

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina convened for a Special Meeting on Monday, June 17, 2024, at 3:05 p.m. in the Meeting Chamber of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center with Mayor Vi Lyles presiding. Councilmembers present were Dimple Ajmera, Danté Anderson, Tiawana Brown, Ed Driggs, Malcolm Graham, Lawana Mayfield, and James Mitchell.

**ABSENT:** Councilmembers Tariq Bokhari and Victoria Watlington.

**ABSENT UNTIL NOTED:** Councilmembers Renee Johnson and Marjorie Molina.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Mayor Lyles** said thank you for joining us for a Special Meeting for public comment on a project that we are working through and around and all kinds of ways for it. So, I want to say thank you for taking your time today to share your thoughts and perspectives with us. We want to ensure that we have community input at the forefront of our decision. For the process this afternoon, I'd like to ask you to come down to the microphone when your name is called, each person will have two minutes to speak, and when your time is up, you may leave additional remarks, or anything else that you have written, with our City Clerk. Upon conclusion of our public comment session, Council will have a break prior to beginning our rezoning meeting. So, those of you who are fortunate enough to sit with two meetings of us this afternoon, we're really grateful that you show up at all, so thank you. On behalf of the City Council, I'd ask that all speakers and audience members be civil and courteous in their use of language. Speakers are encouraged to address Council and should refrain from responding to each other in the audience. Likewise, our audience members, I hope each of you will be courteous to the speaker, and not yell out or interrupt them. We want to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to be heard. So, we're now going to introduce the Council members who are joining us for this Special Meeting, and that will follow with the beginning of our public comment period regarding the Bank of America Stadium improvements project.

\* \* \* \* \*

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

### **Bank of America Improvements Project**

**Joe Bost, 330 South Tryon Street** said good afternoon. I'm Joe Bost, Chief Advocacy Officer at the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance, and we support the proposed investment in Bank of America Stadium, a key economic driver for our City. I want to thank each member of City Council and the Mayor. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this proposal, which in our view, would be a significant investment in one of our City's most powerful economic assets. I also want to acknowledge the vision of Tepper Sports & Entertainment for their leadership and commitment to upgrading Bank of America Stadium. This public/private investment is a strategic move to modernize and advance one of our foundational public hospitality assets. An upgraded Bank of America Stadium is a vital ingredient in any economic development formula, and the CLT (Charlotte Regional Business) Alliance appreciates the public and private momentum in advancing this investment. The stadium is uniquely seated in the heart of Uptown Charlotte and serves as an economic development catalyst for the City and region. This is the exact type of investment that the CLT Alliance supports, because it adds to the high quality of life, we all enjoy in Charlotte, and a state of the art stadium that hosts two professional sports teams and many other events and concerts, is critical to recruiting and retaining all the talent and businesses that call our region home. The stadium is critical, not only to that, but to our hospitality and tourism industry. We know that billions of dollars of visitor's spending come to Charlotte and North Carolina annually. Over 160,000 people are employed in leisure and hospitality in our region. Bank of America Stadium is a critical ingredient in this industry's growth and our region's growth overall. As the voice of business, the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance thanks Tepper Sports & Entertainment and the City of Charlotte for being willing to make such a critical investment in this community's future and encourages the

City Council to advance this proposal. Again, thank you for your consideration in this important investment.

**Michael Smith, 200 South Tryon Street** said Mayor, members of Council, thank you for having us today, and thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this proposal to invest in the renovation of our Bank of America Stadium. This is a wise City building strategic move to modernize and advance one of the foundational public hospitality assets in the heart of Uptown Charlotte. We have worked closely with small businesses over the last four years that have struggled mightily to recover from the implications of the global pandemic, and we hear from them again and again, the massive role that programming at Bank of America Stadium has played in their recovery and transformation to what's next for business. In fact, in 2023, nine of the ten busiest days in Uptown were connected to stadium events. This is a driver for us. This is an exciting and defining time for Charlotte's next chapter. Charlotte is a great sports city, and we are maturing as a destination with Center City Charlotte transforming from a Central Business District to a Central Activity District, really a more balanced place. Our stadium, the Panthers, Charlotte FC (Football Club), are key in driving that transformation. They are defining assets for our City, tourism hospitality economy, both locally and regionally. The stadium district was identified as a top ten focus area in the 2040 Vision Plan for targeted investment and improvement, creating a more lively, Mixed-Use District around Bank of America Stadium, that will seamlessly connect to the Gateway Station area, the West End neighborhoods, the Gold and Iron Districts, and the core of Uptown. This wise deal structure has been negotiated with many benefits, but one of the most dramatic is certainty for our stadium, our Panthers, and our CLT FC. Certainty is one of the most powerful tools of economic development that government has.

