

Tennis stadium concerts on hold

Delray ends deal with promoter

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Don't expect concerts to headline the Delray Beach Tennis Center any time soon.

The Delray Beach City Commission has decided to end the agreement, made in 2003, that the city had with World Wide Entertainment Inc., City Manager David Harden said. The company, which promoted such groups as the Bee Gees, was supposed to book five concerts a year at the tennis center for three years. But it only provided the tennis stadium with one concert, Christian singer Michael W. Smith, along with Christian artists MercyMe and the David Crowder Band on July 22.

"They had a contract and made a commitment and fell short, so we're moving in a different direction," Mayor Jeff Perlman said. "We're disappointed, because they have an outstanding reputation. They are big-time promoters."

The city did not lose money on the agreement, Harden said.

Perlman said the city doesn't plan to book more concerts at the tennis stadium at the moment, but he's not ruling it out in the future.

"But I'm open to looking, or open for people coming forward to us. We're doing a lot of events in season and it's hard to do things in August or September with hurricane season," he said.

"We've had a couple different folks express interest and will explore it further."

Brahm Dubin, president of JCD Sports Group, which manages the tennis center on East Atlantic Avenue, said he's disappointed that there won't be concerts in the stadium's near future.

World Wide Entertainment was not available for comment.

Representatives with the entertainment promoters talked with Dubin about the difficulty of booking other groups, Harden said.

"I'm disappointed, but I've faced reality that there are many venues in the area that are more suited to hold concerts. World Wide meant well, but they had difficulty bringing acts to our tennis stadium," Dubin said.

City officials were hoping concerts held in the stadium would generate more activity downtown, Harden said.

"Obviously, we were hoping we'd have five concerts and still believe sooner or later we'll be able to sell the naming rights [to the tennis center]. The more use it has, the more marketable the naming rights are," Harden said. "People come to an event in the stadium and bring economic activity downtown. They go out to dinner before a concert. We find events bring people."

The venue is ideal for community and sports events, Dubin said.

"It's wonderful for sports, and a world-class tennis stadium, but not a world-class concert venue," he said.

Perlman remains optimistic. "We believe concerts can be successful there. If it doesn't happen, it's still a successful venue. Tennis is a big boon. Concerts would be a bonus," he said.