

## PRESS RELEASE



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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Town of Hope Mills to Host Groundbreaking Ceremony for Heritage Park

**HOPE MILLS, N.C.** – The Town of Hope Mills will host a groundbreaking ceremony for Heritage Park, located at 5445 Lakeview Road, Hope Mills, North Carolina, on Friday, October 6, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. 2023 has been a busy year for the Town of Hope Mills as many milestones have been reached, from the Grand Opening of the John W. Hodges Public Safety Center to the Ribbon Cutting for Reid’s Journey Inclusive Playground at Hope Mills Municipal Park. These projects have been years in the making and Heritage Park is no different.

Those who frequent Hope Mills may be familiar with the sign identifying the future home of Heritage Park that sits beside Hope Mills Lake dam located off of Lakeview Road. The long-delayed Heritage Park project was put on hold after the 2010 failure of Hope Mills Lake dam. In July 2019, the Hope Mills Board of Commissioners approved a proposal from McAdams Company, a design, planning and engineering firm based in North Carolina, to complete the Master Plan and Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) grant application for Phase I development of Heritage Park. In 2020, the Town received notification it was one of 16 recipients of the 2020 PARTF grants and accepted \$300,000 of grant funding. The final master plan for Heritage Park was also adopted in November 2020. During the process, McAdams Company held meetings with Hope Mills residents to receive their input on the project.

A complete breakdown of the Heritage Park development timeline is as follows:

- November 16, 2020 - The Board of Commissioners accepted the PARTF grant from NCDENR, and authorized the Mayor to execute an agreement for Phase I construction.
- December 7, 2020 - The Board of Commissioners approved a contract amendment with McAdams to continue with the design phase of the project and allow McAdams to proceed with design development and construction documents for Phase I of Heritage Park, which was a condition of the PARTF grant.
- November 3, 2021- McAdams completed the design development phase and site plan for Phase I Construction. The site plan was approved by the Town’s Planning Committee. During this time, the Town was awaiting approval and recommendations from State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) regarding the Phase I Archaeological Study.
- March 21, 2022 - The Board of Commissioners approved the contract with McAdams Company for the provision of engineering drawings for Phase I construction bidding.

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- June 20, 2022 - The Board of Commissioners approved the design-build purchase for the design and construction of the Heritage Park Comfort Station (restroom building).
- November 2, 2022 - The Division of Water Resources NCDENR awarded the Town a grant in the amount of \$200,000 for the construction of the flume storm water feature.
- September 12, 2022 - SHPO and the North Carolina State Division of Parks and Recreation directed the Town to stop the construction process pending an in-depth Archaeological Data Recover Report.
- September 19, 2022 - The Board of Commissioners approved the contract with Richard Grubb & Associates (RG) to perform the data recovery field work and report. The field work for this phase of the project took approximately 6 months to complete and another 90 days to complete the report.
- July 2023 - RGA completed the Archaeological Data Recovery report and submitted its finding to SHPO. The report revealed that no significant historical artifacts were found, and recommended the Town be released to begin construction. The Town of Hope Mills is currently awaiting approval from SHPO before we can move forward with construction bidding.
- July 14, 2023 - The Town of Hope Mills received notification from Congressman David Rouser's office that we had received an EPA grant in the amount of \$350,000 for the reconstruction of the historic flume.

On September 18, 2023, the Town of Hope Mills Parks & Recreation Department announced they will host a Groundbreaking Ceremony to commemorate the beginning of construction for Heritage Park. Interim Town Manager Chancer McLaughlin said "the development is a major milestone for the Town of Hope Mills as it allows the Town to preserve its history in a way that is educational while providing citizens with yet another park & recreation facility. The park, which will be more passive in nature, will tell the rich story of one of the strongest mill communities that once thrived in the heart of Cumberland County". The preservation of mill village history will also be evident by the inclusion of a historical gate and flume from a previous dam. The plan for the over 7-acre site includes a comfort/restroom station, nature trails, a kayak/canoe launch, interpretative signs, an open lawn space to allow for events, an outdoor classroom, shelters, and ample parking.

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