**Vinay Patel, 9230 Hollybush Lane** said good afternoon, everybody. My name is Vinay Patel. I'm the Principal at SREE Hotels, a hotel development and management company based right here in Charlotte, and the Executive Committee Chair with the CRVA (Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority) Board of Directors. The hospitality and tourism industry is integral to Charlotte's thriving economy. Our hotels, restaurants, and attractions welcome millions of visitors each year, specifically enhancing our local economic vitality. One in nine residents works in the leisure and hospitality industry, which employs a significant portion of our community and supports a wide array of local business. Sports and events have been a major driver of record revenue for the industry, as we continue to emerge from the pandemic, highlighting the vital role these activities play in our economic recovery and growth. Hospitality taxes, that we the industry self-imposed, support infrastructure, cultural assets, high-profile events, which further enhance our city's appeal. Many of the community's most recognizable assets were developed with, and continue to be supported by, revenue generated by visitor spending and the hospitality industry. Proposed renovations at the stadium will be made possible through hospitality tax, which is generated from hotel/motel taxes, and prepared food and beverage taxes. These funds are specifically earmarked for hospitality-related projects, ensuring that our investment directly benefits our community. Just last year, the General Assembly extended their tax to 2060. These funds are designated exclusively by legislation for improvement and construction of sports facilities, the Convention Center, further boosting Our city's infrastructure and attractiveness. I want to thank the General Assembly for approving the extension, thus, allowing us the opportunity to retain this great destination asset. On behalf of the tourism industry and the Charlotte Regional Business Authority, we proudly support their renovation.

**Daniel Morrison, 4250 Congress Street** said good afternoon. I'm Danny Morrison with the Charlotte Sports Foundation. So, appreciate the opportunity to be here to speak in favor of the stadium renovation. Our mission with the Charlotte Sports Foundation is pretty simple. Bring high profile advanced sporting events to Charlotte that have economic impact and add to the quality of life. So, Georgia-Clemson a few years ago, the highest hotel night ever in Charlotte, and then to have the HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) game, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Aggie-Eagle Classic a couple years ago, was another important event for Charlotte. So, as we're working on

all of this, harmony in Charlotte always comes into play, city, county, CRVA and the venues, and as we compete with cities all across America, the venues are critical. We're seeing the renovation of the Spectrum Center now, which again, has impact on several of our events, like the Jumpman Invitational, the Ally Tipoff, and then for all of our other events at Bank of America Stadium, this is a wonderful stadium, classic American stadium. The bones are great. The renovations plan will make it the very best outdoor stadium in America. So, we have this wonderful asset. I love the word classic American stadium, and we have an opportunity now to make it the best outdoor stadium in America, which will have tremendous impact as we compete with these other cities. Thank you.

**Kristian Pedersen, 317 South Church Street** said thank you for allowing me to speak in favor of the Bank of America Stadium project. My name is Kristian Pedersen. I'm a local business owner. I own restaurants and bars on Brevard Court. I signed my first lease there in 2009, and I've seen all the growth that's happened around there. Over the last few years since soccer came to town, we have seen amazing growth when it comes to our businesses, which has now allowed us to open more businesses in our area where we are. We're hoping to continue to do so as we go along here with this project. I want to kind of make a side note also. If we're making this large investment to the stadium itself, we need to think about the infrastructure surrounding the stadium as well too. I'm located on what's called an abandoned street, which is Brevard Court; therefore, we get no support when it comes to pretty much anything. We now have to fix the streets ourselves, fix the potholes, fix the lighting, fix everything that's around us, just simply because it's an abandoned street. Now, hoping that when you guys consider Bank of America Stadium, that everything around you guys also matters too, and it matters a lot. We live off the stadium at the end of the day. When you've got soccer, you've got football, you have concerts, you have any event that they come up with, it's a great, great deal for us, but at the same time, we have to worry about our customers, we have to worry about our people. We are right in front of Romare Bearden Park. You guys know what's going on down there sometimes. We need help also. So, please consider that as well, but I am definitely for the project, yes.

