

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

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.