicated was the most important factor required by the Atlantic League, one regarding the delivery timetable of the project: the Atlantic League made it clear that it wanted a team in place by the 2001 season, and while a team could probably be delivered at Prescott St. by that time, a team could not be delivered at the Franklin St. site until 2003 (TEAM, 2000).

Despite what was said in the press statements issued by Christopher English, on behalf of TEAM LLC, Thomas Hoover said that he wanted to continue to work with the task force to try to bring a team to Worcester. The city decided that it wanted to set up a meeting later in the week with Christopher English. Forseberg said that English decided to withdraw from the meeting because the city had sent out confusing signals on the purpose of the meeting (Kotsopoulos, 2000). Forseberg later said that the city manager indicated that the purpose of the meeting was to give city development officials an opportunity to sell TEAM officials on the Franklin St. site. Forseberg also added that consultants had not even studied the Franklin St. site designated by the Baseball Task Force. He said that the Franklin St. site that was originally considered and studied by the WBDC is farther east than the one that was recommended by the task force (Kotsopoulos, 2000). This is another example to illustrate the possible distrust and/or lack of cooperation among the participants involved in determining a stadium site. The

second Franklin St. site, as described by city auditor James Delsignore, provided more flexibility for expansion of the stadium. He goes on to say that Prescott St. may be a tight fit with no room for expansion and Franklin St. would provide that. However, as noted by David Forseberg, there would not be time to thoroughly study the second Franklin St. site like the other sites in time for the 2003 season, which would probably be too late for the Atlantic League anyway. Forseberg added, "I don't think anyone really knows what might be in the ground on site or what is under it in terms of utilities" (Kotsopoulos, 2000).

4.4 The parking garage

Another obstacle in the decision process of the stadium's location involves the parking garage that would be required to go along with the stadium. The state issues grants for construction of public parking garages, which would probably be approved at either site. The problem with this is that whether or not the Franklin St. site has a stadium, it needs a parking garage to accommodate the large urban renewal that will eventually take place there, and the state has not been known to issue two such grants to the same area in a short period of time. Although Franklin St. would require a larger parking garage, it will be used a lot more. A parking garage at Prescott St. would probably not be used year round, and hardly ever when there is not a ball game taking place.

District 5 City Councilor Stephen Abraham said that the task force took more than just a baseball team into consideration, saying that the group looked at the long-term prospects of each site and concluded that Franklin St. was best for the city. Everett Shaw

added, “We want to try and serve baseball, but we want to do it in such a way that will have the greatest impact to the overall revitalization and economic growth of the city. Economic development would best be served by the Franklin St. site” (Kotsopoulos, 2000).

Despite the inability to come to a mutual decision in earlier talks about stadium location, around May 24, 2000 TEAM agreed to continue dialogue with Worcester on the subject. Stadium location was not the only obstacle that needed to be overcome in order to bring an Atlantic League franchise to the city. Another problem that was not fully resolved was how the stadium would be funded. State Representative William McManus II has been working on an amendment that would provide state funding for a baseball stadium in Worcester, as a part of a bill to finance the construction of a new Fenway Park (Kotsopoulos, 2000). McManus did note that the amendment would not specify the location of the stadium, leaving that decision up to Worcester city officials. The fact is that there was no formal financing proposal. It is likely that the city and state will cover most of the costs and those costs would be paid off after years, if the team were successful. It can't be told for sure whether fans would even support a minor league baseball team in Worcester, despite the success of minor league hockey and the fact that Worcester supported baseball decades ago. Some old timers do recall, however, that there were days when players on the field outnumbered people in the stands.

As May came to a close and June was passing by, talks between the ownership group, the Atlantic League and the city of Worcester continued to subside to the point where it was inevitable that there would be no Atlantic League franchise in Worcester's near future (Kotsopoulos, 2000). The city considered looking into other ways to land a

minor league team, but Worcester lies within a 35-mile radius of the city of Pawtucket, RI. There is a territorial rule that prohibits a new Major League affiliated team from being located within a 35-mile radius of another Major League affiliated team without a waiver of this rule by the existing team, in this case, the Pawtucket Red Sox (Kotsopoulos, 1999). This unlikely possibility is another obstacle that the city of Worcester most likely could not overcome.

On June 12, 2000, Christopher J. English released another press statement on behalf of Touch 'Em All Markets. In this statement, he underlined all of the reasons why his group refused to agree with Worcester's preference of Franklin St., pointing out the main reason as cost. Prescott St. would be cheaper because preparing the site, which involves demolishing buildings, and relocating businesses and utilities, would be significantly less expensive than at Franklin St (TEAM, 2000). In a package that included the parking garage, TEAM foresaw Worcester recovering nearly all of the costs if everything went as scheduled, but the city would also incur increased liability if the team failed and folded under this proposal. This was not a risk that the city wanted to undertake if at all possible. Even though the operating cost at Franklin St. would be substantially higher than at Prescott St., the city insisted that if a baseball stadium were to be constructed in Worcester, it would be located at Franklin St. and nowhere else (TEAM, 2000). TEAM again asked Worcester to reconsider its preferred site and David Forsberg said that TEAM would be willing to consider any other possible sites proposed by the city, as long as they were less of a risk and more deliverable than Franklin St. No agreement was ever met in the following months between the parties and Worcester remains without a minor league baseball team to this day (Kotsopoulos, 2000).

