

Prince George's Suite

FALL/HOLIDAY 2022

A Great View Of Prince George's County, Md

www.pgsuite.com

\$9.95

Building Fields Of Dreams

Liberty Sports Park

Best 2023 EVs // Wes Moore // The New Safety Corridor // Phylicia Rashad at PGCC // Durant Aids BSU // Frances Tiafoe // First Annual PGC Film Festival // Get Winter Ready

New Physicians At MedStar, The Arc Prince George's, UMD Regional Medical Center, Cancer Moonshot, Bladensburg's All-Black Women Leadership, Industrial Bank's Doyle Mitchell, First Baptist Church of Glenarden's Annual Car And Bike Show, Legacy:FSC First's Shelly Gross-Wade, Photo Essay: Ghana Aid And More



Fields Of Fu

By Raoul Dennis with Brittney Gordon
PHOTOGRAPHY: RAOUL DENNIS AND AMIR
STOUDAMIRE

While people across the nation sat at the edge of their seats screaming at their TVs during the 2022 FIFA World Cup Competition, thousands across the Washington, D.C. metro area envisioned their own children one day playing in the games within the next two decades. Many of them already know that it's a dream several steps closer to fruition because magnetic North of field sports competition just shifted to the DMV in the form of a new state-of-the-art, tournament ready outdoor complex known as Liberty Sports Park.

It was a Saturday in the sun in early October. The weather was just over 70 degrees – as more than 1,600 people, including 300 girls on lacrosse teams from across the region battle through the heat of competition. They fight for the win, for the team – and for their parents and families who are watching on the sidelines. The scoreboard matters.

But for these young athletes and their families, the final score isn't the only thing that counts. The field itself is also a matter of personal pride. It's brand-new turf with field markings so fresh the paint doesn't yet chafe on uniforms. The commute to get to Liberty Sports Park cut the drive time of the average family to travel to a tournament at this level by an average of 2.5 hours. And although participants had to walk through an unfinished parking lot with dirt and gravel beneath their sandaled feet, they know that in another month that same lot will be paved and lit for night action. There will be concession stands, restaurants and merchandising shops replacing most of the portable restrooms and loose gravel currently at the new venue. Most patrons know this is just the beginning; the thirst for a sprawling sports complex with social, residential and hotel stay options note that even with the 10 fields planned, 10 more could easily have been added to the vision.

Liberty Sports Park is currently booked through the middle of 2023 and by January, the entire year could be under contract. Already, the adjacent South Lake complex has attracted interest from over 700 potential residents – and the property hasn't opened yet.

It's a moment almost ten years in the making, but Upper Marlboro's Liberty Sports Park officially opened for business on October 23rd, billed as the mid-Atlantic's premier sports vacation destination. That said, this ten-field athletic facility is much more than just a place to play sports. It will be an oasis for regional and national youth sports events and competitions. It will be the go-to outdoor venue for student athletes after school and weekends. And it will grow to become a destination location for sports, entertainment and travel enthusiasts.

"Having what's going to be the crown jewel of soccer fields and complexes in our area [located] in Prince George's County is going to be a major feather in the cap for this county," says Patrick Noel, director of operations and coach



uture Dreams



*New \$18 Million Sports Complex
Becomes The Latest Step In
Growing County As A High End
Destination Location*

for the Maryland United Soccer Club.

The park will have 10 lit fields, 6 turf fields and 4 grass fields on over 50 acres. The park and its adjacent destination South Lake are projected to create over 500 jobs and over \$50 million in annual spending.

At an overall cost of \$18 million, the potential return on investment set the spark that let former Maryland State Senator Douglas J.J. Peters know that he was on the right track with his vision for the park. According to a 2014 study, "On-going activities at the proposed new Sports Complex are estimated to generate between \$31 million and \$34 million annually in incremental new direct spending to the County of which approximately \$17 million to \$19 million would be incremental new to the State."

