

# Town to Purchase Land for Future Parks and Recreation Facility

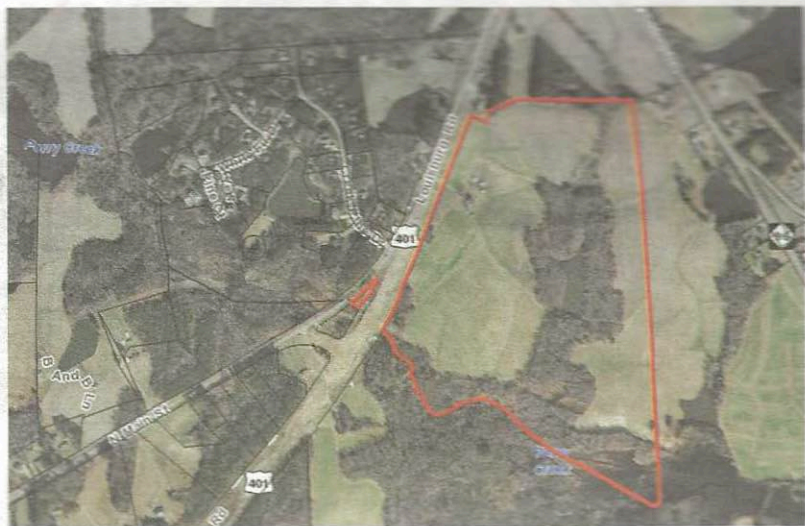
By SUSAN LONDON

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An idea years in the making came to fruition June 27 when the Town of Rolesville signed an offer to purchase 116 acres for a future parks and recreation facility. Town Manager Bryan Hicks said town officials hope to complete the purchase by the end of September.

Owned by members of the Frazier family, the land is appraised at \$29,000 per acre, with a total purchase price of just under \$3.4 million. Funds for the purchase were allocated in the 2017-18 budget, and the town expects to obtain financing through a low-interest government loan estimated at 2.75%. Developer impact fees will be used toward the purchase.

The land, located at 11624 Louisburg Road near the intersection with N.C. 96, will provide space for a multipurpose facility to support sports programs including baseball, softball, soccer, football and basketball, and for possible future entertainment and educational use.



WAKE COUNTY REVENUE MAPS

**An aerial view of 116 acres under contract for purchase by the Town of Rolesville located at 11624 Louisburg Road.**

Rolesville currently uses facilities at Rolesville Middle School, Rolesville Elementary School and Sanford Creek Elementary School. While the town owns the fields at Rolesville Elementary, the Wake County Public School System owns those at Rolesville Middle and San-

ford Creek, and the town handles most of the maintenance at a cost of \$92,000 per year. The town also rents basketball facilities at Rolesville Middle and Thales Academy for which it pays \$22,000 per year.

**See Land Purchase, T ▸**



# Land Purchase

continued from page 1

The town is generally at WCPSS's mercy as to availability for usage of the fields; town programs cannot use the fields during school hours, for example.

"We've been talking about land purchases in the last 10 years," said Frank Hodge, a town commissioner who has been key in moving the project forward.

Hodge has served as a commissioner since 1989 and has seen the need for town facilities grow through the years.

"With the tremendous growth we've had out here, it's almost a requirement now," he said, "... We're using the county school properties because we don't have any, but we bought and paid for them with our tax dollars and then we're also maintaining them. We're spending money we don't need to be spending."

In December 2016, Hodge, along with Hicks and Parks and Recreation Director J.G. Ferguson, formed the Rolesville Athletic Complex Development Committee, which also includes Town Advisory Board Member Allen Mitchell, Town Commissioner Michelle Medley, and Mayor Frank Eagles. The committee's purpose was to design, identify, select and acquire property within the Rolesville community.

The committee completed a search of available land, identifying seven properties that



PHOTO BY SUSAN LONDON

**The land being purchased includes a main home and several outlying structures.**

fell within their criteria, primary of which was that the size should be more than 100 acres. Most were not actively listed for sale. Hodge, a long-time resident of Rolesville who knows many multigenerational families, said availability of land is mainly by word of mouth.

Once they settled on the Frazier property, they spent the better part of this year negotiating with family members, many of whom no longer live in the area.

The town plans to preserve a residential structure on the property dating from 1826, several utility buildings and two ponds. Ferguson noted that future greenway plans lead to the property.

From now until the fall, the town will submit an application for review by the Local Government Commission, an offshoot of the state treasurer's office tasked with oversight of local government financing, and the town will complete other due diligence on the sale.

Once closing has completed, the town will

move forward with the process of choosing a provider to create a master plan and determining potential funding of construction of sports fields and other facilities. Hicks said the design may be a wagon wheel approach with fields radiating from a central concession and seating area. The planning process will involve public input.

Ultimately, according to town estimates, the final cost on the entire project including a future recreation building could exceed \$20 million.

Hodge stressed the goal is to move forward with putting the land into use in some capacity within the next year.

"The town has never done anything this big. There's a fair amount of money involved," Hodge said. "Our goal next year [is] to begin using that property for something. ... But we want to use it for something to get people focused and, hey, it's for real. It's not just a piece of land that will sit there for 10 years."