4.5 An insider's opinion

Most of the information that was compiled in this section was based upon articles written by and documents provided by *Worcester Telegram & Gazette* writer Nick Kotsopoulos. Because of this, we decided to ask him his own personal views on the subject, in order to get an insider's view on the subject. We interviewed him through a series of questions pertaining to his articles that were prepared then sent and returned via fax machine and/or telephone. When asked what he felt was the primary reason the city of Worcester failed to obtain an Atlantic League team, Mr. Kotsopoulos said it was because of the lack of agreement on a stadium location. He said that the city wanted the stadium as part of the overall development of the Union Square area at Franklin St, and that they would need a parking garage there anyway. He also reiterated that the reasons that TEAM and the Atlantic League preferred Prescott St. included the availability of the land, the earlier deliverability of the site, and the costs that would be saved.

When asked if there were any other significant reasons for the result that was reached, Mr. Kotsopoulos indicated that there was an evident distrust between the city and TEAM. He said that he was told that the city asked TEAM a few times for additional financial information about itself and its plan to help pay for the financing of the stadium, and never received that information. It was also noted that the city was uncomfortable with the owner of the land at Prescott St., the WBDC, being a consultant in TEAM's study that was supposed to fairly decide upon a location. Mr. Kotsopoulos also noted that TEAM was distrustful of Worcester's chief development officer, Everett Shaw because of several of his actions. Also reaffirmed was the fact that Worcester did not want to take too much of a chance on a team that would not be affiliated with a major league

team for two reasons: financial responsibility if the team folds and a Major League team for fans to identify with (as the Ice Cats have the St. Louis Blues).

When asked if the city of Worcester will have a chance in the foreseeable future to obtain another pro baseball team and if the city will even try to do so, Mr. Kotsopoulos expressed that Worcester has tried to get a team for years, and will probably continue to try to some extent in the future. In accordance with this response, he cited the territorial rights that the Pawtucket Red Sox have in Worcester being a major obstacle that will always be prevalent. He feels that it is important for Worcester to have a minor league baseball franchise in an economic sense as well as in a cultural sense, referring to the success of the Bridgeport Bluefish and the rich baseball history in the city of Worcester. We also asked if anybody appeared to be in opposition of Worcester bringing a baseball team to Worcester in the first place and why. We discovered that there were some members of the Worcester City Council that felt it wasn't in the city's best interest to actively pursue a baseball team if it involved building a new stadium. Those who were opposed to the idea did not feel the city could currently afford such an investment, with other spending priorities higher on the list. As it turned out, the opportunity was passed by anyway.

5. The AL flourishes in Bridgeport, Connecticut

5.1 The successful acquisition of the Bluefish franchise

To obtain the Bridgeport Bluefish and establish them in the city required a few obstacles to be overcome. A few of these problems were explained in an interview conducted with Steven Schoenfeld, assistant manager of the Bluefish, and from articles that were published in the Telegram and Gazette newspaper.

The obstacles that the development of the ballpark encountered were more about the validity of the Atlantic League rather than the actual development of the ballpark. The “viability” of the Atlantic League was in question since it was an “unproven entity” considering the league started in 1998. The local obstacles were easy to overcome according to Schoenfeld because “both the city of Bridgeport and the state of Connecticut financed most of the cost of the ballpark.” The ownership of the Bluefish then provided two million dollars to finance the remaining cost of the ballpark.

The city of Bridgeport needed a revitalization of their city and the opportunity of a baseball league was one way to make this possible (Schoenfeld, 2000). With the advent of a new ballpark the city could begin to attract new growth and bring affordable family entertainment into the city.

The Atlantic League and the city of Bridgeport were a perfect match for each other. The Atlantic League was attracted to Bridgeport because of its size, plenty of land for a ballpark and a mayor and city official that were willing to “go out on a limb” and stay committed to the project (Schoenfeld, 2000).

Bridgeport wanted something that could revitalize their city, so the opposition to the project was not too strong. City officials, as stated above, really felt they needed this

project and were in favor of it from the start (Schoenfeld, 2000). This allowed the whole process to run very smoothly.

Opposition came, if at all, from the businesses that were located around the proposed stadium site. The stadium was built on the remnants of an old factory building, so the issue of demolishing concerned only that building. A few small businesses had to be relocated and that is where most, if any, of the opposition came (Schoenfeld, 2000).

The success of the Bluefish can also be attributed to the level of business that has grown around the ballpark. The team has given many local residents jobs in the stadium and has been very successful in “luring companies to spend big dollars in sports marketing.”

The location of the stadium also helps the Bluefish in the long run. Fairfield County, Connecticut is one of the wealthiest in the country and the potential to be successful in the long run is substantially increased because of this factor (Schoenfeld, 2000).

The league’s success is also due to the quality of the product that they are selling and the baseball that is played in the Atlantic League consists of very talented players. As a result, the stadium attendance for a ballpark that seats 5,300 has averaged around 4,300 people (Schoenfeld, 2000). People from all over Southern Connecticut, and even Westchester County, New York are traveling to the ballpark.

The success of Bridgeport Bluefish has also brought success and economic growth to the city of Bridgeport. The city’s revitalization efforts are making great progress. The success of the baseball team has helped the city bring in a hockey team, which will begin play in October 2001.

6. A Comparison of the two cities

There are several important issues to look at while comparing Worcester's failure to obtain an Atlantic League franchise to the success of another New England based franchise, the Bridgeport Bluefish. Although both cities felt that an AL franchise would boost the economic as well as the social status of their respective regions, only one of these cities was successful in their acquisition. Upon performing this study it became evident that the two attempts varied immensely and it is the city of Bridgeport, Connecticut that has flourished, while the city of Worcester, Massachusetts has been left behind, unable to strike a deal with the Atlantic League.

