

Ice Bumper Car Information Takeaway

as presented by West Orange resident John Kaletski

Presented to the West Orange Township Council, summer 2018

- Ice bumper cars are almost never used as a stand alone attraction. Their primary purpose is to increase revenue for established ice skating rinks. Most ice rinks provide them for public use only during open public skating sessions. The typical business model is to allow open skating on two thirds of the rink and ice bumper cars on one third of the rink.
- Ocean Ice Palace in Brick NJ , an established facility, offers ice bumper cars during public skating sessions only three times a week on:
 - Friday 2 hours
 - Saturday 1 hour and 45 minutes
 - Sunday 2 hours
 - For a total of only 5 hours and 45 minutes a week
- Clearly the demand for this ride is VERY LIMITED
- At O'Connor Park the demand will be EVEN LESS
- Ocean Ice Palace charges \$10.00 per ride for ten minutes.
- The Township must also charge a fee and cannot offer free rides to residents because it will be impossible to determine who is "currently" a resident.
- At Ocean Ice Palace drivers must be at least 4 feet tall and passengers are not permitted.
- The mayor wants to provide a winter activity for families. However the ice bumper cars can only be used by family members who are at least 4 feet tall
- At Ocean Ice Palace riders must sign a liability waiver and be oriented to the ride.
- Does the Township really need to operate a ride that has so much risk and requires users to sign a liability waiver!
- The street hockey rink at O'Connor park is not suitable as an ice rink. It is constructed of asphalt pavement, covered by a membrane and a painted coating suitable for street hockey. If flooded with water and frozen the membrane will crack due to the pliable nature of asphalt from freezing and thawing cycles and will be ruined. Currently the coating has cracks and the membrane has tears.
- Asphalt is an excellent conductor of heat. The rink at O'Connor park has a southern exposure. Thus it gets direct sunlight even in winter making it subject to numerous freezing and thawing cycles.
- A properly constructed outdoor ice rink is very complex and requires specialized engineering. The process requires the right site selection and tends to be very expensive.
- A building will be required to house the ice bumper cars, a workshop, the spare parts inventory that comes with the vehicles along with appropriate electrical chargers for the 24 volt batteries. The building must be heated because the ice surfacing machine, (ZAMBONI), carries water and cannot be allowed to freeze which would result in damage. Additionally such a building must meet all building codes, and be aesthetically pleasing and fit well into a park environment. Extensive site

work will have to be performed and an environmental study must be undertaken to ensure that no damage will be done to the delicate ecosystem in the park.

- Ice bumper cars on an outdoor rink can only be used at most 3 months during the winter. They probably will not be used on weekdays while people are working or are in school. And at night when the temperature drops it is simply too cold and raw to be outdoors. That leaves only 12 weekends or 24 days in a 3 month period when it may be possible to operate this ride. However because of weather conditions and freezing and thawing cycles the ice may not even be usable or safe.
- Does it make any sense to invest so much taxpayer money in a ride that will be so underutilized?
- The township should not be in the business of providing carnival rides!
- The Township SHOULD provide great, fun winter activities that cost almost nothing and can involve EVERYONE such as:
 - Ice skating at Degnan Park when the ice is safe.
 - Ice fishing and ice fishing lessons at Degnan Park when the ice is safe.
 - Cross country ski trails in various town parks.
 - Snow shoe hiking in various town parks.
 - Sleigh riding in conjunction with Essex County at the Francis Byrne golf course, (an awesome hill)!
 - Winter geocaching in our parks. This is a form of treasure hunting using your own cell as a gps to find hidden objects and “treasures”. This activity can also be integrated with winter walking, hiking, snow shoe hiking, cross country skiing and sleigh riding.
- The above types of activities offer something for everyone of all fitness levels and can be tailored to provide a mild to extreme workout.
- Ice bumper cars provide absolutely NO exercise or health benefits whatsoever!
- These machines are battery operated and are designed to be used on a professionally groomed ice skating or hockey rink. The ice must be smooth and constantly maintained by a Zamboni machine.
- If the ice surface is not smooth and perfectly level the small wheels of each ice bumper car will be stuck or even worse will slide to the lowest point of the ice rink.
- These machines are not designed to be used on a haphazardly frozen surface.
- These machines are used outdoors in Providence Rhode Island on a professionally designed ice rink. The ice surface is frozen to a level concrete pad and maintained by a professional ice manager. The surface is maintained with a zamboni machine.
- These machines are also at the Toledo Zoo and the same situation is required to use them.
- With the freezing and thawing cycles due to GLOBAL WARMING occurring the actual amount of time these machines will be in use will be limited.
- O'Connor park has very limited parking, no restrooms, no heated areas to warm up and no first aid facilities.
- O'Connor park is located at the top of Lorelei road which can be a dangerous place to drive during winter weather.