"I felt like saying, 'I knew it,'" Peters says today

Prince George's Boulevard in Upper Marlboro, Liberty Sports Park is a multi-field sports complex that will host youth and adult sporting events from soccer, lacrosse and football games to ultimate frisbee, and just about everything in between. Athletes from all across Maryland and along the east coast are already flocking to the park to take advantage of what is being described as one of the most sought-after sporting facilities in the region.

Thomas H. Graham chairs The Green Branch Foundation board. The retired Pepco President and former professional soccer player may have thought that after coaching at Georgetown University, his athletic days were behind him. But that was before Doug Peters called him in one night in 2017 and introduced him to his vision for Liberty Park. As he got ready to host the opening day celebra-

entia who's who group of regional and state VIPs. In some ways the gathering was a reunion of contributors who had been looking forward to this day since 2014 – and the groundbreaking in 2017.

"We're so happy to have this project completed for a variety of reasons," said Tara Jackson, a spokesperson for County Executive Angela Alsobrooks. "One of them, of course, is that we're going to bring people to the county, and of course, that is a priority for the county executive's economic development. We're excited about the thousands and thousands of people that we're going to bring to Prince George's County because of Liberty Sports Park."

Jackson continued: "The second is, I'm excited that we have a premiere sports park here in Prince George's County, and it really is about

not only the people that come to our county but the children that live in our county and being able to give them an opportunity that they may otherwise not have had."

The sponsors of the park include the state of Maryland, The Washington Commanders, The Truist Foundation, Prince George's County Government and a host of others.

But there were mentions by some of the speakers that were pearls.

"It's always tough to do something new when you're so used to doing different things [in a similar way]," said former District 4 County Councilmember Todd Turner. Turner was third in a line of four District 4 councilmembers (including Ingrid Turner and

today's Ingrid Scott Harrison) that passed the baton starting with Peters. "This one, this was a new way of operating," Turner said referring to the daily operations of the park being managed by an outside not-for-profit. "We have an award-winning Park and Recreation department here in Prince George's County. They're very proud of the work that they do, but this is unique in that we have a not-for-profit [organization] that's coming in to manage the fields, working with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, who will be using the fields a



Michael and Graham share their expectations for Liberty at the opening.

of the moment he read the data that reinforced his gut feeling. "It was just another level of motivation to get it done. I knew I was on the right track. Now, I felt like I've got to push the gas pedal."

The Opening

The park officially opened with a kickoff celebration on October 23rd, bringing together a host of public and private stakeholders who worked together to bring this dream to fruition. Located on 55 acres of land on

tion of the park Graham donned his University of Tampa Hall of Fame jacket.

"It literally took a village to get to this point," Graham said of the four opened fields and those coming. "We had every alphabet working in the Prince George's County government, and we needed the state, the partnership with the council, the County Executive's office, and then a lot of hard work from some people over at Park and Planning to really get our design together [in order to] get the best park that we could possibly have."

The event was populated by a small but influ-



majority of the time, for residents here in Prince George's County, in addition to bringing others into this county."

The Green Branch Management Group Corp. is a community-based, non-profit organization in Prince George's County, will manage it. Scott Morrison, president of the Green Branch Management Group, will lead the daily operations. A seasoned sales professional, Morrison took a pay cut to take on this position, for him a dream job. Morrison, who coached lacrosse at DeMatha for 14 years, is ready for the challenge.

"Handling a staff of eight people and a product of '10 fields' is something that I'm super excited about. I've surrounded myself with the right people, not just at the board of directors' level, but certainly at the field and the ground level."

He says development is moving along more efficiently now that COVID-19 isn't a supply drag. "Right now, we have two grass fields completely in and laid. Obviously, all six turf fields are done," he said in October. "Six turf fields are done, two are completely laid. We will have the other two and a half fields done in Spring 2023."

Morrison believes the public-private approach to the park will give Liberty the flexibility it needs to draw in maximum revenues

while tying the destination to the best opportunities to work with the state and county at all levels. "I believe that's the best model," he says. "That's the model that was given to us through the Maryland Stadium Authority. The public-private partnership was the model that was suggested. We're trying to follow that model to a T where everybody wins."

