

From: Kim Roney <kimroney@avlcouncil.com>
Sent: 3/3/2022 10:20:08 AM
To: blackwoodlea@gmail.com
Cc:
Subject: Re: Do Racial Equity! Support a Track at Memorial Stadium!

Lea,

Thank you for your input on the East End/Valley Street advocacy to secure a track at Memorial Stadium. I appreciate the leadership of my colleagues on this matter. We have discussed this during checkins and I anticipate there will be more information available for the public soon.

With Gratitude,
Kim

On Thu, Feb 10, 2022 at 7:49 PM 'Lea Blackwood' via councilgroup <AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov> wrote:

: Asheville City Council,

Dear City Council and City Manager Campbell,

I want to ask you to help our City make good on our promises to East End/Valley Street neighbors and to make good on our commitment to racial equity by setting aside American Rescue Plan funds to build a track at Memorial Stadium.

For decades, neighbors who have faced racism in many ways for decades in our City including the devastation of urban renewal. More than 10 years ago, these neighbors asked for a track to be built at Memorial Stadium. It was dreamed as a place where neighbors could support their health together. We know walking, jogging, and running help to improve heart health, lower the risks of chronic diseases, support healthy blood sugars, lower blood pressure and reduce stress among many more health benefits. We also know that health disparities due to systemic racism in all areas of life negatively impact the lives of so many black Ashevilleians.

As we talk of reparations and racial equity, one thing the City could do to build trust and do racial equity is to keep its promises to the Black community regarding the track at Memorial Stadium.

I know personally what access to a public place to exercise can mean. I lived in a house on a busy road where you had to drive to get anywhere to walk or play. With two small children, it was hard to find time to get in the car and get to a park so that we could move and get fresh air. Once we moved to a neighborhood where we could take a walk, it improved our quality of life immensely.

I join my voice with the chorus of East End/Valley Street neighbors and call for the City to improve Memorial Stadium in ways that support neighborhood use and to set aside ARPA funds for the following purpose:

- *Build a 6 lane track around the entire field for neighbors to use for regular exercise
- *Reduce the field by 6 yards (this still being FIFA compliant)
- *Remove bleachers from the far side and only have bleachers on the side closest to McCormick Field
- *Create a parking plan for Memorial Stadium

Thank you for hearing the concerns of the East End/Valley Street neighbors and for following through on your promises to our African American community. I ask that you commit to racial equity in all of your decisions. And finally, thank you for your service to our community.

Lea Blackwood
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