

VIRGINIA BEACH

Beach agency OKs land deal for amateur sports venue

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A major league plan to build an indoor sports complex for amateur athletes took another step forward Tuesday when a city agency agreed to sell the land the facility needs.

The Virginia Beach Development Authority voted to sell 7 acres at Dam Neck and Landstown roads for \$875,000 to a group composed of current and former Major League Baseball players. The group, 7 Cities Development Co. LLC, also has an option to buy an additional 3 acres of adjacent land.

The deal needs City Council approval, which could happen this summer.

Plans show a venue where baseball players could train on a regulation-size infield, and batting and pitching tunnels. The proposal also calls for a sports therapy component to help amateurs in different sports improve their agility, and physical rehabilitation.

Councilwoman Rosemary Wilson, who sits on the authority board, said the complex is an extension of the athletic village concept at Princess Anne Commons, a development corridor along Princess Anne Road.

The proposal dovetails with the city's desire to be a "mecca for amateur sports," Wilson added. "This really complements all that we're doing. We're all pretty excited they've chosen Virginia Beach."

Tim Hummel, a retired major leaguer who played at Old Dominion University, said his group chose the Beach because "this is everybody's hometown." Hummel's partners include current MLB stars and locals B.J. and Justin Upton, Ryan Zimmerman and Michael Cuddyer.

Hummel added Tuesday that 7 Cities is confident the plans, which could cost more than \$10 million to build, will attract top talent from around the region.

Steve Herbert, Virginia Beach's chief development officer, said investment by 7 Cities may entice more companies to Princess Anne Commons.