"When we arrived at the lacrosse tournament, I saw that it was just a field that a farmer had plowed and there was nowhere to eat," Peters recalls as he stepped out of his car and into the mud. It only got worse. "The hotel was 40 minutes away."

Looking upward as if searching for the sense of it, the former senator continued: "No restaurants, no food, no nothing - just a farm.

"We're excited about the thousands of people that we're going to bring to Prince George's County because of Liberty Sports Park," said Tara Jackson, a spokesperson for County Executive Angela Alsobrooks

Where It Started

Flashback to 2012. Then a County Councilmember, Peters found himself driving to North Carolina with his son Brad to be scouted by college recruiters.

"My son Brad played lacrosse for DeMatha and kept saying 'Dad, I was invited to a major lacrosse tryout! DI coaches will be there and I need them to see what I can do in the goal. I said, 'all right, Brad. We'll go.'"

Somebody just decided 'I'm gonna clear my land and make four fields and rent them for a bunch of money. I took my car, drove up there and I got stuck in the mud for an hour."

The trip was a success: Brad was eventually recruited by a number of schools he played in front of that day (although he later decided to play goalie for Brown Lacrosse). More importantly, an idea began to form with the county

councilman after they returned home. Peters called Scott Morrison, who was at DeMatha at the time, and proceeded to burn a second hole in his ear with the vision. “Why couldn't we have a first-class facility here in Prince George's County when we have some of the greatest athletes in the nation coming from here? We don't have the facilities. Why not??”

In 2012, Sen. Douglas J.J. Peters asked, “Why couldn't we have a first-class outdoor sports venue in Prince George's County when we have some of the greatest athletes in the nation coming from here? We don't have the facilities. Why not??”

The Makings Of A Home Team

The 1977 release of “Star Wars” presented a classic story wrapped in a sci-fi format with high tech special effects that forever changed the way the world experienced sci-fi movies. But it was the classic cast of characters and story that made the film resonate with audiences of all kinds – something that director George Lucas maintained throughout his illustrious career.

In the story, a handful of personalities are unwittingly strewn together to become the heart and soul of a movement larger than themselves. In the process, the audience connects with them—and their struggle. It's an old formula: from “The Hobbit” to “The Wizard of Oz” to “The Avengers.” The creative evolution of Liberty Sports Park is no different.

It started with then County Councilman Douglas J.J. Peters. “When I was on the county council, each of the council members had some seed money which we could use for projects in our district from Park and Planning,” Peters explains of the original idea of a development behind Rips Diner near Bowie Baysox Stadium known as Green Branch.

But after environmental challenges were revealed and the 2014 Market Study illuminated the financial potential, Peters, by this point a senator, began to dream bigger.

“I continued to raise money for the project because by then we decided to make it a multi-field project rather than a baseball project because we were going to move it away from Baysox stadium. I was able to work with the county and I looked it up because in the Senate, I had the experience of the county council and I was able to get the list of surplus properties that could not be developed in the county.”

“We had a couple of million bucks, which sounds like a lot, but it's not a lot to complete [this type of] facility. So, we went to work continuing to raise money and grow it a step at a time,” Peters says of the would-be seed monies he had at his disposal as councilmember at the time. “I would get \$1 million dollars one year, get \$2 million the next. Every year I was just getting money in the budget and kept moving forward with planning and engineering,” he said.

Convinced the idea had potential, Peters and Morrison pulled Jeff



Aerial photo of Liberty Sports Park taken by drone of six completed fields. There will be ten fields when it's completed.
PHOTO: NAIMICHAEL COS.

Phase I Retail
NOW LEASING!



SOUTH LAKE

MARKETPLACE

Join our **NEW**
Destination Retail
Center in the DC Region

*Up to 600,000 square feet
of commercial space available*

Adjoins Liberty Sports Park, the Mid-Atlantic region's premier sports tournament venue attracting over 344,000 visitors annually

Closest retail to major employment centers Collington Trade Zone & National Capital Business Park, featuring 8+ million square feet

- ▶ Flexible deal structures for anchor, pad, and in-line sites
- ▶ Main entrance at signalized intersection with Crain Highway (Route 301)
- ▶ Prominent pylon signage
- ▶ Quick access to major highways including Route 301, Route 50, the Capital Beltway (I-495) and I-95

COMING
SOON!



