

Occupancy Tax, Affordable Housing

The excerpted article below was published by the Asheville Citizen Times on June 1.

Service workers, community organizers and concerned residents gathered May 31 on the doorstep of Asheville's convention and visitors bureau calling for tourism tax dollars to be put to use to address Buncombe County's burgeoning housing crisis.

The May 31 event was organized by Food and Beverage United, Buncombe Decides, Asheville For All and Asheville Democratic Socialists of America.

Their ask is twofold, and was presented to Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority board members at their monthly meeting along with more than 2,000 signatures.

The first of the coalition's asks was that the new TDA funding cycle known as the Legacy Investment From Tourism (LIFT) Fund, likely to total \$10.2 million by the time grants are awarded in April 2024, would dedicate money toward affordable housing projects.

The second was for service workers to be represented on the committee that will ultimately make project recommendations to the TDA.

Governor Signs Sports Wagering Bill

The following article was excerpted from WSOC-TV published on June 14.



You can soon place bets right from your phone.

North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper headed to Charlotte's Spectrum Center on Wednesday to sign a bill that legalizes mobile sports betting.

Now that the bill is signed, you'll be able to bet from your phone and in person at eight facilities across the state.

The law allows bets on college, professional and other sports at places like the Spectrum Center, Bank of America Stadium, and Charlotte Motor Speedway in Concord.

"This legislation provides funding for treatment and prevention for people with addiction and gambling problems," Gov. Cooper added. "Look this is a very real thing, and it exists now. We already know, sports gambling is going on now in our state, this gives us the opportunity to put up safeguards."

Supporters say the betting bill will provide North Carolina with a major revenue stream. NASCAR fans Channel 9 spoke with at the Coca-Cola 600 last month said this is long overdue. "I have been waiting a long time for sports betting to come here, that way you can bet on races," Jeremy Taylor said. "If sports betting does come here, it is going to be a good thing."

Sports betting could start as soon as Jan. 8, but the North Carolina Lottery Commission has up to one year to get it up and running once it's signed by the governor.

The state could generate about \$100 million from sports betting by its fifth year. As Cooper mentioned, that money would go to treatment programs for gambling addictions, youth sports programs, and several public universities including UNC Charlotte.

The remaining money would supply the general fund and provide grants to draw events to the state.