**Thomas Neal, 224 East 7<sup>th</sup> Street** said this is Thomas Neal. I'm his wife Sherry Neal. We are the owners of Southern Charm Rides. I'm speaking in favor of the proposal, for investing in these restricted Hospitality and Tourism Funds into the Bank of America Stadium. I started Southern Charm Rides, a historical tour cart company, on limo golf carts, educating residents and visitors to the rich history of Charlotte, all the way up to the modern days. We were concerned when we started, because it's hard for a small business to get off the ground. The growth of our company was fairly quickly. Our profit and our business, from July to December in 2023, increased 149 percent. A lot of this increase was credited to the advance at the Bank of America Stadium. Actually, those events kept us afloat many times by increasing visitors to the City that were looking for other entertainment as well. The Bank of America Stadium events gives us quite a positive effect on a lot of the decisions made by those visitors, even considering to move to Charlotte and becoming permanent residents. This large increase has helped us a great deal, and I do speak on behalf of several small businesses as I stand here today. This renovation will certainly bring in more events, as well as attract even more customers to the area, making a huge, positive impact on our economy here in Charlotte and allowing us to continue to thrive. This will secure a multi-decade commitment between our City and two of our major sports franchises, which gives us a level of certainty in the fast-changing environment for small business, allowing us to feel more secure about investing and building into our dream as a business. The renovation is focused on enhancing guests and visitor experiences inside and outside of the new stadium, which will help attract new and repeat visitors in Charlotte without a doubt, more potential customers. The investment by the City and Tepper Sports will help create new opportunities for our City in the future, and existing small businesses will certainly benefit. I want to thank all of you for your thoughtful consideration of this proposal and voting yes to help all of us in the success of continuing the upward economical momentum. Thank you.

**Toni Sawhney, 1617 South Tryon Street** said good afternoon and thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak in favor of Bank of America Stadium. I'm Toni Sawhney, Charlotte area resident for nearly 40 years. During this period, Charlotte has grown beautifully in many ways to become one of the topmost desirable cities to live and to move in. Our quality amenities attract businesses to relocate, invite tourists to visit Charlotte, and offer options and activities for the existing residents. My company owns and operates Holiday Inn Express in South End. Our business opened in November of 2019, just before the pandemic. Our business was revived by return of leisure travel and especially the events at Bank of America Stadium. Return of Panthers, addition of Charlotte Football Club, College Bowl Games, and Football Championships, concerts from many mega music sports superstars in Queen City, including the Rolling Stones, Bianca, Elton John, George Strait. These events at the stadium bring in hordes of excited fans and visitors that create a festive vibe that is priceless, and our guests love taking the Light Rail to these events. They spend their time and money enjoying Charlotte, while providing a huge financial stimulus for local hotels, restaurants, breweries, shops, boutiques that support so many of the jobs in this industry. Hospitality taxes charged to the visitors provide us the funding to grow and expand. To remain nationally and globally competitive, Charlotte must be able to provide world-class coliseum facilities for all the top shelf events. It should be coliseum that is very modern feel, and design which can carry us forward for the next couple of decades. Let us face, our stadium is nearly 30 years old, and it was the best in the league then, but now it's time to upgrade. Thank you, Mayor. Thank you, Council members.

**Bobby Lord, 1212 Duncan Gardens Drive** said hi. Good afternoon. I'm Bobby Lord, a Charlotte city resident. I'd like to start by thanking City Council for allowing us to speak today. I will be speaking in opposition, because someone has to start for that side. The City is preparing to pay 80 percent of the cost of this renovation. We're told that no new taxes are going towards this renovation, yet the fund for this project was slated to sunset in 2031 and was extended for 30 additional years at the behest of City officials and the local hospitality industry. As has been repeated many, many times, the tax revenue can only be spent on a limited number of projects, primarily the Convention Center and stadium seating 60,000 people. Given the lack of major upcoming projects to renovate the Convention Center, the purpose of this extension can reasonably be assumed to be for the stadium. As was noted in the press at the time of the extension, a vast majority of these taxes come from the food and beverage tax, paid for primarily by county residents. The proposals put forward by both the City and TSE (Tepper Sports & Entertainment), imply that the two are partners in maintaining a community asset. In fact, the asset is wholly owned by TSE, and any increase in the value goes straight to TSE. The City does not receive an ownership interest in the building. The City does not receive any portion of ticket revenue from games or concerts. We don't even have public access to the park-like atmosphere we're paying to build outside the stadium. The only real benefit is the knowledge that neither the Panthers nor Charlotte FC can relocate for 15 years. We're told that this kind of investment is necessary and expected. Other cities do the same to avoid the fate of towns like St. Louis, Oakland, and San Diego. The sad reality is that TSE can decide to leave at any time that makes financial sense to them. St. Louis is a perfect example of a city negotiating in good faith with an owner, only to be left without a team anyway. If our investment does not come with any kind of tangible financial benefit, it's not truly an investment, it's a shakedown. In 15 years, another bill will come due, and that bill will be for a heck of a lot more than \$650 million. Thank you.