Contact us to learn more about locating your business to South Lake

NAMichael

+1 301 459 4400 | naimichael.com

Flaig onto the team. Morrison and Flaig went back together as far as



high school where they were lacrosse teammates. Both former athletes, teammates and lifelong sports enthusiasts, they joined Green Branch, each bringing over 30 years of sports and business development to the table. Like Morrison, Flaig had a passion for Lacrosse that bordered on the spiritual and years of high level playing and coaching experience. Flaig's official role as board treasurer was fulfilled, but it paled in comparison to what he brought to the table. For Flaig, the project was similar to being asked to be part of the Academy at the Oscars or the NFL's executive team during Superbowl Week. "Oh my gosh, he was so excited to be included in the endeavor from the very beginning because it was just an idea, it was a concept for so long, and he just kept saying, 'We'll break ground next year. And then it was next year. And then next year.' It was a long wait, but he was so proud of the progress that they were making and just excited about the opportunity to be involved in the whole project," says Terry Flaig, Jeff's wife of 32 years. After decades of love for athletic competition and discipline of sport, specifically, lacrosse, Liberty was Flaig's legacy work [see "*The Flaig Effect*," Page 44].

In 2015, Gary Michael, President and CEO of NAI Michael Companies brought two winning aspects to the deal: solid construction experience and South Lake.

"We had a champion in the Michael Companies who knew the construction side and would help us with bringing large crowds, restaurants, shopping and hotels," Peters says.

Introducing South Lake

South Lake is the planned mixed-use community co-located with Liberty Park, which will offer student athletes, their families and college recruiters something that no other sporting facility in the DMV area provides—the opportunity to play, eat and sleep all within steps of the sporting fields. South Lake will boast 381 acres of mixed-use space, 1,600 homes and 600,000 square feet of commercial retail space. Athletes and their families will be able to leave the field and walk directly to restaurants and hotels, a convenience factor that developers are betting on for success. The combination of Liberty Park's state of the art fields and South Lake's amenities creates the perfect combination to

lure the 300,000 visitors that developers expect to see annually—and the significant dollars they will bring to the county. The Liberty Sports Park facility and South Lake amenities are projected to create over 500 jobs and more than \$50 million in annual spending.

Peters liked the additional value South Lake added to Liberty. Michael appreciated the projections—and the residual effects for upcoming generations of Prince Georgians.

"We were shown the market study that the Maryland Stadium Authority produced, and it convinced us that this can really be an impactful thing for both the youth in the county and the economic development of Prince George's County. It was a twofer," Michael says. "But that study really convinced us that we're going to have hundreds of thousands of people coming to visit here and our kids will benefit from not having to travel, and also having some of these major college scouts here in our hometown looking at our kids."

NAI Michael Companies is a longstanding anchor company in the county's economic growth and identity. A true corporate good neighbor, the Michael Companies has been a source for jobs, community support and educational development for some five decades.

"Over 50 years, we've done a lot of different things," Michael replied when asked if the company had worked on a project similar to Liberty – South Lake in the past. "We developed the Ammendale Business Campus, which is a 400-acre business park. It's been a real success and something we're really proud of. The shopping centers that we've done have added retail opportunities for the County and created jobs and tax revenue for the County. It is important to us. This is right now one of our bigger things and something that we want to get right. We've got one opportunity to do a really good job, and we're going to put all of our energy into doing that, making it happen."

Michael demographically envisions South Lake as a cross section of the county, from first time homeowners and family homes to empty nesters and seniors. Residents will appreciate the walkable nature of the location and will likely be sports and wellness enthusiasts themselves.

