



## **Fort Dupont Ice Arena (FDIA) “New Rink” Overview**

### ***HIGHLIGHTS OF FDIA’S IMPACT ON CHILDREN OVER 26+ YEARS:***

- FDIA’s Kids On Ice® (KOI) programs have served over 20,000 children, most from Wards 7&8
- ~3,000 kids on the ice each year ... Free of Charge!
- 30 DC Public/Charter school students participate in FDIA’s free “Schools Skate for Fitness”
- DPR holds Summer Camps and FUN DAYS at the rink
- FDIA Computer Lab and meeting room available to the community
- “StudyBuddy” program brings students-in-need and older *mentor* students together 1-on-1
- 56% of our skaters are girls
- 62% of our skaters are African American
- We have waiting lists for KOI classes because available ice time cannot meet the demand.
- No one is denied participation because of their ability to pay.

### ***RINK PROJECT TIMELINE:***

#### **June 2013**

After years of effort by FDIA supporters, the District appropriates \$15M for construction of new, 2-rink Fort Dupont Ice Arena. FDIA representatives meet with District officials to discuss how to proceed. The District asked FDIA to raise the “last” \$5M. “Last” was significant since, as a small non-profit, FDIA capital campaign wouldn’t begin until the District began construction. FDIA needed potential donors to see the rink was under construction for our fundraising to succeed, and FDIA funds were to be used to complete interior requirements: furniture, equipment, etc.

#### **2014 – 2018**

While FDIA representatives with rink construction and operations expertise were originally at the table with the District, FDIA was kept “out of the loop,” notwithstanding our expertise and financial participation. We had no input into the scope and required experience of vendors. FDIA was excluded from the working group overseeing the project and relegated to receiving irregular updates. While we did comment on any information that was shared as the design process continued, our concerns and recommendations were largely ignored.

**Spring 2014:** Kramer Consulting awarded project manager contract; Kramer brings in O’Connor Construction Management and later Sigal as General Contractor. Sigal is fired within a year. Throughout

the next 4 years, the District hired and fired project managers, general contractors and consultants and had architects design and re-design the facility. Those vendors included Quinn Evans/Sink Combs, Kramer consulting, Sigal Construction, Brailsford & Dunlavey, etc. We don't know how many firms were hired, fired or replaced during this process or what deliverables or costs were involved.

As cost estimates continued to soar, FDIA proposed a “valued engineering” approach to construction, but that approach was rejected and the budget continued to grow.

**June 2017:** The District appropriates an additional \$10,000,000; total budget now \$25,000,000. FDIA is “uninvited” to project status meetings.

FDIA's concerns grew as the cost of the project increased. Elements that FDIA flagged as important (e.g. locker rooms, bleachers) were squeezed for space to accommodate aesthetic design elements that FDIA said it didn't need, but that District contractors insisted were necessary. For example, the Colorado design consultants used their previous work on NHL practice facilities as “comparables” to FDIA's needs. The cost per square foot exploded, and the extended delays increased the cost of needed materials.

This “over design” of a recreational ice rink has continued to this day. We need less aesthetically pleasing wood slotted ceilings and windows in the locker rooms and more bleachers.

## 2018

Budget has now topped \$30,000,000 without any FDIA input or consultation.

**March 2018:** FDIA launches its Capital Campaign, retaining The Sheridan Group, a full-service capital campaign consulting firm, experienced in campaigns for nonprofit organizations.

## 2019

**Jan. 2019:** Without notice or consultation, the District proposes to “re-program” rink funds for other uses, without a typical commitment to reinstate and suggests moving the rink. FDIA supporters engage and encourage Council to reject re-programming the rink's funds.

**Feb. 2019:** Council rejects re-programming of rink's funds. The District and FDIA sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) confirming terms on how to proceed to build the new 2-rink arena. *Key terms of the MOU include:*

“The District will review the current design plan for the Ice Arena Project to identify opportunities to reduce the cost of the Project. The District will actively engage FFD in the design review process and seek FFD's input on how to modify the Project design to reduce the estimated Project costs and meet the needs of current and future uses and users.”

FDIA had to raise funds to specific amount to “trigger” construction. District stated that if trigger is met by 2/1/20, shovel in the ground in October 2020.

**June 2019:** Council reviews the MOU and, by statute, reduces FDIA's construction “trigger” to \$1.3M.

## 2020–2021

**March 2020:** FDIA notifies the District it has met the “construction trigger” of \$1,300,000. Meetings with DGS and FDIA are convened, but no substantive engagement, no budget information for FDIA.

**Summer 2020:** DGS will not release budget information to FDIA. Chairman Mendelson intervenes; DGS agrees to release full data... but doesn't.

Bi-monthly conference calls continue the previous pattern of ignoring FDIA input and requests for budget and substantive data on the project. The “over design” continues.

**Summer 2021:** FDIA elects Murry Gunty as new Board Chair, bringing experience in building, owning and operating over 28 recreational ice rinks; Murry becomes principal point of contact with DGS.

Meetings with DGS are not focused effort “to reduce the cost of the Project,” nor does DGS “seek FFD's input.” FDIA proposals to reduce costs are ignored and, in fact, “aesthetics” (e.g., slotted wood ceilings instead of ceiling tiles, interior “grass patch,” etc.) rather than *needs* (e.g., bleachers) or *reducing costs* drive revised design. DGS continues to refuse to release full budget to FDIA, and cost of project soars.

## 2022

**February 2022:** DGS informs FDIA budget is now \$37,500,000, with \$6,000,000 unfunded; start of construction period uncertain and duration of construction nearly doubled.

FDIA refuses to support the bloated budget and uncertain future of new rink, advising in letter to Mayor Bowser that the District has breached the 2019 MOU and that FDIA will not agree to District demolishing current rink next month because we don't believe they intend to replace the rink.

### Questions for the District:

- 1) Why was Fort Dupont, a financial partner in the project and with relevant expertise and experience, excluded from the working group process? How did FDIA's role in the working group and access to information compare to the role of other nonprofits in public-private partnerships with the District?
- 2) How many project contractors, consultants and vendors have been hired? What were their assignments, tasks and deliverables? How much was each paid? Were they terminated prior to fulfilling their assignments and tasks?
- 3) How much of the budget actually goes back to the District?
- 4) How did a \$15M project explode in costs to over \$36M while shrinking to half the original scope?