

\$24 million Approved for O's Spring Training Facility

Written by The Staff

Thursday, 28 September 2006 01:28



Broward County commissioners voted 8-1 very early Weds. morning to approve \$24 million in funding over 20 years for the redevelopment of the Baltimore Orioles Spring Training facility. The approval of the funds means the Orioles will not be relocating their Spring Training location.

The Orioles had asked that a Hotel Tax in Broward Co. be redirected at \$1 million a year for 30 years. Those funds have been used to replenish sand along Broward's beachfront.

Total cost of the project is estimated at \$38 million and would involve four athletic fields, four baseball diamonds and the main stadium.

Lockhart Stadium would be torn down, which is a concern as high school games are held there. The Orioles have said that they are committed to allowing schools to use the new main stadium and fields for games.

There are concerns about the funding, however. As reported:

Several county commissioners balked at not having adequate information about the stadium deal and worried about having enough money for future county projects such as beach renourishment, a hotel at the convention center and a convention center expansion. "I want to protect that surplus money by prioritizing," Commissioner Ilene Lieberman said.

Their eventual agreement came with the caveat that if surpluses run dry for beach renourishment and the convention center, the county will withhold its annual \$800,000, and the team would reduce the value of its \$1.2 million marketing and promotion package by that amount.

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Broward's tourism bureau would receive one 30-second advertisement for every game aired on the Orioles cable network, spots on game radio broadcasts and a left-field placard at Oriole Park at Camden Yards in Baltimore.

Fort Lauderdale also would finance the stadium by issuing tax-exempt bonds for construction, which would be repaid over 30 years with the \$350,000 facility-use fee the Orioles pay annually. The team would lease the facility from the city.

Final agreements still must be drawn up and approved by both the city and county.

([The Miami Herald](#))