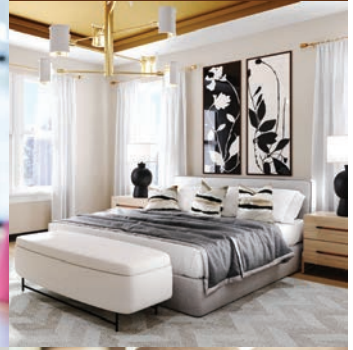
"We're all across the board in terms of the product that we're going to have. We'll have from apartments and condominiums that are for starter families or singles to single-family homes that could sell for a million bucks," he says. "It's going to run the gamut."

Michael continues: "I do think that what we have is a walkable community. It's going to be people who have a health wellness kind of a bent to them. Maybe the sports thing is a huge attraction [for South Lake]. If you had kids involved in sports, they can walk down to the fields for their practice, and they can walk to see the games on the weekends. I think that the community will be a cross section of the county. I think that it'll probably have an orientation toward people who want to get out and walk, people who want to exercise, who are interested in sports. That would be my sense."

This Magnetic Moment

Acquiring the funding was the last big hurdle. "I was able to secure the balance of the funds, the \$14 million from the state to get it all constructed," Peters said.

According to the former statesman, when the time came to put the



**LIVE
SHOP
WORK
PLAY**



The Bowie Place to Be

At the intersection of Routes 214 & 301 lies history in the making. A new community, meticulously planned for you, that will have it all: a thoughtful mix of homes, a bustling retail Marketplace, an incredible Clubhouse and a rich list of resort-style amenities. **Welcome to South Lake Bowie, models are open and sales are underway – we invite you to join us.**

SouthLakeBowie.com

 **SOUTH LAKE**





“Our purpose at Truist is to inspire and build better lives and communities. We live up to our purpose by making sure we are supporting the positive development and growth of the county.”

—Truist Bank Senior Vice President — Market President Bernita Bailey



Liberty's Leaders (l-r)
 Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks; former Sen. Doug J.J. Peters with his wife Corinne, daughter Natalie and son-in-law Chandler; NAI Michael Companies President & CEO Gary Michael and Green Branch Management Chair Tom Graham in his photo and trophy room and posed with his Hall of Fame ring.



reins in the hands of someone who could complete the vision, it had to be Tom Graham. Graham checked all the boxes: executive level leadership as former Pepco president, an award-winning athlete, now in the Hall of Fame at his alma mater, the University of Tampa, community leadership experience and relationships, and sheer charisma.

“It all really came together and it was a vision I had,” Peters says of Graham as the board chair. “I was an architect for awhile and then I was able to turn it over to Tom, and Tom took it to the finish line. I took it from Alpha to Tau. Tom took it to Omega.”

Graham says the need for Liberty was immediately clear to him. “I grew up on the playground and playing on dirt and rocks,”

time I really played on a nice field was probably in college. I coached at Georgetown University for 19 years. I knew that there was a tremendous need for quality facilities in the DMV area.”

Truist Bank was among the first financial institutions to step in.

“We’re a very proud supporter of the Liberty Sports Park through a grant to Greenbranch Management non-profit from the Truist Foundation,” says Truist Bank Senior Vice President — Market President Bernita Bailey. Bailey, a lifelong resident of Prince George’s County, wasn’t always a bank professional. “I remember as a child having to travel to the next county over in order to do

the sport I loved because at that time there wasn’t a gymnastics facility in the county. Through the hard work and dedication of our county leaders and the business community, Prince George’s now has state of the art facilities to support our kids.” She says Truist aims to be a solution-oriented corporate neighbor in Prince George’s. “Our purpose at Truist is to inspire and build better lives and communities and we live up to our purpose by making sure we are supporting the positive development and growth of the county. Through direct grants from the Truist Foundation to nonprofit organizations, we can give our communities the opportunity to succeed. We are a very proud supporter of the Liberty Sports Park through a grant to Greenbranch Management non-profit from the Truist Foundation.”

Other sponsors include The Washington Commanders, NAI Michael Companies, St. John Properties, Bush Construction, Pepsi Cos. and Oak Hill Strategies.

Equity And Access Goals

“One thing I hadn’t talked about was how important the MBE minority part of this project was to us,” Peters says. “I made sure that we kept in touch with Bowie State University. They’re a partner in this and they’ve been at every function. On the turf and the major expenditures, we required MBE participation. There is a whole part of the



Tom Graham and former Senator Douglas J.J. Peters at the grand opening.

