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Crandon Park's \$50 Million Renovation Referendum Approved By Miami-Dade Voters (PHOTOS)



By Christiana Lilly

According to preliminary voting results, 72.59 percent of Miami-Dade voters are in favor of \$50 million renovations to tennis facilities at Key Biscayne's Crandon Park for the annual Sony Open.

A ballot question asked for two-thirds approval by the public to allow tourney organizers IMG to seek approval to expand the tennis park and extend the tournament's contract for another 30 years — with two optional 10-year extensions.

A public vote was required under Miami-Dade County's "Save Our Parks" amendment, which protects public lands.

IMG said the \$50 million facelift would be funded solely by private funds and event proceeds, though that would likely happen through a revenue-backed county bonds issue. The plan drew strong opposition from Bruce Matheson, whose family donated the land in 1940, and who sits on a special committee that must approve all changes in the park.

In an op-ed the Miami Herald, Matheson blasted the referendum, claiming the "sweetheart" deal would lead to lost revenues and IMG's plans did not meet the restrictions of the Crandon Park Master Plan.

About 20,000 absentee ballots still needed to be counted Wednesday morning; however, the referendum was tracking with majority support.

The two-week Sony Open, which brings the biggest names in tennis to Key Biscayne, draws more than 300,000 spectators and generates \$386 million every year, IMG said.

According to a study, 20 percent of spectators come from outside the United States to watch, and some 15,000 nights are booked in local hotel rooms because of the Sony.

IMG's plans include expanding Stadium Court, three new grandstands, covered pavilions, a grass lawn, lake cottage for media interviews, and multi-story addition to house dining and bar facilities, a pro shop, and offices, among other amenities.

See renderings below.

PHOTO GALLERIES

Renderings of the new Crandon Park