

# Soccer team lays out plans

**BY PAT KIMBROUGH**  
ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER

## HIGH POINT —

The new professional soccer team that will play in High Point will put a premium on developing a pipeline of youth talent. Carolina Core FC representatives told the High Point Economic Development Corp. board on Wednesday that the team has a foundation arm that will provide free access to its youth soccer at an annual cost of \$20,000 per child. "The only issue with MLS Next and a lot of other higher-level youth soccer is they're extremely expensive," said Eddie Pope, chief sporting officer for Carolina Core FC. "For example, a fall and spring season may cost a parent \$8,000 to \$10,000-plus, which, obviously, that's going to exclude a lot of families, a lot of players regardless how good they are." The foundation will be designed to make Carolina Core youth soccer free for all children so that the pathway from youth soccer to the pros is easier to navigate,

he said. "Obviously, our goal is to make our MLS Next program free to everyone," Pope said. "We feel like, that way, we can touch all communities and all price points. We will absolutely eliminate that barrier." The team will play its first match at Truist Point stadium in April 2024, Carolina Core FC President Andy Smith told the EDC. The city has committed to renovating the stadium at an estimated cost of \$6 million to accommodate soccer. Smith said the renovations will bring enhancements that benefit both soccer and the stadium's other tenant, the High Point Rockers baseball team. "The new corner bar is really the big thing that we're all excited about, using that space on that empty pad in right field, which is going to be a great spot for soccer and baseball too," he said. "I think it's going to be a great place for people to congregate."