On the one hand, it is necessary to examine the success of Bridgeport, Connecticut and how this city landed an Atlantic League franchise, the Bridgeport Bluefish. The successful acquisition is accredited to several different aspects, the most important being the total support from city officials, local businesses, and the community as a whole. It was apparent to nearly everyone that a revival was necessary in order to spur economic, as well as social growth in the metropolis of Bridgeport. The obvious need for revival sparked an interest in the area and it was this interest that created the excitement and optimism surrounding the Atlantic League and what this organization could bring to Bridgeport. From the first day that the project was proposed, there was never any public opposition to the project. The fact that no opposition arose really shows that the area was excited about the proposal and was ready to take the necessary steps to bring the AL franchise to fruition. In a sense, one could say that everyone involved in the project was "on the same page". Whether it involved negotiations on the funding of the team, or the location of the stadium, the parties involved worked together and came up

with solutions that could be accepted by the city officials, local businesses, the citizens of the city, as well as Atlantic League representatives. The efforts were put forth to ensure that Atlantic League baseball in the city of Bridgeport was made a reality.

On the other hand, the opposite occurred in the city of Worcester, Massachusetts. As far as support is concerned, there were several city officials that were unsure about bringing an unaffiliated baseball franchise to the community. Several questions arose to the legitimacy of the league and what would happen if the league or the team folded and went bankrupt. Without the support and funding of a Major League Baseball franchise, where would the money come from to keep the team playing if they were not creating the necessary fan base to financially justify keeping the team? The questions surrounding the league and the possibilities for failure were the cause of limited support from officials, local businesses, and the community as a whole. One could say that in the case of Worcester and the Atlantic League, “not everyone was on the same page.” There were actually several different firms that were consulting on the project and because neither of these groups were “on the same page”, the franchise was never brought to fruition. The opposing sides could not agree on the funding of the team or the stadium, or even the location of the stadium. The location of the proposed stadium actually became the largest obstacle that the sides faced and it is our belief that it is why the sides could not come to agreement. The city wanted one site, while the league and their consultants wanted another. There were several questions that also surfaced about the parking garage situation, and again the sides could not agree. The disagreement between the two opposing sides created distrust in everyone and their intentions and the league eventually pulled out of Worcester and deducted that the time frame of the project was unmeet able.

In comparison of the two situations, it is evident that Bridgeport worked together for the same goal. They focused on the positives that the league could bring to the region and were focused on making Atlantic League baseball in their city a reality. On the other hand, Worcester never brought the necessary resources together to bring the project to fruition. Rather than working together, there was considerable opposition that could just not agree on the vital aspects of the project. While one community worked together, the other was never “on the same page” and that is why the Atlantic League is flourishing in Bridgeport Connecticut, while Worcester is going back to the drawing board.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

Over the course of this IQP project, we have determined that the city of Worcester, Massachusetts, as well as the Atlantic League organization, made several mistakes in their negotiations with one another. The end result of these mistakes and discrepancies was the Atlantic League's decision to stop negotiations with Worcester and move on to another city where there was substantial potential to land a professional baseball franchise. Although Worcester has been in the market for a professional baseball franchise for a few years, the city has not yet been able to successfully acquire a team. Upon completing our analysis in this project, we feel that there were several things that Worcester, as well as the Atlantic League could have done differently in order to bring an Atlantic League franchise in Worcester to fruition.

The number one thing that stands out in our analysis, as well as the analysis of others who followed the project, was the dispute over the site of the stadium as well as the parking garage. For a number of months, this issue was on the front burner and it was both sides of the project going back and forth at each other without the slightest hint of cooperation. On the one hand, the City of Worcester felt that the location on Franklin St. was the better choice, while the Atlantic League and their consultants felt that the Prescott St. site was the more favorable of the two. Reports and analyses were made on both sites and neither side would budge on their recommendations. The city of Worcester wanted the Franklin St. site because it was all part of a downtown renovation. Also in the area, Union Train Station was just revitalized and it was the plan of the city to build a stadium and garage in the area that could be used for both facilities. In contrast, the league preferred the Prescott St. site because it involved substantially less land

cleanup and could be delivered sooner than the other site. The final fate of the equal stubbornness on both sides was, as we see it, the main reason that the Atlantic League decided to pull all efforts out of Worcester and look for another area that had the promise and potential of making Atlantic League baseball a reality.

In addition to the sides never being able to agree on the site of the stadium, another deterrent to this project was the strength of the Atlantic League as a whole. The dependability and stability of the league was constantly in question because they are not affiliated with Major League Baseball. Questions arose as to who would take the financial responsibility if the league folded, or if the team was not drawing the necessary crowds to make a profit. The city did not want a multi-million dollar stadium as well as a parking garage that could no longer be used if the league, or the team decided to pack up and leave Worcester. The uncertainty of the league, as well as the team resulted in limited support from Worcester city councilors as well as residents. And without the support from everyone involved in the project, it was destined for failure.

Another important aspect in this project was the timeframe. The league and its consultants wanted a franchise by as soon as the year 2001. It was this timeframe that also helped shape their support in the Prescott St. site. Because there was not a substantial amount of cleanup to do at the site, it could be delivered much sooner than the City of Worcester's recommendation, which was of course Franklin St. The necessary cleanup at Franklin St would have been a much more involved process, and experts felt that the stadium and parking garage could not be delivered until around the year 2003. With all of the negotiations going nowhere and the timeframe getting shorter and shorter,

the league could no longer put forth the efforts to bring a team to Worcester and they made the final decision to pack up and leave.

