



and Wofford. The team is responsible for finding families in the community to house the players if they're not local.

"I wish them well," Spartanburg Mayor Bill Barnet said. "I was delighted they were in Spartanburg, and I wish the circumstances of Duncan Park had been different. Maybe that would have changed their thought process."

An estimated \$4.7 million would be needed to make the Duncan Park Stadium a real attraction, and the park only collected a few thousand dollars each year from the Stingers.

That's not deterring the Friends of Duncan Park, a community group bent on keeping this piece of the city's - and of baseball's - history intact.

"We wish the Stingers the best, but we're moving along," said Lenny Mathis, president of the Friends of Duncan Park.

"We've actually been in conversations with other baseball organizations - I can't say who - but we're hoping to hear back positive things."

The year 2009 has been floated as a potential target date for saving the park, Mathis said. The group is working with the city, but ultimately negotiations and any bottom-line decisions - like contract-signing or giving the green light for renovations - lie with the local government.

Had the city been more aggressive with its plan, the Stingers might have decided to stick around.

"They still probably will save the park. But they're looking at a three- to four-year time frame for that to happen," Wolfe said. "With economics and things like that, I don't think the Stingers would have been able to survive to see that happen."

Saving the park puts the city in a tough situation, in terms of weighing the money that would be needed to do so against the potential long-term benefits and other financial obligations.

"We're kicking all the tires. To justify the kind of money that we're going to have to spend would take more than the Stingers," Barnet said.

Forest City doesn't have a big college scene like Spartanburg, but it has many nearby high schools with successful baseball programs - East Rutherford and Shelby, for instance - and has many students go off to school to play baseball who come home for the summer, Wolfe said.

The Stingers' first game of this season is at home. It will be at about 7 p.m. on May 30.

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