

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
May 23, 2025

**City of Friendsville Provides Update on Proposed Arcadia Behavioral Health Facility**

**FRIENDSVILLE, TN** – The City of Friendsville is providing an update on the proposed Arcadia behavioral health facility, which has garnered public interest and questions in recent months.

Arcadia first expressed interest in establishing a facility in Friendsville in 2018, and reinitiated contact in July 2023. No further communication occurred until April 2025, when Arcadia contacted the City Planner to resume development discussions.

Since then, Arcadia has submitted preliminary site plans for review. While the proposed location is zoned appropriately under the City’s C-2 Corridor district and meets all applicable zoning ordinance requirements, the project has not yet been brought before the Planning Commission.

The delay is due to a critical infrastructure concern: whether the City’s water system can support the facility’s fire suppression and sprinkler system needs without compromising the water service to existing customers. Until this issue is resolved, the project cannot move forward in the planning process.

Arcadia’s engineers are actively collaborating with the City Engineer to find a viable solution. Once resolved, the revised plans will undergo a coordinated review by the City Planner, Codes Inspector, the State Fire Marshal’s Office, and the State Building Inspector to ensure compliance with all regulatory requirements.

After these reviews are complete and approvals are secured, Arcadia may formally request to be placed on the agenda for a Planning Commission meeting, where the public will have the opportunity to provide comments or feedback.

**Legal Considerations and Zoning**

Following public concern, City officials consulted with the University of Tennessee’s Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) for guidance. MTAS confirmed that under Tennessee law, municipalities must follow due process when regulating businesses. This means fair procedures must be in place, and businesses must be given the opportunity to operate if they meet legal and zoning requirements.

Although municipalities may establish zoning designations, they cannot arbitrarily deny a business the right to operate in a permitted zone. Attempts to do so, such as rezoning in a discriminatory or reactionary manner, could result in legal consequences, including lawsuits the City is unlikely to win.

This matter underscores a broader lesson: as growth along Highway 321 accelerates, communities like Friendsville must proactively plan and update ordinances to address future development in a legally sound and forward-thinking manner.

**Commitment to Transparency**

The City of Friendsville remains firmly committed to open, transparent governance and encourages all citizens to stay informed and involved. Residents are welcome to attend public meetings, explore resources on the City’s website at [www.friendsvilletn.gov](http://www.friendsvilletn.gov), and communicate directly with City staff through official channels.

“The city is not hiding anything,” said Mayor Steven Cardwell. “Our staff and commission are always available and willing to answer questions. We ask that residents reach out to us directly so we can provide accurate information and address concerns in a constructive manner.”

The Friendsville Board of Commissioners and the Planning Commission share this commitment to transparency and are dedicated to preserving the City’s small-town charm while planning for thoughtful, sustainable growth.

While the City does not engage in official discussions on social media, due to the potential for misinformation and unproductive exchanges, we encourage residents to contact City Hall directly with any questions. Our goal is to serve the community respectfully, openly, and effectively.

For media inquiries or additional information, please contact City Hall at **865-995-2831**.

Thank you,

City of Friendsville