Through our analysis, our main recommendation would have to be to get everyone involved in this project “on the same page”. By this we mean that we feel it is vital to a project to have everyone working toward the same goal, with the same means of getting there. It seemed that there were too many consultants on this project and they all had different agendas. The Baseball Task Force and the Worcester Business Development Corporation represented the concerns and the interests of the City of Worcester. Their main concern was the future and the consequences that could occur from bringing an unaffiliated franchise to the city. The stadium and the parking garage had to be in a location where it could possibly be used if the league folded and also where it could be seen and easily accessed by the public. The opposition to the Task Force and WBDC was the Atlantic League and its consultants, TEAM, LLC. Their main concern was the timeline and the cost of building a stadium and parking garage. The league wanted a team by possibly as soon as the year 2001. Their proposed site actually made this preliminary dates a strong possibility. In addition to the timeframe, the league also wanted a site that would require less financial investment. It was quite apparent that the sides had different concerns and questions in mind and it was these doubts that resulted in the Atlantic League moving on.

With the proposed project seeming so optimistic and promising in the initial announcement, it was quite disappointing to see it end the way that it did. It is a shame that the second largest city in New England has not yet been able to bring a professional baseball franchise to the city. In this case, it seems that the sides were never in

cooperation with one another, and as the project dragged on, it became apparent that the Atlantic League and Worcester could not reach an agreement that would please both sides. The plan is to now look towards Pawtucket and hope that they will loosen their grip on Worcester if baseball in this city is ever going to become a reality.

8. Appendices

Worcester T&G Articles

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IQP/MQP SCANNING PROJECT



TEAM LLC Press Statement

Press Statement

Christopher J. English
President of TEAM LLC

The ownership group, attempting to bring a professional Atlantic League baseball team to Worcester learned today of City Manager Hoover's Baseball Task Force's decision to reject their preferred site to construct a 6,000 seat ballpark in the City of Worcester.

"I am extremely disappointed in the decision made by the task force and quite surprised by the lack of regard shown for our preferred site on Prescott Street. The Prescott Street site was chosen after an exhaustive analysis of four sites. Prescott Street was our strong preference and the Atlantic League's preference as well." Said Christopher J. English.

"The Franklin Street site does not meet the timing requirements of this project, does not offer the opportunity of commercial success necessary to embark on this difficult project. We do not believe that the Franklin Street site can be delivered in a fashion that meets our timing requirements."

"Following a productive meeting today with City Manager Hoover and members of the Task Force, we hope and encourage that Task Force and the City Manager to move to their alternate site and our preferred site on Prescott Street." Concluded English

The Atlantic League plays a 140 game schedule and this year expanded to include Bud Harrleson's Long Island Ducks and Cal Ripken's Aberdeen Arsenal. Team LLC presently owns and operates that Atlantic League's Nashua Pride in Nashua, New Hampshire.

Baseball Task force Selects Preferred Ballpark Site

Baseball Task Force Selects Preferred Ballpark Site

Worcester, Mass.,-City Manager Thomas R. Hoover announced today that his specially appointed Baseball Task Force has unanimously selected a variation of the so-called Franklin Street site as its preferred location for the construction of a professional baseball stadium in Worcester. The 11-member Baseball Task Force, chaired by Samuel DeSimone, Esquire, will soon submit a full report on its recommendation to City Manager Hoover and the Worcester City Council.

The advisory Task Force studied four possible sites in Worcester to construct the ballpark: the former Wyman-Gordon property bordered by Madison, Washington, LaMartine, Hermon, and Gold Streets; the so-called Prescott Street site bordered by Prescott, Concord and Lincoln streets; the so-called Shrewsbury Street site bordered by Shrewsbury, Fantasia, Albany, and Casco streets; and the so-called Franklin Street site bordered by Franklin and Plastics, and Grafton streets.

Several factors were considered by the Baseball Task Force in its selection process, including: availability of ample acreage; land acquisition and preparation costs; suitability of topography; traffic flow; parking; public transportation access; pedestrian access; economic impact on the surrounding areas; visibility from I-290; and delivery timetable.

The Shrewsbury Street and Wyman-Gordon sites were recently eliminated from the list due to very significant cost and logistic obstacles. The Baseball Task Force chose Franklin Street as its preferred site on the condition that it be developed with sensitivity to the surviving family members of the six firefighters who lost their lives in the tragic Worcester Cold Storage fire last December. The Prescott Street site has been retained as the Task Force's second preferred site.

The Task Force deemed the Franklin Street site to be superior and in the best long-term interests of the City of Worcester for multiple reasons, including:

- The site offers ample acreage to accommodate a 6,000 seat ballpark, as well as possible future seating expansion and related development;
- The site is within easy walking distance from Union Station and its pending MBTA and Amtrak public transportation service;
- A site for a new 1,000 space parking garage has been identified between Union Station and the prospective ballpark that would conveniently service both venues;
- The site would transform a currently blighted area, and would be synergistic and complementary to other key development projects in the immediate downtown area, including Union Station, Worcester Common Outlets, the realigned Washington Square and proposed hotel; and the proposed Franklin Science Park;
- The site would augment the economic resurgence on nearby Shrewsbury Street, and would help anchor the East gateway to the City;
- The site was deemed to have the best automobile traffic flow for access and egress;

- The site has high visibility from I-290 and would maximize advertising and sponsorship opportunities;
- An adequate public utility infrastructure already exists to support the prospective ballpark;
- The land acquisition and construction cost of the Franklin Street site has been deemed by the Task Force to be comparable to the Prescott Street site;
- The timetable to deliver a Franklin Street ballpark by the preferred 2003 opening date appears achievable.

