

"Bedford's Past Working"



"Towards the Future"

Bedford High School Alumni Association

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BEDFORD ALUMNI ASSOCIATION TO EXPLORE STADIUM ADDITIONS, OTHER PROJECTS

TEMPERANCE, MI — The Bedford Alumni Association has planned a meeting Dec. 8 to ask the community at large: How do you envision Bedford's future?

The association is seeking comment as it considers the third and final phase of construction at the Community Stadium – a facility that for 18 years has hosted football, track and other school sports as well as countless residents who meet there to socialize and exercise, including events that serve Bedford High School and Bedford Junior High PE classes, Elementary School's field day, Senior Relays, and Big Ball Game (Homecoming), Relay for Life, 4th of July Fireworks, The Toledo Reign, past little league football programs, various 5K runs, and candlelight vigils.

Association leaders want to make sure that those plans, which originally called for restrooms, still match the community's needs. A campaign that began in 1996 generated \$1 million in in-kind donations of material and labor and helped leverage a \$1 million loan that financed the stadium that opened in 1997 to its first football game in front of 7,000 fans.

"The Bedford Community Stadium project created a level of excitement and anticipation that was just remarkable. It truly displayed the "Can Do" spirit that the Bedford Township Community has shown time and time again." said Gene Stock, co-chairman of the stadium committee and now the association's vice president.

"Plans to complete the stadium must be reconsidered because they're no longer compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and some have suggested that updates should include a multi-purpose building and plaza," said Mickey Rudolph, the association's president.

The meeting, scheduled for 7 p.m. at the Bedford High School Media Center, begins the community conversation. "We want to know 'What do you need?' 'What do you want?' and 'How can we get to this goal?'" Rudolph said.

Building on the momentum from this summer's Bedford 50th anniversary celebration, the alumni association ultimately wants to expand its focus beyond the Community Stadium.

Rudolph and Stock met in November with members of the Bedford lacrosse and soccer clubs to discuss those clubs' "Campaign for a Brighter Bedford," an effort to get new lighting at the former football stadium at Douglas and Dean Roads. That smaller stadium, which was the district's football stadium before the larger Community Stadium opened in 1997, is known for its

exceptional playing surface. But its aging lights limit lacrosse teams to daytime games and threaten soccer teams as well. Estimates to replace the lights and wiring has topped \$100,000.

Other efforts by the Alumni Association may include collaborating with local activists trying to establish a memorial garden for Bedford students and young Bedford alumni. Alumni leadership wants to offer long-term support for the district's non-athletic programs as well, such as its academic, theater and arts endeavors and technology, engineering and robotics clubs. The association is in the process of updating its database of an estimated 20,000 alumni so that it's easier to plan future class reunions and other social events.

The association has established a new website at www.BedfordAlumni.com and can be reached at its new central email address, alumni@mybedford.us, or filling out the online form to update your alumni contact information.

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