**Welch Liles, 1616 Camden Road** said good afternoon, City Council. Thank you for letting me speak today. I want to reach out in support of the stadium renovations and all of your efforts that you've done to help ensure that Bank of America Stadium is renovated and stays as a vital asset to Uptown Charlotte. As you guys know, I mean, St. Louis was just referenced. CBD, Central Business Districts, around the country are seeing major blight and concern right now with office vacancy and the lack of return to work, and other security concerns, and the last thing that Charlotte needs is to add another major obsolete building to our Central Business District. I think by working and partnering with Tepper Sports, we're going to ensure that this remains a viable asset for the future. So, I'm with Asana Partners. We focus on retail investments, both in

Charlotte and throughout the United States, and one of the things that we see is most important to those investments and to the retailers and restaurants and other businesses that we work with, is foot traffic and visitors. It's already been alluded to today, but I just wanted to point out that our studies and research show that Bank of America Stadium last year brought in nearly 1.8 million visitors to Uptown Charlotte. That is the equivalent of the Spectrum Center, the Knights Stadium, all of our museums and theaters, and the Convention Center combined. So, by removing that from Uptown, and turning our back on that building and that investment, we're going to see a major, major hit to our businesses and revenues and some of these small business owners who were speaking earlier today. So, again, thank you for your support, and we look forward to the new stadium.

**Councilmember Johnson arrived at 3:27 p.m.**

**Alison Summerville, 2627 Sherwood Avenue** said good afternoon. I'm Ali Summerville, Business Administration Executive at Ally Financial and Chair of the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance. Thank you for your time today. It's great to be talking about such a transformational opportunity for the City. Bank of America Stadium is an incredible asset for the City and the region. Making upgrades to the stadium will ensure it continues to be a critical economic development asset for Charlotte. I do want to thank you all for considering this investment and the positive benefit it will have on the City, and I appreciate the Tepper Sports team for working to make this a reality. Ally is a proud sponsor of Charlotte FC. As you know, we have been their lead sponsor since inception. Our name being on the kits signals our strong support for Charlotte FC and soccer in the Charlotte region. We have appreciated being able to see Charlotte FC play in Bank of America Stadium, and the fan support has been better than imagined. The upgrades already made to the stadium, to make it more soccer friendly, have made the fan experience incredible. If you all support the additional upgrade, we know the fan experience and increased support will be that much greater. Just like our support for FC goes well beyond the jerseys and extends into the community, the impact of a world-class stadium is more than just game day. The stadium hosts concerts and other events throughout the year. Those events, with thousands of people attending each one, are critical to the small businesses around the stadium. The hotels, restaurants and shops see an incredible influx of business when stadium is hosting the events. An upgraded, modern stadium will be even more attractive to event organizers and fans in the coming years. I encourage you to support this critical investment for the City, our residents, and the businesses who rely on customers and fans utilizing the stadium. This is the right time to make this investment. Thank you.

**Grace Fendrick, 9715 Grove Crest Lane** said hi, my name is Grace Fendrick. I am a Charlotte resident, and I am here to express both an opposition to this plan, as well as a deep disappointment with the lack of transparency shown by this very Council. As a Charlotte citizen, we have the right to be informed and involved in decisions that impact our community; however, your handling of this has made it clear transparency is anything but a priority. Just over two years ago, I stood at this very dais and told you guys, it was against a different stadium subsidy, and one by one, each of you along the dais said that you were not happy with how it was handled, and the fact that there was very little time to give public comment. Yet again, two years later, we stand here today despite those concerns by each and every one of you. Another thing that I find very troubling when it comes to this deal, not only is this not a public asset, despite what everyone and CRVA and TSE and BoA (Bank of America) say, it is a Tepper Sports & Entertainment asset, but additionally there has been public insistence, by TSE, that any delay in this vote will affect construction timelines, and that raises further questions. Could this certainty of when this vote will be passed, and the demand on those timelines, stem from behind-the-scenes dealings where public meetings serve as mere facades to justify predetermined decisions. Today, I speak as the author of a petition opposing this plan, which has quickly garnered over 491 signatures. Its widespread skepticism underscores the community's concern about the proposal's precedent, the track record of TSE and its owner, just look at Mint Hill, and the lack of economic benefits for Charlotte. It is crucial that this Council listens to voices and engages meaningfully with the community before proceeding. Six hundred fifty million dollars is a

significant public investment that demands thorough scrutiny and ensures it serves the best interest of all Charlotte residents, not just those who stand to profit from it. Making pivotal decisions behind closed doors.