“If [Liberty] was around when I was a kid, I’d have been a better player. I’d be healthier now because my legs wouldn’t be all screwed up from playing on the wrong kind of field conditions. It would have been such an inspiration for me.”

—NFL veteran Derrick Fenner

retail shopping area that the Michael Companies has committed to have MBEs work with ownership, equity and real money [opportunities],” he explains. The career public servant says minority business equity was a top priority on the project.

Regarding access, during weekdays from three to five p.m. the public school system will also have the opportunity to use the facility at no fee. “The unique thing about our partnership is 25% of our net proceeds, we donate back to the community to support some other non-profit,” Graham says. “Whether it be programming for kids, whether it be STEM, whatever that might be, whatever we decide it’s going to be, but 25% of the net proceeds go back into our community.”

“We’re going to do a lot of fundraising as well,” he continues. “We have some good sponsors. And I can’t say enough about Gary Michael and the Michael companies. Their contribution as a development consultant at no fee has been extraordinarily important to the success of the project.”

Liberty will also partner with neighboring Bowie State University through an internship program funded, in part, by the grant from the Truist Foundation.



Prince George’s Continues To Evolve As An Entertainment Destination

Since 2000, particularly with the groundbreaking at National Harbor (2005), there has been a slow but steady walk by county leaders and developers strengthening Prince George’s as an entertainment destination – arguably the playground of the DMV. Certainly, Six Flags, in Bowie since 1974 and Jack Kent Cooke Stadium (now FedEx Field), here since 1997, along with scores of historic and cultural venues are part of the county’s established social and entertainment fabric.

But things are growing quickly: The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland (2001), Bowie State University opened its new Performing Arts Center (2012), MGM National Harbor (2016), The Culinary Arts Center at Prince George’s Community College (2018), The Center for the Performing Arts at Prince George’s Community College (2019).

As COVID-19 takes a back seat to reopening, Parks and Recreation and the County Executive’s office push forward with soon-to-come projects that include renovations at the Publick Playhouse and a new arts amphitheater and “downtown” Largo. Liberty Sports Park and South Lake will contribute to the destination landscape of the county.

NFL veteran Derrick Fenner, a Marylander who played for the Seattle Seahawks and attended Oxon Hill High School, praised

Liberty’s advent. “Man, if this were around when I was a kid, one, I’d have been a better player. Two, I’d be healthier now because my legs wouldn’t be all screwed up from playing on the wrong kind of field condition.”

“It would have been such an inspiration for me,” he continued. “If one of these kids who’s playing brings their friends out to the field and they see this place, they’re going to be like, ‘Wow, man, this is the big time.’”

There are moments when locales begin to evolve far beyond their original aspirations. The County is no longer a sidekick to the nation’s capital, but a destination spot curated on its own terms. “Absolutely,” Peters says embracing the notion that the county is evolving into a social, political, and economic driver in the region. “This is another destination particularly focused around athletics,” he said referring to Liberty. “You go to National Harbor, you go to Largo, which is becoming a downtown hub – the council’s there, the exec’s there, the hospital’s there. Each area is becoming its own defined destination. Liberty Sports Park will be the athletic center of the county.”



60+
Real estate professionals



12,000+
Transactions brokered



5,000,000+
Square feet managed



10,000+
Acres developed

Our 50 years experience is key to helping you be successful.

NAI Michael is proudly celebrating 50 years of service to Prince George's County and the entire Washington DC metropolitan region. We are one of the largest full-service, privately owned commercial real estate firms serving the DC region. Our in-depth local knowledge is unparalleled.

We provide brokerage, property management, and development consulting services. Our experienced team provides clients with the best service in all commercial markets, including office, industrial, medical, retail, and land.

Contact us today at (301) 459-4400
to find out how we can help you!

BROKERAGE | PROPERTY MANAGEMENT | DEVELOPMENT CONSULTING

10100 Business Parkway • Lanham, MD 20706 • naimichael.com