

# We Got the Lights – Now What?

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For a period of about five years there were several half-hearted movements in Ottawa to build a lighted baseball field here. Several organizations with that intended purpose were formed – or at least were attempted to be formed – but got nowhere until about two years ago when the Ottawa Community Boosters Club was organized. This club was successful in raising \$7,000 to erect the lights at Memorial park.

During the fund-raising campaign the issue became a hot potato in some places. There were a few people who were outright opposed to the lights and more who were overwhelmingly in favor of them.

But the greatest number, probably, were those who felt, "If they want them, let them have them. We'll go along – to a limited degree." Those who don't were tagged as not being civic-minded.

We will have to admit that we were as much in favor of having a lighted ball park for Ottawa as well as the next guy, but will also have to admit to being a little skeptical as where the money was coming from to operate it

One eager enthusiast said the town would pay for the electricity once the lights were up. Our answer to that was, "That I'll have to see!"

**WELL, WE GOT** the lights, and a wonderful set they are. Now what are we going to do with them?

The Boosters club promised that anyone who wanted to use the lights for any purpose whatever could do so. The lights were erected in such a manner that they could be used for a great many different affairs.

The only hitch was that the users would have to pay for the electricity – about \$15 an hour.

Last year two teams – the men's baseball team and the American Legion Junior team – used the lights regularly. There may have been a couple of softball games under the lights, but nothing else. No one could afford them.

This year the Junior Legion is going to use them again. They are sponsored by one of the town's more flushed organizations. What about the men's baseball team? They're broke!

**THAT TEAM** spent all its money last year paying for use of the lights. The large crowds which were anticipated to come to see the boys under the lights did not materialize. Some nights enough was collected by passing the hat to foot the electricity bill, but usually the collection fell a little short.

Every game took several new balls and maybe a bat or two, so all that was left at the end of the season were a couple of well-worn bats and a few well used balls and uniforms – and no money.

It takes money, and lots of it, to run a baseball team. Where it's going to come from is a good question, but if it doesn't come there will be no baseball team and our \$7,000 lights will be an expensive luxury to be used one night a week by the Junior Legion team which could play just as well on Sunday afternoon.

The men's baseball team is entered in the West Central league, and its first home game is scheduled under the lights on Tuesday night, June 4. The team has one game scheduled away from home before that and can possibly get by on the equipment it now owns, but it will have to have funds for its home opener.

**A GOOD CROWD** which would open its purse when the hat is passed would help immensely. But we can't depend on that. That fact was demonstrated last year when the lights were a novelty and would naturally attract more of a crowd if ever there was to be one.

If the team is to remain in the league it must play its home games at night because the schedule is set up and there are no Sunday afternoons open for them to play. If they don't remain in the league, who are they to play?

Maybe they could pick up a game here and there, but what easier way is there to break up a team and lose interest in it when you don't know when and if they are to play.

If it were known before the league schedule was drawn up that the team wanted to play in the afternoons it could have been arranged that way, but it is too late now.

However, we got the lights and who wants to play in the afternoon when they can play at time.

**IT'S TIME** for action now. And the action is up to those who were so enthusiastic a year and two years ago. The Booster's Club should be reorganized and it should help pay for the use of the lights they wanted so badly.

New officers should be elected and the organization kept moving. The old officers did a splendid job in raising funds to erect the lights, and we can't blame them if they feel they have done their share.

But there are other members of the group. Let them take the lead and aided by the old officers, figure out some way of helping the local baseball team.

Let's get together and prove we're not stuck with a big bright, white elephant.