- Parking on the streets around O'Connor park is not an option during the winter months due to snow piled up on the roadsides. The roads are already too narrow after winter storms.
- A better option for ice bumper cars is the pond at degnan park. However it is impossible to groom this with a zamboni. The machine would fall through the ice.
- The best and probably the least expensive option would be for the township to rent ice time at the Cody arena. The ice bumper cars could then be used year round and the ice would be maintained professionally.
- The mayor made a remark during the June 12 council meeting that West Orange does not have good hills for sleigh riding. Actually it has lots of great hills such as the golf course on Pleasant Valley Way and Mount Pleasant school. However very few people go sleigh riding any more.
- People have less free time and during the winter they tend to go to professionally managed ski resorts to ski, snowboard, or go snow tubing. Additionally with the development of gigantic indoor water parks in the Poconos such as Camelback, Great Wolf Lodge, and Kalahari, There are many options for winter recreation literally 1 hour away.
- Freezing the street hockey rink at O'Connor park and buying some ice bumper cars is never going to work for the township simply because the competition 1 hour away in the Poconos has such awesome complete all season resorts.
- As crazy as it sounds it may be cheaper and a better option to work out a special deal with a mom or pop resort whereby west orange residents get a special deal during the winter to enjoy all the amenities they offer.
- Additional information O'Connor park ice bumper cars.
- The sales quote for 16 ice bumper cars from "IBC" is \$95,095.00 and includes shipping, spare parts, inflator and a stacker.
- 16 are required because each vehicle runs on a closed cell 55 amp 12 volt battery. Thus 8 bumper cars will be running while 8 are charging.
- The price of a Zamboni ice surfacing machine ranges from \$95,000.00 with no water system to \$140,000.00 with a water system that puts down a thin layer of water that freezes into ice.
- A heated building must be constructed to house the Zamboni to prevent the hydraulic system from freezing.
- The ice must be kept surfaced and smooth. This is a daily job. If the ice thaws it must be reconstructed by refreezing it and resurfacing it.
- Snow must be removed immediately otherwise hardpack will form and render the ice unusable.
- The street hockey rink at O'Connor park is not an ice rink. A properly designed ice rink will have to be constructed.
- Prior to any construction of a heated storage building and an outdoor ice rink an environmental study must be done. So many different animals frequent the park. Most particularly turtles are often in the area of the basketball courts and the street hockey rink.
- Additionally the effect that repeated freezing and thawing cycles of the outdoor ice rink will have on the plants and animals in the adjacent stream must be studied.
- Payback:

- The price of the ice bumper cars and a Zamboni machine is a minimum of \$200,000.00. And does not include the storage building, ice rink construction and employee costs to run and maintain the ride.
- Ocean Ice Palace in Brick NJ charges \$10.00 for a 10 minute ride only for people at least 4 feet tall.
- If the township charges \$10.00 it would take 20,000 rides just to cover the cost of the ice bumper cars and the Zamboni
- This is impossible. O'Connor park is not equipped for this level of business. Additionally the ride will only be in service at most 3 months and will most probably be used only on weekends, weather permitting.
- It would make more economic sense for the township to provide 20,000 free \$10.00 ride vouchers for interested residents to go to Ocean Ice Palace if they really want to ride ice bumper cars!
- Carnival rides in New Jersey require a permit from the NJ Department of Community Affairs. Ice bumper cars fall into this category. To receive a permit an application which details the ride is sent to DCA and analyzed by their engineers. If approved a permit is issued and the ride must be inspected when ever it is set up, repaired or modified. Detailed maintenance records must be kept. Insurance requirements are \$1,000,000 per occurrence.
- Before any ice bumper cars are placed in O'Connor park the following problems must be rectified;
 - The field house and rest rooms are always locked and are surrounded by a locked, tall, ugly, sinister looking chain link fence. Who are we trying to keep out?
 - 2 Saturday's ago my 4 year old son and I were riding our bikes in the area around the field house when he pointed out 8 large aluminum barrels behind the locked fence. Which I told him were empty beer kegs! Each keg holds 165, twelve ounce glasses. So 8 kegs hold 1,320 glasses! Who is drinking all this beer? I thought alcohol is prohibited in town parks.
 - I noticed people urinating in the woods because no restroom facilities were available.
 - Clearly we need to get our recreation priorities in order before any ice bumper cars are considered.