

From: Patrick O'Cain <procain@gmail.com>
Sent: 3/6/2022 11:55:53 AM
To: Christo Bubenik <cbubenik@ashevillenc.gov>
Cc: Allison Dains <adains@ashevillenc.gov>, AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov, Christy Bass <cbass@ashevillenc.gov>, D. Tyrell McGirt <dmcgirt@ashevillenc.gov>
Subject: Re: Memorial Stadium Improvements -- what is going on?!

Apologies for further cluttering already cluttered inboxes with this exchange, but I must push back a bit so all are aware.

First, I am a resident in the Oakhurst neighborhood and to say that our neighborhood association has been "heavily involved" in the Memorial Stadium project is, quite frankly, wrong. Yes, we were very vocal and involved with the Oakhurst park, which the city has done a magnificent job with. However, we have not been involved with the planning for the stadium.

I am in the park daily and am well aware of all the different clubs that use the stadium. The issue with the soccer club is their requirement to make the playing field a certain size so that they can have international play. This makes the construction of the track impossible. Additionally, I am not aware of any of those other clubs shutting down the park and charging admission for entry. It is, after all, a public park. The UNCA facility is much better suited to their needs.

Lastly, I have shared the recent citizen times article with the neighborhood association and we have been invited to to East End meeting for further discussion about park design/plans and their impacts both on our neighborhoods and for the community as a whole. You can expect to hear more from *both* Oakhurst and East End neighborhood associations.

Looking forward to continuing the conversation and my apologies for all the typos in the last email -- it was composed from my phone.

Patrick O'Cain

On Fri, Mar 4, 2022 at 15:00 Christo Bubenik <cbubenik@ashevillenc.gov> wrote:

Patrick,

Thanks for reaching out about the work taking place at Memorial Stadium and the two adjacent neighborhood parks, Mountainside and Oakhurst. I invite you to check out the [project page](#) on our website for the background on this project and what is happening now.

As it approaches its centennial anniversary, Memorial Stadium is experiencing major upgrades including safety enhancements, the replacement of artificial turf, improved drainage, new stormwater infrastructure, installation of sidewalks along field ends, and ramp access to bleachers in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Known as one of the best atmospheres available in a publicly-owned sports venue, the improvements mean the stadium stays true to its long-standing intended use to accommodate multiple sports and provide equitable athletic access for all Ashevilleians.

In addition to Asheville City Soccer Club, well-established regular user groups include East End and Oakhurst neighborhood associations, Special Olympics Buncombe County, Asheville Ultimate, Asheville Youth Football and Cheerleading, four soccer leagues including ABYSA and HFC Latino, flag football teams, four

lacrosse leagues, and area schools, among others. Asheville Parks & Recreation has placed a focus on enhancing a flexible space that can meet multiple needs of the community throughout this bond-funded project.

Since public engagement began around these enhancements, residents of the East End/Valley Street and Oakhurst neighborhoods have been heavily involved. Understanding the vision and concerns of those who live closest to the park helps the City of Asheville understand the direction of the next phase of improvements. That is why Asheville Parks & Recreation has proactively been working with community members who live in the neighborhoods around Memorial Stadium first before having a public discussion with the community at large.

Currently, there are multiple visions for a walking track at Memorial Stadium and Mountainside Park – greenway-style trail, natural surface, landscaped nature walk, and competition-style athletics track are just a few. Since a walking feature that can be enjoyed by neighbors and park visitors has always been a part of the conversation, many different renderings and options have emerged. As recreation professionals, we will continue to listen to the voices of those most impacted by this project to deliver the highest-quality and most enjoyable product possible within the budget provided.

If you still have questions or comments about the continuing work at Memorial Stadium and Mountainside Park, please feel free to reach out again.

Have a great weekend,

Christo Bubenik, CPRP (He/Him)

Program and Operations Manager - Communications | City of Asheville | Parks & Recreation
828-552-1019 | www.ashevillenc.gov/parks | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#)



On Fri, Mar 4, 2022 at 9:49 AM Christy Bass <cbass@ashevillenc.gov> wrote:

FYI -

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Patrick O'Cain** <procain@gmail.com>

Date: Fri, Mar 4, 2022 at 8:10 AM

Subject: Memorial Stadium Improvements -- what is going on?!

To: adains@ashevillenc.gov <adains@ashevillenc.gov>, cbass@ashevillenc.gov <cbass@ashevillenc.gov>, AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov <AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov>

Hello,

Â

I have been following the ongoing developments at Memorial Park and am quite shocked to learn that the special interests of the soccer club are being prioritized over the citizenry of Asheville. How can the soccer club (a private entity) lay claim to and shape decisions surrounding this park that is *not theirs*? And why is it such that the soccer club cannot continue the existing fields at UNCA, which are much better suited for their "needs"?

Â

The requirement that the field be wide enough to qualify for "international play" is quite frankly absurd. International play, really? In Asheville? What is this about, the hubris of the fledgling soccer club?

Â

Yes, there indeed do exist an extensive trail network up the mountain. However, those trails are not accessible by many due to the topographical challenges and poor quality of the trail surface. A trail isn't the same as a track. The ability of Asheville citizens to run, walk, and otherwise socialize while on a track should not be usurped by the self-interested few of the soccer club. I encourage you to reflect upon the *actual* usage of the park outside of the select few evenings the soccer club suggests they have rights to it.

Â

I know the East End neighborhood association has been involved in this effort, and you can and should expect others to follow suit. I hope we can get back on the right track here.

Â

Concerned citizen,

Â

Patrick O'Cain

--

Christy Bass, MPA, SHRM-CP
Focus Area Manager
City of Asheville | Parks & RecreationÂ