

SOUTHERN PINES EVALUATING ALTERNATIVE LOCATIONS FOR YMCA FACILITY

The Town of Southern Pines is suspending any further formal action to convey approximately 8.4 acres of property to the YMCA of the Sandhills and will instead evaluate other suitable locations.

At its business meeting on March 14, the Town Council adopted a resolution announcing its intent to convey property along the northern side of Morganton Road so the YMCA can construct an indoor recreational facility. The property identified in that resolution is to the east of Henley Street and is the site of the Armory Park ballfield.

“In 1974, the Town accepted federal Land and Water Conservation funds of \$30,000 in order to develop three park sites. One of those sites was the property that the current Town Council was interested in conveying to the YMCA. Approximately \$17,500 in federal funding was used to construct the ballfields, restrooms, and associated improvements at the Armory Park site; the remainder was used in two other areas – Downtown Park and Pool Park,” states Town Manager Reagan Parsons. “As we continued our due diligence work to formally convey the land, we learned that the federal restrictions associated with LWCF do not make this a viable site for the YMCA’s indoor recreation facility. In order to move forward, the Town must be prepared to acquire another site that appraises for at least the current market value of Armory Park and then construct a new ballfield, restrooms, and other improvements. Only then are we able to initiate a lengthy review process with the National Park Service to convey Armory Park to the YMCA, which comes with no guarantee of approval.”

The Town Council intended to consider formal action on conveying the Armory Park site at its April 11 meeting. In exchange for the property, the YMCA was prepared to construct and operate an indoor facility of at least 45,000 square feet, slated to open by the end of 2027. Instead, town officials will continue working with the YMCA to evaluate different sites in Southern Pines.

“The Town Council and staff remain committed to partnering with the YMCA of the Sandhills to construct a facility in Southern Pines. We wholeheartedly support the YMCA as we know their presence will bring increased services and improved quality of life that are especially critical for low-income families,” adds Mayor Carol Haney. “We are continuing to have conversations with the YMCA leaders and they are open to evaluating other sites in Southern Pines. It is our hope that this is simply a temporary delay in the Town’s goal of welcoming the YMCA permanently to Southern Pines.”