



Elevate Advisory Council

Wednesday, September 27, 2023

This document contains a brief overview of the Elevate Advisory Council meeting. For more information regarding individual projects please visit www.elevatetuscaloosa.com.

Welcome

Mayor Walt Maddox welcomed the Elevate Advisory Council to the meeting. The Mayor's presentation consisted of a slide deck that provided an update on each Elevate Tuscaloosa project. At the conclusion of the presentation, Mayor Maddox opened the floor for questions, which are included below.

Question #1

Does the city know the total amount of external grants, private support that are leveraged within the city? For example, it is important for the community to know that a family donated land worth \$2.9 million for the Northern Riverwalk. When the city invests in its infrastructure like parks, people want to move here or improve their homes.

Response:

Since Elevate was adopted, roughly \$12 million a year in federal and state grants. At one point every dollar generated via sales tax had earned the city one dollar return on investment through grants. This does not include private investment seen near or adjacent to constructed Elevate projects.

Question #2

How does a project get added to Elevate?

Response:

An Elevate project must meet at least one of the five different specific missions. In most cases someone will present a project to the City Council. There is a formal process and that includes budget and Committee review. Most projects are brought to the Elevate Advisory Council first; however, the City Council can determine its own route.

Question #3

How have the first two home football games gone with a new approach to public safety on the strip? It doesn't seem like there have been any issues.

Response:

The City could not be more proud of Tuscaloosa Police Department (TPD) and are very pleased with how the first two football games have gone. University of Alabama Police Department has taken on more responsibilities in the last few years, which has allowed more TPD assets onto the University Boulevard Corridor. The City has placed more public works crews like environmental services and grounds crews on a routine basis to keep those areas clean and vibrant. The City and the UA have met every two



weeks since June for game day operations and that coordination has paid dividends. Key personnel in those meetings have made decisions such as installing temporary speed bumps, recommending a right of way use agreement for the Publix parking lot to strengthen enforcement, and empowering landlords to remove vehicles that are not authorized to be there. There have been 10 to 15 subtle policy changes that did not cost any money that have made a huge difference in gameday operations.

Question #4

From the outside looking in, it seems there has been a challenge in how to distribute some of the money in the Athletics Excellence Fund by the Tuscaloosa City Schools Board of Education. Is it possible to get direction from the Council or desires of constituents to clarify that process?

Response:

It is not the desire of the City to be involved in the Board of Education operations. It is still a rather new program and our hope is that in time, these issues will come to a natural conclusion.

Comment

With respect to city athletic facilities, one attendee expressed hope that the City will wait until the NFL Players Association study comes out before installing artificial turf. While turf may save money in the long term, consideration should also be given to protecting players when they impact the field's surface.

Response:

One of the challenges in using fields for tournaments is that they do wear out faster and we want our local community to use them, so the idea of artificial turf helps.

Question #5

Currently the City owns the YMCA building and the YMCA runs programming. Would there ever be a situation where the City decided they no longer wanted that facility or wanted to do something different with it?

Response:

The City issued bonds on that property so the City must own it. It is similar to how the City owns the McDonald Hughes Center and leases it back to PARA. If the YMCA decided 20 years from now that they do not want to provide programming, the City would have to make a decision about what to do with that property. It is not the goal of the city to be in the recreational business. However, providing a building allows organizations like PARA or YMCA to use the space to provide their programming. The City can focus on keeping a well-maintained building.