**Henderson County Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Meeting**

Tuesday November 9th, 2021, 12pm, AAC

**In attendance:** Jeff Donaldson, Terry Maybin, Milton Butterworth, Corum Smith, Bob Smith, Philip Ellis, Katie Breckheimer, Scott Rhodes, and Ralph King.

**Staff in attendance:** Carleen Dixon, Megan Bishop, Jason Kilgore, Bruce Gilliam, Autumn Radcliff, Betsy Gerwig.

**Speakers in attendance**: Tommy Laughter, Connie Stewart, Greg Jennings

1. **Call to Order:** 12:10
2. **Approval of Minutes:** A motion to approve the October 2021 minutes was made by Corum, seconded by Bob, unanimously approved.
3. **New Business:**
   1. **All Inclusive Playground Fund Raising – Tommy Laughter**

The playground at Jackson Park had to be removed after years of deterioration and the Elks Club is motivated to help replace the playground. The Elks Club wanted to help fund an “All-Inclusive” playground that will be accessible to all. The total cost is estimated to be somewhere between $300,000 and $350,000. Tommy stated the Elks Lodge plans to fundraise and provide about $100,000. He asked the board for their support to move forward with this plan.

Connie stated that the lodge gets a grant every year that provides funding for the annual special needs dance. The emphasis for this year’s grant will be to assist special needs sports, and they plan to put the grant money next year towards the playground project.

The playground will be “All-Inclusive” for people of all abilities. Kids will be involved in the design process for the project. All donations for this project will be handled by the Henderson County Community Foundation, which is not connected to the county.

Philip asked what an all-inclusive playground is.

Carleen stated that inclusive playgrounds can be used by people of all abilities and have additional features that make it easier for everyone to play. These playgrounds do not look any different.

Carleen mentioned that she has been working with Pardee to potentially provide funding for adult exercise stations surrounding the playground for parents to exercise while their children play, all in one location so they can by close to their children.

Ralph stated the importance of shade for parents and children in parks. Carleen noted that shade structures would be a part of the playground design and that we can look at additional shade if requested.

Jeff asked if the board would like to make a motion of confidence and support.

Katie made a motion that the advisory board support the Elks Lodge endeavor for the playground fund-raising project for an “All-Inclusive” playground at Jackson Park.

Bob seconded this motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Milton stated that the advisory board still needs to ensure that the Board of Commissioners understand the importance of this central playground in Jackson Park.

Jeff asked about the timeframe for the project. Carleen stated as soon as we have enough funds to order the structure, we can order that right away and take care of everything else later.

* 1. **Next meeting in December or January**

Carleen suggested changing our next meeting from December 14th to December 7th.

Terry made the motion to change the December meeting to the first Tuesday, seconded by Philip, and passed unanimously.

1. **Unfinished Business:**
2. **Edneyville Stream Restoration Plan Update – Greg Jennings**

Greg Jennings is present to provide an update to the Edneyville Stream Restoration.

The Lewis Creek is part of the French Broad River Basin and is a watershed that is considered worthy of improving and in need of funding by the state. It qualifies for the 319 programs, which is EPA money.

The creek currently is eroding and has sediment that inundates habitats.

Philip asked why the watershed has degraded so much.

Greg stated that the stream has probably been straightened and a substantial amount of berming has been done.

The land area is in the floodplain, commonly referred to as a 100-year flood zone. He expects continued floods in this area, and its best use is for recreational purposes and storage of flood waters.

Greg’s team is currently applying for the required permits needed for the project.

The project will include a walking path down to the educational access to the creek. Instead of the current mowed grass and steep drop off to the creek, it would be a gradual drop off with the floodplain planted with grasses, bushes, trees, and other native plants. Three double sided educational signs have already been ordered for the project.

Greg outlined the potential walking path that the public could use after the project is finished. This trail would be subject to flooding but will provide access to the creek. The land will be graded and stabilized when the project is finished. It will be a walkable area.

It was unclear if the walking trail would still be there after the grading was complete. Greg noted that a trail could be added but that the budget would not allow for it as is.

Don Henderson asked if they have plans to save the large healthy trees near the creek.

Greg stated they plan to make every effort to save healthy trees. Some trees on the county property are in danger of falling, decaying, or invasive and those will be removed.

All five property owners on the far side of the creek will need to sign an agreement for the project to proceed. Property lines do not follow the creek exactly.

Milton stated the group could advocate for a walking trail to ensure one is created after the project is finished.

Philip asked about the possibility of excavating further to maximize the flood plain area. Greg replied that the community wants to keep the loop trail around the creek. He also said that the budget of the project is not huge and that his team is cautious about designing an affordable project.

Betsy stated they plan to have multiple volunteer events once the construction is finished and planting is feasible. This would include a planting event and a pollinator event. Don Henderson stated when the area was first established volunteers were very active and many walked the trail. He would like to see this trail maintained.

Construction will begin next summer because it is a functional trout stream. Planting will happen in the fall and winter of the following year. The project is completely funded by grants.

Milton stated this is a great opportunity for the community and it is an exciting project to be a part of.

1. **Soccer Update**

Following discussions at previous meetings, Carleen asked the board to consider forming a subcommittee for recreational soccer.

Milton made a motion to form a subcommittee to further study the opportunities around recreational soccer. Philip seconded, passed unanimously.

Philip, Milton, and Stephanie volunteered to fill this soccer sub-committee and will report back.

1. **Tuxedo Park Multi-Use Court**

The Green River Community Club Association voted to move forward with their multi-use court project.

Terry stated the paving is estimated to cost $25,870 and the association will be funding this court. They are selling bricks to line the walkway for $50 to help fund this cost and they have already had success with this fundraiser. The Green River Community Club Association is very active and has an event in the community just about every month.

1. **Staff Updates**
2. **Departmental Update – Carleen**

Halloween Treat Street was a huge success, and we had a great turnout with amazing decorations. It was a partnership event with the City of Hendersonville and Hola Carolina.

Santa on the Square will be on Friday, December 3 on Main Street at the Historic Courthouse. There will be crafts, hot chocolate, and snacks.

The Elf Party, an event for all ages, will be on December 17th at the ECC.

The NYE Apple Rise will be on Dec. 31st on Main Street at the Historic Courthouse.

1. **Member Comments**
   1. Katie stated that she would like a lighting upgrade for sports fields added to the budget, the amount that we are spending to keep our current lights functional is high and she would like to see a new lighting system in place that is more efficient.
   2. Katie also stated that after the needs assessment was presented and trails were a top priority, that it is important to keep in mind that we need to take care of all of our Parks and Recreation facilities.
   3. Katie mentioned that she wants to keep the packaging for food trucks low waste.
   4. She also stated the need for parks and recreation participation in the comprehensive planning process. Carleen noted that the Planning Department will be visiting the Advisory Board after the first of the year to get feedback from the group.
2. **Call to Adjourn: 1:33**