

# Brookings Friends of Baseball

PO Box 536, Brookings, SD 57006

April 1, 2020

Dear City Council Members,

For many years, Brookings Friends of Baseball has been committed to providing youth in the Brookings community with the opportunity to play organized baseball. We believe the game of baseball is a tremendous opportunity for youth to not only get physical exercise, but learn the value teamwork, respect, and practice. It is a wonderful game that can be played long into adulthood and we strive to develop the skills and love of the game in our young players. We are committed to continuing to provide organized baseball in the Brookings community long into the future.

Currently, our organization offers programs for youth ages 7 to 18. Our players play organized baseball within the city of Brookings and represent Brookings while playing in other cities for league games and tournaments. At most age levels our teams are affiliated with state or national organizations that provide the structure and rules that we must play by. Our 18 and under (18U) team and one of our 16U teams are affiliated with American Legion. A second 16U and our 14U, 13U, 14U/13U combined, 12U, 11U, 10U, and 9U teams are affiliated with South Dakota Class A Baseball. Our junior teams (7 and 8-year old players) are not affiliated with an outside governing body but follow the general principles of South Dakota Class A Baseball, albeit with much greater emphasis on skill development rather than competition. Each year we provide the opportunity for over 250 players from approximately 200 families to play the game of baseball. We do charge registration fees; however, we have made a concerted effort to keep those fees as low as possible for our families and provide scholarships for those families experiencing financial hardship.

Our excitement for the Bob Shelden Field renovation project is beyond measure. Brookings has a rich history of baseball and Bob Shelden Field has played a key role. The renovated field will build on that tradition and bring new opportunities for our youth to play in one of, if not the, nicest fields in the region. To make the field even better, Brookings Friends of Baseball would like to commit to providing funding for the addition of artificial turf to the infield of the renovated facility. Adding artificial turf will significantly enhance the utility and efficiency of the facility by minimizing the time and consumables necessary for field maintenance and providing for a more rapid recovery from rain events. Several of our teams play on artificial turf infields several times throughout the year and the communities that have them, rave about their benefits. We will be able to provide more opportunities for practices and games as well as more effectively host tournaments that bring numerous visitors to our community. The combination of the facility enhancements and the artificial turf infield will provide for a wonderful experience for players and fans alike.

It is with great excitement that I inform you that the Brookings Friends of Baseball Board of Directors voted unanimously to accept a proposal from First Bank and Trust to provide financing

for the addition of an artificial turf infield at Bob Shelden Field. We have secured a construction line of credit that will allow for us to cover the cost of the artificial turf and have an agreement in place to convert the construction line of credit to a term loan and/or pledge note at the conclusion of the construction period. Funds in the construction line of credit can be drawn upon as the expenses are incurred. Given that the 1-year duration of construction line of credit and the charging of interest do not begin until the first funds are drawn, we would prefer to not use the line until funds are required to pay contractors. However, we would be open to a discussion with the City of Brookings for alternate arrangements. Brookings Friends of Baseball will secure funding to cover the annual costs associated with the financing package using a combination of donations, sponsorships, and additional advertising revenue. Furthermore, the Friends of Baseball Board of Directors voted unanimously to commit to funding the replacement of the artificial turf at the conclusion of the expected 10 to 12-year lifespan of the product. Details of our arrangement with First Bank and Trust have been provided for your review.

In conclusion, Brookings Friends of Baseball, our Board of Directors, players and families are incredibly excited about what the Bob Shelden Field renovation will mean to baseball in Brookings and the community as a whole. We are excited to be collaborating with the City of Brookings on this project and look forward to continuing our strong relationship into the future. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding our application, please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kindest regards,

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