



Sports Complex Task Force Meeting September 17, 2024

- Introductions were done.
- Michael Cowin reviewed high level information pertaining to this Task Force. He went over the City Council directive for the Sports Complex Task Force, potential locations, funding source, and partners.
- Brian Connolly reviewed some highlights pertaining to the study Victus did.
 - Top 4 factors organizers decide where to book tournaments:
 - Quality of Sports Venues
 - Proximity and access
 - Hotel and amenities
 - Reputation and brand
 - He reviewed the local facility and tournament analysis across all different sports.
 - He reviewed how Greenville is currently positioned to attract tournaments:
 - No: Sports Tourism Venues
 - Yes: Proximity and access, lodging and attractions, reputation and brand
 - He reviewed the SWOT analysis, the cost of facility opportunity, and the opportunity for Greenville to host 40 weekend events throughout the year.
- Broke into small groups to discuss potential partnerships. Potential partnership ideas included:
 - Group 1 – Partnership with ECU and North Rec Complex. The location has opportunity for expansion with 400+ acres. This would benefit tournament directors and residents.
 - Group 2 – ECU, ECU Health, Various Banks, Grady-White and General Assembly.
 - Group 3 – Agreed with previous groups; North Rec partnership and same financial partners.
 - Group 4 – County, ECU – North Rec location due to possible expansion and other sports fields nearby. Potential development of a tax district as well as naming right opportunities.
- Brian Connolly discussed the economic impact with at least 12/12 set-up; Examples of facilities are include in the presentation, along with the respective economic impact and ROI.
 - East Ridge Sports Complex – Discussed the complex and the TIF special tax which helped with economic growth in the area as well as new businesses since 2011.
 - Panama City Beach – held 52 tournaments in 2022. In first three years, the complex generated \$170M in cumulative net new economic impact.
 - Question – Andrew Schmidt asked about parking fees. Brian Connolly stated fees have rapidly increased with some fees being as high as \$20-25.
 - Question – Grege Steele asked about cost of the complex shown. Brian Connolly will provide those by email.
- Michael Cowin asked the group if anyone would be against North Rec Complex location. No one objected and agreed this is the best location based on the conversation.
- Kevin Faison asked Ce’Nedra Dillard about the average contract terms for tournament directors. Ce’Nedra Dillard stated that it typically starts with a one-year contract to then secure the event

long-term. Current bidding for some groups is as far out as 2033. Andrew Schmidt stated multi-year contracts would be more desirable for the community along with tournament directors.

- Trent McGee asked if there is a regional threat to what we are currently discussing since Jacksonville and Fayetteville are both looking at complexes. Andrew Schmidt explained that organizers look at the community when booking a tournament and we have more to offer than those other cities.
- Norma Warren asked who would manage the complex.
 - A possible partnership of various local organizations was discussed, and it was noted that the topic would be discussed further in a future task force meeting.
 - Michael Cowin explained the methodical process of the task force including the following: diving into economic impact, hotel tax, retail, location sites, City vs. independent contractor, funding, etc.
- Les Robinson explained that we have a great community here with our local sports championship teams and currently our residents and teams are having to travel long distances for sports tournaments. He also emphasized that a sports complex would be beneficial to local residents.
- Hank Hinton asked how Greenville would stay competitive against other regional cities like Wilson and Rocky Mount. Andrew Schmidt said that the facility quality will make the difference.
- JJ McLamb explained that the group needs to look how we communicate locally to ensure local groups understand how a sports complex will impact their operations.
- Les mentioned the Beast of the East tournament had to limit teams due to the number of fields available.
- Kevin Faison asked if there are any other cities that have the issue with 3-4 same complex with an hour drive? Brian Connolly explained there are and one example is the Publix Complex in FL. He also added that during their interviews, organizers expressed their want to come to Greenville and don't feel the region is saturated with sports complexes