**Bryan Paschal, 10319 Kilmory Terrace** said Mayor and Council members, my name is Bryan Paschal. I'm with Paschal Events, a corporate event planner and small business owner, here in Charlotte. Thank you so much for this opportunity to speak to you today. I am for the proposal for the following four reasons. Bank of America is a community asset. Investment is needed to keep Bank of America Stadium competitive and drive future growth. The stadium is an economic powerhouse, hosting nearly 40 major events each year, and 80 to 100 corporate and community events, drawing visitors world-wide and benefiting local businesses. Second reason is for the investment. This City's investment is a fixed \$650 million funded by restricted hospitality and tourism tax resources. The investment will enhance our City's infrastructure and boost its attractiveness. Third reason is the community impact. Bank of America Stadium has been instrumental in transforming Charlotte into a top metro area for nearly 30 years, hosting valued events and driving urban growth. The fourth and final reason is the economic benefits. The stadium's prime location in Uptown has a significant impact. Major sports events and concerts have driven many of Charlotte's highest hotel occupancy nights, underscoring their influence on tourism and economic growth. I'm proud to say that I am an employee of Tepper Sports & Entertainment for Carolina Panthers and Charlotte FC. Thank you very much.

**Lucia Griffith, 1345 Maryland Avenue** said so, I'm Lucia Griffith, living in Charlotte since 1985, and I remember the excitement when we had this new, wonderful community asset come to Charlotte for football. I'm in support of the renovations. I think it's no different than renovating any other facility you have that serves the community, but also the fact that it's funded with the visitor's tax. We travel to other cities, we pay taxes in other cities, and they invest them however they please to have their community offer assets, like stadiums and parks and whatever else there is. So, I think it's valid, and the point that the person that spoke before me made, were right on my list. It's a community asset and it's paid with those taxes, but it also I think is more than football. I think the fact that soccer is such an international followed sport, has allowed us to have games with Mexico, Cuba, Guatemala, and then the British teams. I road that Light Rail packed. I knew all the songs. They were singing all in Spanish in support of Mexico when they play. Only a few weeks later, I came, and everybody was singing for the British team. So, there's more than just football. I also think of the entertainment that comes to it. I saw the Rolling Stones, [inaudible] the Bridges of Babylon, and I didn't even know how the football games go, but I thought it was a fun thing to do. So, I think it is more than just football. I think that's where we get closed into. I think it's an asset that cannot be moved. It's a stadium that's going to stay here, and it keeps the team here longer, which allows us to market Charlotte in much better ways than just not having the asset we have right now. We used to have [inaudible] where the corporate Bank of America building is, a little store, and then it changed to become what it was, and attracted a lot of professionals here. I think the stadium and the baseball field and having the arena and having all these things together, makes Charlotte what Charlotte is, where you can have a Charlotte Asian Festival with people from all countries in Asia, or Latin American Coalition hosting the symphony, and people are listening to the symphony, and then having Mexican authors perform. Thank you for your time.

**Scott Bryan, 101 South Tryon Street** said yes, good afternoon. My name is Scott Bryan. Thank you, City Council, Madam Mayor, for the opportunity to express my concern regarding the \$650 million commitment to David Tepper's organization out of our Tourism Tax Fund. I just have two points, two simple points I'd like to make, and that is please disclose more of the real details of this investment to citizens, and second, extend the period of the public input beyond a mere three weeks. So, first, what are the safeguards in place to protect our investment of such an enormous magnitude? Some of you have said it's the largest one Charlotte has ever made. How do we avoid the failed partnership that Tepper and Rock Hill experienced, and before that, the experience with the Eastland Mall Redevelopment? So, there is a history here. You should understand our concerns. So, a few questions on the details that have been

made public. The 20-year non relocation clause. Buffalo Bills and Tennessee Titans just negotiated 30 years. I really don't even know if it's 20, I've heard 15, and on that same subject, are there provisions in this stadium deal that he cannot tear down the stadium and demolish it in five, 10 years? I haven't heard any comments on can he demolish it in five or 10 years. Also, what are the breakdown of some of these costs? You do not owe us every little detail, but you do owe us some detail. What does it cost to redo these bathrooms and remove the seats? Also, what's going to happen to the tens of thousands of thermoplastic seats that are being removed? Where are they going? I mean, that's an environmental question. Are they going to a landfill? So, also, some more numbers here. How much of the Tourism Tax Fund is left over for our great City's museums and art institutions? I haven't heard any numbers. What's left over for them? So, last, just please explain why we're spending two-thirds of a billion dollars on this investment? Please do your duty.