As the Task Force was being formed in the fall of 1999, the Worcester Business Development Corporation was retained by Touch'Em All Markets (TEAM) LLC to bring and independent Atlantic League franchise to Worcester. After determining that there would likely be substantial civic and economic benefits from having an Atlantic League franchise in Worcester, City Manager Hoover provided a letter of conditional commitment to Christopher J. English, Managing Partner of TEAM LLC, for inclusion in his application to the League.

In its own report prepared by the Maguire Group for Mr. English, the WBDC chose as its preferred site the Prescott Street location. After conducting its own independent study of the Franklin Street site, the Baseball Task Force concluded that it is possible and preferable to move the ballpark footprint as sited in the WBDC report on the eastern edge of Franklin Street parcel to a location closer to I-290, on the western portion of the same parcel.

In addition to Atty. DeSimone, the Baseball Task Force members are: Charles Bibaud, owner of Kangaroo Crossing in Worcester; Joseph Bisceglia, chief aide to U.S. Representative James McGovern; Timothy Cooney, former city council and executive director of the Central Massachusetts Safety Council; James DelSignore, Worcester city Auditor; Thomas LaVigne, president of Lavigne Press; R. Norman Peters, attorney and sports agent; Richard Phelps, associate director of public affairs at Holy Cross; Everett Shaw, Worcester chief development officer; Baseball Task Force project leader William Sullivan, chairman of Sullivan Insurance in Worcester; and Stephen G. Abraham, Worcester city councilor.

Baseball Task Force Survey

Interview with a Bridgeport Bluefish Representative

Mr. Schoenfeld,

Here are some questions that would help our project:

- 1) Were there any obstacles that the city of Bridgeport had to overcome to obtain an Atlantic League Team?
- 2) Was there anybody opposed to having a baseball team in Bridgeport? If so, who and, if you know, what were there reasons?
- 3) Was there already a stadium for the Bluefish, or was one constructed, and were there any complications with the location or construction of the ballpark?
- 4) Do you feel the city of Bridgeport has benefitted economically and culturally from the presence of a professional baseball team?
- 5) Have the Bluefish been successful from the beginning and does it seem they will continue to thrive in the future? If so, what do you believe have been the reasons for this success?
- 6) Do you know if the city of Bridgeport had any teams in the past that were unsuccessful, or if there were any unsuccessful attempts at obtaining a team in the past, whether through the Atlantic League or otherwise?

I apologize for the delay in responding to you. Our season just ended, so I have a little more time now. I don't know all the details you may be looking for, but I'll do my best with your questions:

1. I am sure there were obstacles, but they were mostly regarding the viability of the Atlantic League, since it was a new league and an unproven entity. Local obstacles seemed to be pretty easy to overcome, as both the city of Bridgeport (\$7 million) and the state of Connecticut (\$10 million) financed most of the cost of the ballpark. (The ownership of the Bluefish contributed the remaining \$2 million it took to get the facility outfitted and up and running.) So, the city of Bridgeport was a prime location for the league, being a city of 140,000 people, ample available land for the ballpark, and a progressive mayor and city government that were willing to go out on a limb and commit to the project in an attempt to help revitalize the city.

2. I don't know this for a fact, but I don't think the opposition was too strong, if there was any at all. The ballpark itself was built on the site of an abandoned factory, although there were a few small, independent business left that had to be displaced as well. There might have been some fallout from that, but like I said, it probably wasn't too strong. The city really needed a "jump start" toward revitalization in the mid 1990s, so most of the politicians were in favor of the whole project.

3. I think I covered this in previous answers, but to recap...the ballpark was built during the winter of 1997-98 for the Bluefish. It is part of a large revitalization plan in an attempt to bring affordable family entertainment to the city, bring residents of nearby towns back into the city, civic pride, etc. The ballpark was funded mostly with public dollars, and the only obstacle was to get it done in time for opening day, May 21, 1998, which was accomplished.

4. I feel the city has certainly benefited from the ballpark and the Bluefish. Our success has helped spur construction of a 10,000 seat arena right next to the ballpark for an AHL hockey team which will start play in October 2001. (Plus concerts, NCAA basketball, ice shows, etc.). I think the city realized that it is possible to build a revitalization plan around sports facilities, but they also realize that sports can't do everything, and that retail and corporate development is also necessary to make the grand plan work. That kind of development hasn't happened yet, but there are plans for a huge retail mall on the waterfront (similar to Baltimore, MD) with a new hotel, etc., but funding has yet to be secured for this project.

As a side note, the owner of the Bridgeport hockey team is actually the guy that used to own the Worcester IceCats. He is originally from Fairfield, CT, and still lives there, so I guess he saw this as an opportunity to do business right in his own backyard. He is in the process of selling the IceCats to his partners in Massachusetts.

