

Why Sell Off Bill Evans Baseball Field and Half of Badgett Stadium Practice Field For More Apartments?

Update 4/21/2025

At the 4/21/2025 Council meeting, **despite a number of residents' having urged for Council to reconsider the motion** (made at the 4/7/2025 Council meeting) to spend an additional \$825,000 **to facilitate the sale** of the field, **none of the four councilpersons requested that the reconsideration item even be added to the agenda for discussion - a big disappointment for Ms. McKenzie's Ward 1 constituents.** Click here to view the missed opportunity.

Update - 4/18/2025

I believe we may have another opportunity to save Bill Evans Field - Council could vote to reconsider (and reverse) a decision made at the 4/7/2025 Council Meeting! Please go to the next page to read my 2/11/2025 posting that gives a history re the loss of this important green space. At the conclusion of the 4/7/2025 Executive Session ([Click here to view](#)), **Council re-convened in Public Session to authorize \$825,000+ of additional expense to make the sale acceptable to the buyer.** The \$825,000 is to reimburse the FAA for the cost of moving a tower on the property that I believe is used to detect a potentially deadly atmospheric condition called "wind shear". The "+" is the cost of buying the land to which the tower will be relocated. **Bill Evans field is located in Councilwoman/Mayor-Pro-Tem Mckenzie's Ward 1**, and the apartments proposed to be built there would add several hundred more constituents. As I recall, Councilman Gay suggested relocating the field near Phillips Park. I have heard that the cost of "building" a new baseball field of the same quality (e.g., highly level) is much more than one would think.

One counter argument to reneging on the sale is that it is already a "done deal" because BIDA committed to do what was necessary to facilitate the transfer. This is despite the fact that I have heard that the sales price was already a bargain because **it was not based on its most valuable (future) use of the land.** I am not a lawyer, but from what I have seen in my 16 years on Council, the additional cost (\$825,000+) needed to make this deal palatable to the buyer, that could be saved by the City/BIDA reneging on the sale, could go quite a way toward covering the penalty cost for breaking any contract. I don't know whether there may be more undisclosed future costs (eg., moving cell phone towers) that are still to come. If that were the case, it would make reneging even less costly (on a net basis).

In addition to the comments on these two pages, there are other arguments for backing out of this property sale. For example, the City is required to replace this "banked" green space in some other location. There may be a cost to acquire that space. As I believe was mentioned at Council meeting, the City already has a need to allocate green space due to several other removals for construction.

Now is an opportunity for Ms. McKenzie to champion her **current** constituents!

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2/11/2025

Bill Evans Baseball Field has been part of College Park Recreation assets since well before my first term on City Council began (2008). Prior to the **New Council** (2024) there has never been a plan to put it to non-recreational use. It has been used by various groups for baseball (Clark Atlanta, Marquis Grissom, College Park Recreation). In addition for the last several years it also has been used by College Park Recreation for Day Camp, Kickball, and football practice (up to 4 teams at once).

The Badgett Stadium Practice Field (adjacent to, and west of, the main football field) has been used for practice by as many as 5 separate teams simultaneously, saving maintenance costs on the main field (only two teams of the tiniest ball players have played simultaneously on the main field). Thus parents with multiple children in the program could take them up to Badgett Stadium and walk/jog on the track while their children participated in one or more of the 11 teams practicing nearby - a healthy family outing.

In 2024, Tackle Football was eliminated from Badgett Field. The existing Flag Football program is being expanded to replace Tackle Football (I believe a wise move considering increasing medical evidence of brain injury with tackle football). A side benefit of Flag Football is that it significantly reduces the the cost of equipping a player, making it more available to families of modest means. Flag football will expand the opportunity for family participation, an important consideration since it is located next to the College Park Housing Authority.

Unfortunately, in 2024 the **New Council** transferred ownership of Bill Evans Field, and approximately half of the Badgett Stadium Practice Field, to College Park BIDA (Business Industrial Development Authority) **FOR SALE**. From what I have heard, BIDA is intending to sell it to a developer for an apartment complex - thus reducing recreational capacity (while adding users), right next to the group or residents who could benefit from it the most. In addition, it is questionable whether it is medically sound to locate residences near/around the cell towers on the property. Moving the Cell Towers, along with the connected underground fiber optic cables could be costly - and where to move them while providing adequate cell service(?) - the flight path for Airport arrival runway 8L is 4 blocks away. Planes landing to the east (when the wind is from the east) are very close to the ground, flying over Main Street at about 200 feet (near SunTrust). Finally, parking for the apartments is likely to overflow outside the complex. This will further stress downtown & Conley Recreation Center parking.

This land should never have been transferred to BIDA. Its sale should be aborted (even at some cost) and it should be transferred back to the City to remain as recreational green space.