**Muhsin Muhammad, 6100 Fairview Road, Suite 1100** said alright. Good evening, Mayor Vi Lyles, City Council members. I'm here in support of the stadium renovations, and just wanted to offer a different perspective. I think that we've all heard about the economic impact that the Panthers have had on this City, over \$1.1 billion of annual impact to our economy, but I just want to say this. I was drafted here in 1996, landed in Charlotte, a beautiful city. There was no 485 here. I don't know if guys remember this, but there was no 485 here. There was no transit system. There was no Light Rail. The Charlotte DMA (Designated Market Area) was around 500,000 people. I remember going to Trade and Tryon and I could walk across the street without a traffic signal. I remember those days, and so, I've watched this City grow and I've grown with the City. As a matter of fact, we were spoiled in 1996, because the Carolina Panthers, in my first year as a rookie, we went to the NFC (National Football Conference) Championship Game, and there was such an excitement around this City. There was such an excitement around this team, and from that point, I watched this City grow exponentially to where we're 3 million in our DMA now. I'm sure everyone who owned a house at that time has seen and felt the impact of their home values increasing, regardless of if you have a business here or not. I watched the transit system grow. I watched 485 loop around the City. I watched the skyline downtown blossom and bloom, and many vibrant businesses move here. I just want to applaud City Council for making the right decision of continuing to invest and keep our Panthers here for another 20 years.

**Craig Rushing, 800 Beaty Street, Davidson** said thank you. Mayor Lyles and Council members, thank you for the opportunity to speak and offer Trane Technologies' support for the proposal to make investments in Bank of America Stadium. My name is Craig Rushing. I'm Senior Director of Government Relations for Trane Technologies. So, Trane Technologies employs approximately 350 residents at our locations in Charlotte, more than 2,000 people within the greater Charlotte region, which includes are North American Headquarters in Davidson. Sustainability is core to who we are and what we do. We value working with like-minded organizations that understand it's possible for business, environmental, and community goals to work hand-in-hand. Our company has worked with Tepper Sports & Entertainment and the Carolina Panthers Organization for many years. In that time, they have consistently demonstrated a commitment to forward-looking innovative investments that yield positive outcomes for their business operations, the environment, and our greater Charlotte community. I'd like to share a few examples. Tepper Sports & Entertainment and Carolina Panthers prioritized sustainability and energy efficiency in their infrastructure investments. In 2018, Bank of America Stadium cooling system upgrades from Trane reduced the stadiums energy use by 1.7 million kilowatt hours, and helps the stadium avoid 521 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions every year. As a result of these efforts, Trane leaders recognized Bank of America Stadium with an Energy Efficiency Leader Award for outstanding commitment to energy conservation. Those 2018 improvements are still a model for how large facilities should operate. Less than a month ago, the Getting to Zero Forum was hosted in Charlotte by the New Buildings Institute. As part of the programming, participants toured Bank of America Stadium to learn from the facility's successes in partnering with Trane Technologies. For the past few years, Trane Technologies has been proud to collaborate with the Carolina Panthers to host the

stadium of the future STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) challenge. Thank you.

**Thomas Templeton, 1733 Lisbon Lane** said good afternoon, Madam Mayor, Council members. My name is Thomas Templeton. I am actually a lifelong resident of Charlotte, let's just say for a few decades now. I want to thank all of you, first of all, for allowing me to speak on this issue, and especially the members who actually managed to get this extra meeting held in order for the people to speak. I really appreciate that. First, let me say about this proposal, I think it should be treated as a business deal, and in any business deal you have benefits and costs. On the benefits side, the City seems to be relying upon a study that shows huge dollar and large employment impact for the City of Charlotte, but my questions would be, who initiated and paid for that study? Where is it published so that we can see and analyze the findings and see the assumptions that were used to arrive at those numbers? Just like when we were all in school, it's time to show your work. On the cost side of things, the City says we have \$650 million that we can spend on this project. How much money do we get from hospitality taxes? How much is generated each year? If we want to make the people believe that we can actually afford this, you need to publish those details. Once again, please show your work. Lastly, if we truly have that kind of money, and you're determined to spend it on this project, at least get something real and tangible for our money. Own a portion of the stadium or stake in the teams. Start acting like a business investor who's coming to the table with \$650 million to invest. That, ladies and gentlemen, is power, use it. Tepper wants free money without sacrificing anything. Don't just hand it to him. I don't think he's looking for a partner. He's looking for a patsy. Thank you.