5. The Bluefish have been successful...we have drawn over 300,000 in paid attendance in each of our first three seasons (we averaged about 4,300 this season – the ballpark holds 5,300), we have provided many jobs for local area residents, we have been successful in luring companies to spend big dollars in sports marketing, and residents from all over southern Connecticut, and even Westchester County, NY are flocking to the ballpark. I think this success will continue, although I am sure the novelty of it all will slowly wear off in the coming seasons. The Bluefish have the potential to be successful in the long term simply because of the location. Fairfield County, CT is one of the wealthiest in the nation, and should be able to support a minor league baseball team for years to come. The area was really starving for this kind of development in the mid 1990s, which is why the team was very well received over its first few years of existence. Not only is the per-capita income of the residents pretty high, but there is a huge concentration of big corporations in the area as well. This is obviously important in bringing in season ticket sales, luxury suite sales, billboard and promotion sales, etc., and generates a large portion of our revenue.

However, we have yet to turn a profit, as is typical of many start-up franchises (and all businesses, for that matter). We will report an operating profit for the year 2000, but we are still working on paying down some debts from the start-up. This was expected, though.

6. The last minor league baseball team to play in Bridgeport was the Bridgeport Bees in the 1950s, and I do not believe there was an attempt to lure a team anytime between then and when the Bluefish arrived.

Hopefully this helps. Again, I'm sorry for the delay. I'm a graduate of Clark University, so I'd love to see Worcester get an Atlantic League franchise. The mayor and a delegation came to visit our ballpark last season (1999) and the GM and I gave them a tour. I think they were impressed, but it's just whether they can secure a site and the funding to get it done in Worcester. Worcester is a very different market than Fairfield County, though, but I think if price points are set carefully and the project is done right, a minor league baseball team could be successful there.

If you have other questions, please feel free to call me at 203-345-4800 x 118. It might be easier for me to speak directly with you rather than send another lengthy e-mail. Depending on your time frame, it might be worth your while to make the drive down here to interview a few people with the City of Bridgeport. I'd be glad to give you a tour of the ballpark and talk to you about the construction of the arena next door.

Good luck.

-Steve Schoenfeld

Interview with T&G Reporter, Nick Kotsopoulos

Attention: Nick Kotsopoulos

Here are some questions that will help in our project. Answer whatever you can. Feel free to elaborate on your answers. I'll let you know if we have any other questions, or follow-up questions in the future. Thanks again for your cooperation. – Tom Geer

- 1) What do you think was the primary reason the city of Worcester failed to obtain an Atlantic League team?
- 2) Were there any other reasons why Worcester failed to get a team?
- 3) Do you think the city of Worcester will have a chance in the foreseeable future to ever obtain another pro baseball team? Do you think they will even try again to get a team in the near future?
- 4) Do you feel that all parties involved cooperated fully with each other?
- 5) Do you know if the Worcester team already had a proposed team name at the time the TEAM owner group pulled out?
- 6) Do you feel it was important for Worcester to get an Atlantic League franchise in an economic as well as in a cultural sense?
- 7) Do you know of anybody that was opposed to bringing a pro baseball team to Worcester in the first place? If so, what were there reasons?

Interview with T&G reporter Nick Kotsopoulos

The following interview was conducted with Nick Kotsopoulos of the Worcester Telegram and Gazette. Mr. Kotsopoulos followed the development of the Atlantic League's negotiations with Worcester very carefully and the following is an interview that we conducted to help reveal why Worcester was unsuccessful in obtaining an AL franchise.

1. Q: What do you think was the primary reason the City of Worcester failed to obtain an Atlantic League team?

A: Perhaps the big reason was that the city and TEAM LLC, the ownership group that wanted to bring a team to Worcester, could not agree on a site for a baseball stadium. The city wanted the stadium built off Franklin Street, near I-290 and the site of the Worcester Cold Storage Warehouse Co. building fire. The city preferred that site because it wanted to make the stadium part of an overall development strategy for that part of downtown. The stadium would be built as part of a tract the city wants to develop into a science/ technology park. As part of the stadium project, the city also intended to seek a grant from the state to build a parking garage. The way the city saw it, the parking garage could be used for baseball games during the summer, and then during the off-season it could be used by tenants and visitors to the science/ technology park, those using Union Station and even by some frequenting businesses on Shrewsbury Street. TEAM LLC, meanwhile wanted the stadium built off Prescott Street, north of Lincoln Square. In addition to its proximity to I-290, TEAM LLC preferred that site because it was already under the control of the Worcester Business Development Corp., which TEAM had hired a consultant. Because the land was already under the control of the Worcester Business Development Corp., the stadium could be built sooner than compared to the Franklin Street site, which was owned by a number of private owners. The city did not like the Prescott Street site, however, because it did not want to waste a parking garage grant from the state just for a facility, like a stadium, that would have limited use. It wanted the state grant used on a garage that would have year-round use, and on a site where there was a definite need for more parking.

2. Q: Were there any other reasons why Worcester failed to get a team?

A: I'd have to say distrust between the city and TEAM was an important factor. From what I was told, the city kept asking TEAM for more financial information about its group and its plan to help foot the bill for the construction of the baseball stadium. But city officials apparently did not get the information they asked for.

