

Henderson County Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Meeting

Tuesday, February 11th, 2020, 12pm, AAC

In attendance: Jeff Donaldson, Ralph King, Corum Smith, Bob Smith, Tricia King, Milton Butterworth and Stephanie Cantwell.

Staff in attendance: Carleen Dixon, Autumn Radcliff, Casey Conner, Jason Kilgore, and Erin Hendrix

Speakers in attendance: None

Call to Order: 12:08pm

Approval of Minutes: A motion to approve January's minutes made by Bob, seconded by Stephanie. Unanimously approved.

Public Input: None

New Business:

New Members

Jeff introduces Milton Butterworth as the newest board member appointed to the board.

Expiring Members

Carleen lets the board know that several member's terms are expiring soon and that, if they were sent a letter by Terry Wilson, to please let Terry know if they would like to renew your appointment to the board.

BOC Agenda Item – Staff at Edneyville

Carleen will most likely be on the March 2nd Board of Commissioners Agenda to present on hiring a new position for the new Edneyville school gymnasium. The proposal going to the Board will be to use lapsed salary from open positions to cover approximately 3 months before the beginning of the new fiscal year on July 1. Jeff asks if the position will be running programs and Carleen answers that for a period of time the position will be mainly running open gym time as the position assesses the needs and desires of the community but then yes, they will develop programming. Jeff asks if there will be pickleball in that gym and Carleen answers that they did include pickleball lines on the floor for that purpose. So, if there is a desire, we can offer that. She also mentions the possibility of camps in that facility during the summer months once school is out and says that the position is a clean slate for new ideas and programs for this location.

Henderson County Youth Softball Organization Update

Casey lets the board know that he met with the softball group last week and that they are in the process of turning over leadership on their board. It looks as though we will be doing registration this season for them so that we can alleviate pressure on them during this transition. We would not normally run registration for an outside organization, but in this case the Board of Commissioners authorized us to help in any way that we can to keep this program going for the Spring season. Milton asks if the organization still keeps a collection of gear for use by those who need it. Several agree that they most likely have this available as an option. Carleen also adds that they have sponsorships available for those who need it.

Registration System Changes Update

We are about 40% of the way into the process of changing registration systems. We are still looking at a roll out in early March. Anyone with a current membership with RecDesk will receive an email with the opportunity to update their password in the new system.

Staff Hiring

We are pleased to announce that Cory Blackwell has accepted the position of Admin Assistant and will be taking over the role that Erin Hendrix has had in the department. He has a history in Parks and Recreation and has worked for a few departments, a couple in North Carolina and one in California, and he is excited to be coming on board. We expect that you will get a chance to meet him in the March meeting.

Greenway Update

Autumn Radcliff lets the board know that we have completed two feasibility studies on the Oklawaha Greenway, one looking at the extension to the north and the other to the south. The southern connection would potentially extend to Blue Ridge Community College and possibly further to the Park at Flat Rock. The extension to the North would connect to Westfeldt Park and potentially up into Buncombe County. We received in 2017 a total of \$96,000 through the Surface Transportation Block Grant or STBG Money that comes through the French Broad River MPO. This is transportation money that is reserved for our area and we were eligible to apply for those funds. Equinox did both feasibility studies and reported their findings to the Board of Commissioners. Essentially their study was looking at land topography, environmental features, environmental concerns, land-owner outreach, stakeholder meetings and other potential concerns and limitations as well as giving a rough price range. The Board of Commissioners asked us to seek the same pot of money for the possibility of constructing what we call the Mud Creek Greenway which we did get approved for. We were awarded \$50,000 in STBG money which requires a 20% match of \$10,000. In January, we were approved to hire AECOM as the consultant for this feasibility study and are currently working out contract

details. We expect this feasibility study to be completed sometime in August or September this year.

The Oklawaha lower extension which extends to Blue Ridge Community College has been programmed into our Spot Prioritization List which is money set aside for roads. Jeff asks about the Ecusta trail and the railway acquisition. Autumn answers that Conserving Carolina completed an appraisal and are in negotiations with the railroad. Autumn expects that acquisition to be completed this fall. Tricia asks if there was discussion about the Mud Creek Greenway when the Publix was being built but Autumn says that this greenway was proposed after that build had started and due to opposition on the improvements to Kanuga Road.

The Oklawaha lower extension which extends to Blue Ridge Community College has been programmed into our Spot Prioritization List which is money set aside for roads and has been allotted almost 1.9 million for that project. That pot of money also requires a 25% match. Jeff asks about the Ecusta trail and the railway acquisition. Autumn answers that they are in negotiations with them now and that Conserving Carolina has the appraisal and are working to close that deal. Autumn expects that acquisition to be completed by this fall. Tricia asks if there was discussion about the Mud Creek Greenway when the Publix was being built but Autumn says that this greenway was proposed after that build had started.

Community Needs Assessment Update

The mail out portion of the survey has been completed and there has been much success with those responses. The online section is still open and available on our website and we will close that out later this month. Carleen let them know that the survey needed to return 400 mailed responses in order to be considered statistically valid and we have returned close to 1,000. The baseline demographics seem very well proportioned and varied as far as ages, gender, and location, so this is very good news. The contractor, ETC will present the complete survey package to the Board of Commissioners at the March 18th meeting, but Carleen will let Board know when that is set. Jeff asks if anything rose to the top as a priority. Carleen answers that, nation-wide, greenways tend to be the most popular response because they are so widely used and multipurpose. We were expecting that to be the case, but also want to know the other trends identified so that we, as a department, can start working on our comprehensive plan.

Parks Update

With spring right around the corner, parks staff are starting to shift gears for the upcoming sports seasons. Hendersonville High School Girls Softball and Middle School Boys Baseball are scheduled to start using fields in Jackson Park this week, though it has been raining, so we will have to contend with that. We contracted laser grading and

new dirt on some of the fields, so we are excited as this will help a lot with the upcoming season. Corum asks if the Gymnasium still leaks and Jason answers yes, occasionally there are still leaks in the roof. Jeff asks about the Greenway flooding and Jason answers that yes, it has been flooded most of the time recently. He also says that there has been more stream bank damage in Edneyville.

Recreation Update

Casey mentions that there are notes for Easter Egg Hunt, Spring Recreation Guide, and Senior Games and Silver Arts at the bottom of the agenda and adds that we just had our annual Daddy Daughter Dance. There were just over 650 people registered for this program, the weather turned some away on Saturday, but it was still well attended. This is one of our largest events that is all-hands-on-deck where everyone is pitching in and we certainly couldn't have done it without Jason's staff. We hope to have pictures for the board at the next meeting. Youth Soccer registration is coming to an end and Youth Basketball is wrapping up and our Adult Basketball League is starting their 3rd week. We had 14 teams register, so this has been very successful.

Director Update

Carleen takes a moment to let the board know that they are looking at applying for PARTF again this year. We are also looking at applying for a Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant. This year, these grants are reserved for previous LWCF recipient updates and new land acquisition. We do have a few parks that are LWCF parks, one of which is Jackson Park, so we are looking to see what we may be able to qualify for through that funding process.

Member Comments:

Tricia mentions Abilities Tennis and talks about the new developments in this program. This was a new program last year that had a wonderful turn out by special needs athletes. Milton offers some suggestions on connecting the marketing with the schools. There is also some discussion on the upcoming meeting hosted by the City of Hendersonville concerning the Parking Deck, Boyd Park and the future of the Mini Golf Course.

Motions: Motion to approve the January minutes made by Bob, seconded by Stephanie. Unanimously approved.

Call to Adjourn: 12:53pm