**Stephanie Joyner, 4337 Howie Circle** said thank you. Good afternoon, everyone. I'm excited to be here with you today, and just want to express my appreciation for the opportunity to address you. So, my name is Stephanie Joyner. I'm in District 1. I'm the Founder and CEO (Chief Executive Officer) of DiverseCity Services. We're a local consulting company that develops and implements minority and women small business programs across North Carolina and also right here in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. For more than 16 years, I have been an advocate for minority businesses, having served as the President of the Metrolina Minority Contractors Association, as well as the Chair of the Charlotte Business INCLUSION Advisory Committee. I'm here today to express my support for the Panthers and the renovations to the Bank of America Stadium. A project of this size and nature can be very beneficial to the total community. For every dollar spent with local businesses, it turns over five times by the ways of jobs, livable wages, nonprofit support, housing, and taxes, which support public safety and more. I want to share a few things with you for your consideration, as you decide to move forward. Diversity, equity, and inclusion goals are very important for a project of this size. My colleagues and I believe that the 27 percent that you've established is an achievable goal through intention, strategy, followthrough, and accountability. We recommend the following. Develop a full MWSBE (Minority, Women, Small Business Enterprise) inclusion strategy, both for construction and nonconstruction, community engagement, and workforce development; create a dedicated Oversight Committee to ensure transparency. Establish workforce development goals and objectives. Finally engage with organizations that support minority-owned businesses. I'd be happy to discuss with you in more detail. I'll leave you with this. Attract what you expect. Thank you.

**Councilmember Molina arrived at 3:49 p.m.**

**Tarris Arnold, 2818 Queen City Drive** said good afternoon, Mayor Lyles and Councilmen. My name is Tarris Arnold, Taylor Interiors. I am a Division 7 construction company, minority, and I'm also the current President of Metrolina Minority Contractors Association, MMCA. I'm in favor of the renovation of the Panthers Stadium to see the growth, but also, we need to have some more transparency to make sure that we can reach that 27 percent. It can be even greater. We at Metrolina Minority Contractors Association are minority business owners here who live in Charlotte, pay taxes in Charlotte, and have actually worked on some of the renovations before, but I think that \$630 million can be brought out to make sure everybody at the table gets a chance to



have some work and where they pay taxes and live. I'm looking forward to the renovations. I would like to see and make sure you work with minority contractors, minority business owners. Charlotte's got the fastest growing minority participation in businesses [inaudible]. Can we also make sure that we be highlighted and shown and work on the stadium? That's all I've got to say. Thank you.

**Mayor Lyles** said thank you so much. I hope that you're getting your members to talk to RISE (Rapid Integrated Scalable Enterprise) for the capital that we need to start these businesses, because they are going to continue to grow. Thank you so much.

**Sebastian Feculak, 2967 Interstate Street** said thank you so much. My name is Sebastian Feculak. I'm here with the Iron Workers Association, and actually on behalf of also the other local building trades representing iron workers, electricians, plumbers and pipefitters, operating engineers. Our trades have several apprenticeship schools in the region who hire from CMS (Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools) and other local nonprofits here in Charlotte. However, when construction of the Panthers practice facility unexpectedly shut down, hundreds of our members lost their jobs, including apprentices and journeymen, and we had to work overtime to find them new jobs. I ask for commitments on this new project, that Tepper Sports & Entertainment rehire our tradesman, work with contractors who were on the previous project, and work with our apprenticeship schools to help hire locally. I've emailed and have asked for some of these commitments, and I've reached out to staff and Council members, though, we haven't yet actually sat down to set these sort of goals. That's why I think that setting up a vote for June 24, 2024, before we actually have those conversations, is a little too soon. I've worked on these kinds of projects with our trades, our apprenticeship programs in other cities, and places like in Richmond, we just finished discussion over their minor league stadium, and we've reached 40 percent commitment for local apprenticeship programs. I think we can reach those similar goals for hiring locally as well. We have a couple schools on the West Side by the airport, Iron Workers Hall, electricians. I think some folks are also aware of the Carpenters Hall off of W.T. Harris. I think a lot of folks have visited those schools. Those programs hire locally. We have pathways and pipelines with local schools. Let's make those commitments. Let's work with the apprenticeship programs. Let's sit down and create a solution for local hiring. Thank you.