Also, the city was a bit uncomfortable that the Worcester Business Development Corp., (WBDC) owner of the land on Prescott Street, was involved as a consultant on this. Some city officials felt it was a bit of a conflict to have the consultant (WBDC) who did the feasibility study on stadium siting to recommend the site that it owns over all others. TEAM LLC, meanwhile, was a bit distrustful of the city, particularly its chief development officer, Everett R. Shaw. You see it was Mr. Shaw who succeeded David P. Forsberg as the city's chief development officer. Mr. Forsberg now heads the WBDC and it was no secret that he and TEAM LLC were not happy with several of the actions of Mr. Shaw. Another reason may have to do with the Atlantic League itself. Unlike other minor league teams which are affiliated with major league baseball, the Atlantic League is an independent league that has no affiliation with major league teams. As a result, if the league should ever fold because of financial reasons, the city would be left with an empty baseball stadium. Because the city had no control over the future of the Atlantic League, many city officials were hesitant about getting involved with the league and making a huge financial commitment to it. Also, the city wants a minor league team that is affiliated with the major leagues so it will have a team to identify with, such as the Worcester IceCats are affiliated with the St. Louis Blues of the National Hockey League.

- 3. Q: Do you think the city of Worcester will have a chance in the foreseeable future to ever obtain another pro baseball team? Do you think they will ever try again to get a team?**

A: Worcester has been trying for years to get a team and, yes, I think the city will continue to try. It bothers the city to no end that communities such as Pawtucket, R.I., Portland, Maine, New Haven, Conn., Lowell, Mass., and even Pittsfield, Mass. all have minor league teams, while Worcester, the second largest city in New England does not. The biggest obstacle about getting a minor league team to Worcester, however, has been one involving territorial issues. Minor league teams have territorial rights that extend 30- 35 miles (??? not sure exact distance) from their home. In Worcester's case, Pawtucket owns the territorial rights and an affiliated minor league team cannot come to Worcester without first getting the permission of the Pawtucket Red Sox. Since Pawtucket draws many fans from Worcester and the southern part of Worcester County, it is unlikely that it would waive those territorial rights any time soon. Territorial rights were not an issue with the Atlantic League because that league is independent of Major League Baseball. There has been some talk that the ownership group from Pawtucket is looking to bring a Class A minor league team to Worcester, but there has been nothing definite on that. So, for now, about the only way minor league baseball is going to come to Worcester is if the Pawtucket ownership group waives its territorial rights to Worcester, or if the group brings its own team here. Interestingly enough, the president of the Pawtucket Red Sox was originally from Worcester.

4. Q: Do you think all parties involved fully cooperated with each other?

A: No. I touched upon those reasons in question 2, I think.

5. Q: Do you know if the Worcester team already had a proposed team name at the time the TEAM owner group pulled out?

A: It did not.

6. Q: Do you feel it was important for Worcester to get an Atlantic League franchise in an economic as well as cultural sense?

A: baseball makes for great economics for any city. Any municipal official will tell you that. On top of that, baseball helps give a community a great shot in the arm. The general manager of the Bridgeport (Conn.) team in the Atlantic League once told me that the city took great pride in its team, and many Bridgeport-area residents were seen across the state of Connecticut wearing their Bridgeport Bluefish tee shirts. It is also important for Worcester because the city has some history with the sport. Worcester once had a team in the major leagues, and the first no-hitter in major league history was pitched in Worcester. The city also had a major league team that played down on Shrewsbury Street, and one of the people who played in for that team was Hall of Famer Casey Stengel.

7. Q: Do you know of anybody that was opposed to bringing a pro baseball team to Worcester in the first place? If so, what were the reasons?

A: There were some members of the Worcester City Council who did not want to see the city actively pursue a baseball team at this time. Because the city would have to build a new stadium, these city councilors felt that was something the city could not afford at this time, given its already high debt and other spending priorities.

**Letter from Mr. English to Worcester City Manager, Mr.
Hoover**



Sol F Hen
July

June 12, 2000

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Thomas R. Hoover, City Manager
City Hall Room-309
455 Main Street
Worcester MA 01608

It was accepted - no problem

Dear Mr. Hoover,

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with the recent PS - then back again

Thank you for your recent response regarding Atlantic League Baseball in the City of Worcester and your fax outlining Mr. Shaw's financial analysis of the Franklin Street site.

Please understand the urgency of this process. I responded to your request for a two-week delay of my decision in order to allow you and Mr. Shaw to convince me that the new Franklin Street site will be deliverable and commercially viable. Last October, I discussed the four sites analyzed with Mr. Shaw and Mr. DeSimone. I still remain perplexed and confused as to why this new Franklin Street site was proposed by the Development Office and does not have any information available to meet the Atlantic League site requirements.

Both your site analysis and financial analysis support my conclusion that the new Franklin Street site is not commercially viable, deliverable or affordable for my investors or the taxpayers of Worcester. The unknown cost of land acquisition (estimated at somewhere between \$2 and \$4 million), a \$2.5 million environmental clean-up cost and a parking garage pro-forma that only produces \$500,000 for debt service certainly supports Mr. Shaw's conclusion of a \$900,000 ballpark deficit for the Franklin Street site. My investors and certainly the taxpayers of Worcester should not proceed on a project with that level of financial risk.

Please allow me to explain the criteria and standards that I was held to by your Task Force and the Atlantic League as to why timing, commercial viability and affordability are so critical to this project and why I remain committed to the Prescott Street site. In my previous letter, I requested the same of you for the Franklin St site;

STADIUM LAYOUT:

I requested a layout from you for Franklin Street because the layout on Prescott Street has been completed and accepted by the Atlantic League.

