

Subject: Public Hearing on Parks & Rec. merger: Thursday, Nov. 13 @ 7 p.m.

The Mayors' Coalition of Cumberland County is hosting a public hearing to hear comments from citizens regarding the proposed consolidation of city and county parks and recreation services.

The hearing is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 13, at the Department of Social Services Building on Ramsey Street. The hearing will be held in the first floor conference room. Prior to the hearing, a member of the Cumberland County Manager's staff will make a presentation regarding the proposed agreement.

Persons wishing to speak may sign up at the door between 6:30 and 7 p.m. To ensure that everyone has an opportunity to speak, individuals addressing the coalition have three minutes to make their remarks.

The Fayetteville City Council on Oct. 6 took a step closer to merging the city and county recreation departments by unanimously endorsing a proposal to manage the county's recreation program. Fayetteville City Manager Roger Stancil presented the proposal to City Council during its special called Monday night meeting. Earlier that day, County Manager James Martin made the same proposal to the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners.

The proposal calls for county of Cumberland to contract with the city of Fayetteville to manage its recreation programming via an inter-local agreement, an official memorandum of understanding that will be presented to council no later than the first meeting in December.

That agreement, according to Stancil, would be fairly broad allowing both Stancil and Martin to work out details over the next several months that will lead to the eventual merger of both systems by July 1, 2004. Part of the agreement seeks to consolidate recreation services into one location.

Fayetteville Mayor Marshall B. Pitts Jr. currently serves as chairman of the Mayors' Coalition. Hope Mills Mayor Ed Deaver is vice chair. The coalition consists of the mayors and top town administrators or managers of the county's municipalities. The chairman of the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners and the county manager also are members of the coalition.