**Sylvia Cobb, 2522 Chesterfield Ave** said yes, I wanted to mention to everyone that I am a Landscape Architect. I have worked in Charlotte since 1984. I'm probably one of the only professional planners in the room. I'm here to represent the middle class. I personally can't afford to go to any events at the Panthers Stadium, can't afford to go to concerts, but I've lived here for decades. I think this is wrong. You're giving David Tepper, who has a net worth of \$20 billion, with a B. Why are you giving someone that has that kind of money, \$650 million? I think it's criminal. What do you think of the middle class in Charlotte? They're not here, they're working. They're working hard, some of them two and three jobs. This isn't right. I've heard from my friends that you've already decided, and I want to know how that is legal that you've already decided. I've been involved in other projects where I've seen Tariq Bokhari give the SouthPark developers \$15 million from the Neighborhood Bond Fund. It's probably illegal. I don't see how you keep giving corporations and these rich people money. Why? Yes, it benefits all these businesses. All these businesses have been doing fine. Bianca thought the stadium was okay. If it's good enough for Bianca, it's good enough for half the City. Do you guys think about the middle class here?

**Horatius Greene, II, 3233 Floral Grove Lane** said yes, I'm Horatius Greene. Mayor, Council, I'm very happy to be here as a resident of Charlotte for over 15 years. I think that the stadium is a very good opportunity for the City, and I'll tell you why. Charlotte is not a local city, it's not a national city. Charlotte is an international city. A stadium is an integral and important part of that presentation, not only to the international community, but to the local residents, and I say that because local residents have a pride in pointing to their stadium. Even though they may not go to it, it's still their stadium, and they have a pride in it. Now, the question becomes, what happens when you have a person who has as much money as Mr. Tepper? You're going to get blowback. It's normal. Mr.

Tepper is probably aware of that and has to take steps with regard to it to satisfy the citizens, that they are happy with his work. I'm a graduate of Ohio State. I know about stadiums. I know what they do and how they help out, and there's a lot that can be done as a result of having the income from a stadium. The question becomes, whether or not Mr. Tepper has the internal fortitude to do right by the City?

**Joseph Marqolis, 6549 Quarterbridge Lane** said good afternoon, Council. Thank you for making this opportunity for the public to speak. I'm going to make a reference. It's going to seem indelicate, but I want a little deference to clarify, because I don't think there's any bad intentions, but it may seem like it at first. So, if anybody's watched the movie, *The Sting*, the group running the gang, they always do this when they're pointing out the mark, that they've just worked with the mark. So, one of the things that I want Charlotte, this Council, to look at, is just I don't think anybody in here is committing fraud, any of the interest in here that are supporting the stadium outside of this body, are committing fraud, but my concern is that the Council as a whole is being put in a position as the mark for interest that may not represent what's going to be best for the City. So, I just want to go through, there's a tool that's used in fraud, it's called the fraud triangle, and there's three qualities, motivation, opportunity, and rationalization. So, the motivation would be things like, we need to protect our investment, and for the restaurant workers here, and I've heard a lot of people speak today, and it's undeniable that this has helped a lot of businesses, and so it's something worth considering and trying to protect. So, it's a great motivation. Opportunity. There's a massive pot of money, \$650 million, that taxpayers have been putting in to make this available for opportunities like this. So, let's get into some of the rationalizations. Like, one I have that I tweeted about a few weeks ago, if we don't do this they'll leave.

Mayor Lyles said thank you very much for your comments. Feel free if you'd like to leave comments or send them to the City Clerk's office, you're certainly welcome to do that.

So, thank you all for coming out. The array of comments we greatly appreciate. You've given us a lot to think about, and we'll go ahead and now adjourn this meeting. We will have a 20-minute break before the zoning meeting begins. So, we can come back at 5:00 p.m. for the Zoning meeting. Thank you again for being here. Thank you especially for those of you who have taken the time to leave your offices, your businesses, and to make this availability for us to learn more about how you feel.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:03 p.m.

  
Stephanie Kelly, City Clerk MMC, NCCMC

Length of Meeting: 0 Hours, 58 Minutes  
Minutes completed: December 30, 2024