



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, August 6, 2019

Prepared by the Grizzlies ownership group

Last Monday evening, July 29<sup>th</sup>, the Gastonia Grizzlies, along with the Atlantic League and the United Shores Baseball League made a presentation to the FUSE Stadium Committee regarding management of the FUSE Stadium. Last Tuesday afternoon, we were notified by the City Manager that the Stadium Committee was recommending to the City Council that the City negotiate with the Atlantic League to manage the FUSE Stadium and provide a baseball team as the primary tenant.

Earlier this spring, the prospect of the Grizzlies ownership group – Sean Churchill, Jesse Cole, Emily Cole, Bill Davidson & Matt Perry – acquiring an Atlantic League franchise was put forward. After conducting extensive research on the Atlantic League, the Grizzlies ultimately reached the conclusion that it would be very difficult to operate a successful Atlantic League team in Gastonia, furthered by the Atlantic League’s lackluster attendance figures this season in the new High Point stadium.

While researching the Atlantic League, the Grizzlies were asked by the City whether we would consider sharing the facility with the Atlantic League, a solution the City felt was a plausible alternative. We expressed our concern that a shared facility by two teams may be too much baseball for the market and reiterated our concerns that the market was not large enough for an Atlantic League franchise to operate profitably.

As we stated to the Stadium Committee, the Grizzlies believe we offered the best option to manage the FUSE stadium and serve as the primary baseball tenant. As part of our management team, we presented an experienced national development team who was committed to developing the area adjacent to the stadium. We had also lined up a soccer franchise for the new venue, contingent on our management of the facility. Considering the time, effort and investment put forward by the Grizzlies organization on the FUSE project, we were surprised and disappointed with the City’s decision. However, we need to move the Grizzlies franchise forward.

The Grizzlies will wrap up the 2019 season followed by the League playoffs and hope to provide another League Championship for Gastonia. Currently, the team plans to launch a fun and memorable celebration of Sims Legion Stadium for the 2020 season. As for the team’s long-term prospects, the Grizzlies will explore its options which will include seeking a lease as a second tenant in the FUSE facility and/or relocating the team to a new market.

The Grizzlies are proud of their 18 years in Gastonia and the opportunity to provide quality baseball, great family entertainment and community engagement. The team is equally proud to have initiated the baseball stadium concept nearly six years ago while working side-by-side with the City throughout the stadium process to help bring the FUSE project to fruition.

For further information, please contact Matt Perry, ownership partner, at 785-478-1560.