

NBA NEWS

NBA MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

BRIAN McINTYRE SVP, Basketball Communications | MIKE BASS SVP, Marketing Communications

NBA COMMISSIONER DAVID STERN STATEMENT ON TODAY'S SETTLEMENT BETWEEN THE SONICS AND CITY OF SEATTLE

NEW YORK, July 2, 2008 – NBA Commissioner David Stern has issued the following statement:

“We are pleased that the Sonics and the City of Seattle have settled their litigation. While the decision has been made to relocate the Sonics to Oklahoma City, the NBA continues to regard Seattle as a first-class NBA city that is capable of serving as home for another NBA team. In order for this to occur, a state-of-the-art NBA arena must be funded and constructed in the Seattle area, a subject that has been extensively debated -- but not ultimately acted upon -- by local political and business leaders over the past four years. We are pleased that the City remains committed to addressing this fundamental requirement for the return of NBA basketball to Seattle and we hope that other elected officials critical to a solution will support the City’s efforts.

“We understand that City, County, and State officials are currently discussing a plan to substantially re-build KeyArena for the sum of \$300 million. If this funding were authorized, we believe KeyArena could properly be renovated into a facility that meets NBA standards relating to revenue generation, fan amenities, team facilities, and the like. Assuming the funding can be committed, the league is willing to work with the City on the design and construction of the re-build to facilitate this result. Under these circumstances, if an opportunity arose in the future for an NBA team to be located in Seattle, we would support that team playing its home games in a re-built KeyArena, if it wished. However, given the lead times associated with any franchise acquisition or relocation and with a construction project as complex as a KeyArena renovation, authorization of the public funding needs to occur by the end of 2009 in order for there to be any chance for the NBA to return to Seattle within the next five years.

“We are pleased that Steve Ballmer has expressed the continuing willingness of his group, Seattle Center Investors, managed by Seattle developer Matt Griffin, to be a part of the solution for returning NBA basketball to Seattle. The NBA will keep SCI and the City informed if opportunities arise in the next five years for franchise sale, relocation and/or expansion. Under the circumstances outlined above, the NBA would be happy to return to the City of Seattle.”

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