250th Prescott St - Fulbright Ballpark + P. Gayer

Christopher J. English, President Team Touch 'Em All Markets 44 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA 02210

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SITE CONTROL:

I apologize for the short time frame I gave you to secure purchase options for the ten parcels on Franklin Street. However, Gateway Park LLC has fully assembled the entire Prescott Street site for the stadium and parking garage and has completed an assembly survey to remove all possible land encumbrances. They have expressed a willingness to sell the site for a ballpark and garage for the appraised value of the same amount of land at the Vocational School when it becomes available in the future. Thus, eliminating any cost to the city for land acquisition for the ballpark.

RELOCATION:

I requested relocation information from you because this can be very costly and time consuming given the magnitude of this project. Because of the number of businesses on Franklin Street that would have to be relocated and the fact that there is only one on Prescott Street that I have budgeted, this issue is critical to the project schedule.

DEMOLITION:

I requested demolition estimates because of the large number of structures that must be demolished on Franklin Street to prepare the site. This can be very costly. Prescott Street has only one structure that must be demolished. Our most recent estimate is substantially below the amount indicated in the project budget.

UTILITIES AND PUBLIC WAYS:

Given the information I read in the newspaper on the new location on Franklin Street, public streets bisect the site. I would assume that these streets would need to be abandoned and utilities relocated at a cost. There are no street abandonment's or utility relocations on the Prescott Street site, therefore there are no costs for this purpose at this site.

ENVIROMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

This is a very important issue for the success of any development project. The more you know the more certainty exists for success. Mr. Shaw has estimated a \$2.5 million cleanup cost for the Franklin Street site as shown in his analysis. Gateway Park LLC has completed a Phase I & II Environmental Assessment on the Prescott Street site and received a cost estimate of \$250,000 from a Licensed Site Professional for all cleanup costs associated with the parking garage and ballpark footprint. Environmental Insurance for the Prescott Street site has been secured by Gateway Park LLC, thus eliminating all environmental exposure for the city. This budget amount is below the \$300,000 allowed for in the Prescott Street Ballpark Cost Estimate. The \$2.5 million for cleanup at Franklin Street alone makes the Franklin Street site financially not feasible.

PARKING:

Parking revenues are a critical component to financing and supporting the project debt. Given the parameters of the State's Off-Street Parking Garage Grant program, Mr. Shaw's pro-forma for Franklin Street will not retire the required city match for the grant. Per your request, I have attached for your review the Parking Garage pro-forma for Prescott Street that provides a revenue stream to retire the city match as well as \$570,000

per year for stadium related debt. This parking revenue together with my commitment to sign a substantial lease and allow naming rights and a collegiate related lease will retire almost all of the project debt as shown in the attached financial plan. We acknowledge the state may want a dedicated revenue stream from off street parking garage revenue.

I continue to be confounded by the City's campaign to push this to a more expensive and complicated site. Let me restate as I did to the Task Force, TEAM LLC is prepared to sign one of the most aggressive leases in professional baseball with the city, allow all parking revenues to be dedicated to servicing the debt and secure a private naming rights deal dedicated to debt service. This private financial investment, worth over \$15 million, plus state and federal grants and the land disposition proposed by Gateway Park LLC will substantially minimize the city's financial risk at the Prescott Street site. In addition, the Atlantic League will post a \$1.5 million bond upfront to assist with cost recovery in the event there is a default by TEAM LLC.

For these reasons, I again request you to work with your Task Force and reconsider your decision to reject the Prescott Street Plan. Per your letter of October 12, 1999 (attached) granting TEAM LLC exclusive rights to Worcester for one year, let us continue to work together to bring Atlantic League Baseball to the city. I still believe that Worcester is a strong baseball market and would overwhelmingly support an Atlantic League Team. If over the next four months you produce a site, other than Franklin Street, that meets the minimum requirements outlined above, I would be open to a dialogue with you at that time.

I hope this clarifies my position on this issue. Congratulations on your All-America City designation and I wish you the best of luck with your future endeavors.

Sincerely,


Christopher J. English
President

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Statement from TEAM LLC

Statement from TEAM LLC

Today, I am disappointed to announce that we could not reach agreement with the City Manager on a site for locating an Atlantic League Professional Baseball Team in the City of Worcester. In light of this, we will be pursuing alternative sites for an Atlantic League Team within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. TEAM LLC has become convinced that the Prescott Street site is the only site that works for the Atlantic League and us.

For the past several months, TEAM LLC along with a team of consultants has conducted an exhaustive evaluation of potential sites that meet Atlantic League Facility Standards, timing requirements, and commercial viability for success to construct a professional ballpark and locate an Atlantic League Baseball Team in the City of Worcester. Following our instructions from the city, at the conclusion of our study we presented our findings and offered a preferred site on Prescott Street.

After carefully analyzing many factors, the Prescott Street site offered the best chance for success. We are confident that the area offers many amenities conducive to baseball, one willing seller, no job loss, adjacent city owned land, manageable environmental clean-up, one building to be demolished, and the most cost effective project budget as outlined in the attached material.

As we have indicated to both City Manager Hoover and Chief Development Officer Shaw, the Franklin Street site proposed by the Development Office cannot be delivered by the city to meet the strict league timing requirements and is not financially feasible from a revenue or cost perspective.

Locating a professional baseball team in a city is very expensive and complicated. Based on all of our professional analysis, with the proper site, the Worcester market is commercially prime for locating a Professional Ballpark. Unfortunately, the site selected by the city does not meet the League requirements or our investment guidelines.

We would like to thank the WBDC and their professional team of consultants who assisted with this effort, the Baseball Task Force for their time and energy, elected officials both city and state who offered support, and all of the citizens of Worcester who were so enthusiastic and deserving of a professional baseball team.

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