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Phillips Foundation donates \$3.5 million for Greensboro performing arts center

By Stephanie Stilwell

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GREENSBORO—Large donations continue to come in for Greensboro performing arts center.

The Community Foundation of Greensboro is trying to raise \$20 million in private money to make the project a reality. Over the last few weeks they've been able to reach a quarter of their goal.

It's another major donation to Greensboro's proposed \$60 million performing arts center, as \$3.5 million from the Phillips Foundation came in.

“Phillips Foundation is really interested in making strategic grants that are high-impact, large amounts gifts to create some momentum and move Greensboro forward,” said Phillips Foundation Executive Director Elizabeth Phillips.

This donation comes just a week after Lorillard donated \$1 million to the project. Donors say it's a sign of how important it is.

“We really see it as an economic game changer for the community and wanted to support it in a big way to hopefully encourage other private sector donors to also contribute,” Phillips said.

As it stands now, the project is in fundraising mode. Although project leaders aren't saying how close they are to their \$20 million target and they're not releasing the names of their donors until later this month.

The city voted to give \$20 million to GPAC. That money will come from user fees and not the taxpayers. Although project leaders still have to come up with another \$20 million before the project moves any closer to becoming a reality.

“There's a gap there. We're going to have to narrow the gap but when you have this type of enthusiasm from private donors, the city council has to find a way to make it happen,” Greensboro Mayor Robbie Perkins said.

He said in the end, both sides will have to meet in the middle.

“I think it will be a back and forth and hopefully we'll come together, and have a project and we can start construction sometime this fall,” said Perkins.

A committee has recommended the former YWCA site as the location for the Performing Arts Center to be built. However, a final decision has not been made.