

AN AGING FACILITY



“Rebuilding the facility isn’t only about replacing a building,” Fayetteville resident Bernard Hayes told Cumberland County commissioners recently. “It’s about preserving a legacy that has shaped our town’s identity.”

ANDREW CRAFT/THE FAYETTEVILLE OBSERVER

Fayetteville YMCA members: Building is deteriorating

Rachael Riley
Fayetteville Observer
USA TODAY NETWORK

Members of the Sandhills YMCA in Fayetteville want local leaders to find funds to replace what they say is an aging facility.

Four members of the YMCA addressed Cumberland County commissioners during the public comments portion of the commissioners’ Aug. 25 meeting to speak about the issues and

why they think the YMCA benefits the community.

At the Aug. 25 meeting, Fayetteville resident Radhika Munugoti, a 10-year YMCA member, said the building at 2717 Fort Bragg Road was constructed in 1970 and is deteriorating.

The roof leaks, the heating and ventilation system is outdated, there are plumbing failures, cracked bricks and unreliable heating and cooling, Munugoti said.

“A new building isn’t a luxury,” she said. “It is a necessity.”

Three people also spoke on issues at the YMCA during the Fayetteville City Council’s Aug. 11 meeting.

On Sept. 3, YMCA of the Sandhills President and CEO Jeff Darling told The

Fayetteville Observer that YMCA officials address issues at the 55-year-old building when they arise.

“We’re making sure that people are safe while they’re in the building, and those are what I call critical repairs that will get done in a timely manner, but then we have other repairs that we need that are on our priority list and as funding is available, we take care of those,” Darling said.

What members say the Y does for the community

Fayetteville resident Bernard Hayes said the YMCA is a cornerstone of the

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Myron B. Pitts
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ShotSpotter is up for renewal

I had one sure takeaway from the Fayetteville City Council’s hour-and-a-half-long discussion on ShotSpotter on Sept. 2. ShotSpotter is the pricey gunshot detection system by SoundThinking that is meant to reduce gun violence, the city contract for which is up for renewal.

My take is that people should continue to call 911, whatever the city does with ShotSpotter. Calling 911 in an emergency is still one of our greatest tools in responding to and investigating any kind of crime, including gun crimes. Even ShotSpotter alerts appeared to be most effective when they worked in conjunction with 911 calls, according to consultants who presented the results of an 18-month study of Fayetteville’s ShotSpotter system at a council work session Tuesday afternoon.

As for the effectiveness of ShotSpotter itself, the report presented a decidedly mixed bag. While the consultants were appropriately agnostic on whether the city should keep the controversial system, their findings appeared to show it provided some value in the end but was likely much less effective than the company has claimed.

The Fayetteville City Council work session turned testy

The consultants’ update played out against an important financial backdrop: The city will no longer have its

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Why has J. Cole been in Fayetteville so much this year?

Joseph Pierre
Fayetteville Observer
USA TODAY NETWORK

J. Cole has made countless visits to Fayetteville over the years, which isn’t surprising given that he was raised here. But the Grammy Award-winning hip-hop artist seems to have been in town more frequently in 2025.

Born Jermaine Cole on a military base in Germany in 1985, J. Cole was

raised at 2014 Forest Hills Drive in Fayetteville. The address of his childhood home, located off Cain Road in the northeastern part of the city, is also the name of Cole’s six-times platinum album.

The hip-hop artist is also a 2003 graduate of Terry Sanford High School, where he played two years of varsity basketball with the Bulldogs.

This year, from March through August, Cole was spotted in several places

in Fayetteville. He hasn’t been this visible here since 2020, when he filmed a Puma ad and took part in a protest after George Floyd’s death.

We wondered why J. Cole was being seen so frequently in Fayetteville this year, but his management team did not respond to requests for an interview. Instead, here’s what we know and what residents have told us about his 2025 visits to Fayetteville — so far.

From CRU Lounge to Waffle House

J. Cole was spotted in the Fayetteville area often in March, especially with the fifth and final Dreamville Festival being held in Raleigh, where Cole now lives, on April 5-6.

Social media posts surfaced online noting where the hip hop star was traveling throughout the city.

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