

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

**April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 12:00pm, 708 S Grove St, Hendersonville**

**Board members in attendance:** Jeff Donaldson, David Hill, Terry Maybin, Stephanie Cantwell, Ralph King, Tricia King, Katie Breckheimer, Corum Smith, Doug Moon, Milton Butterworth, and Robert Smith

**Staff in attendance:** Bruce Gilliam, Autumn Radcliff, Jason Kilgore, Mike Morgan, and Brooklyn Bishop

### **Public in Attendance:**

**1. Call to Order:** 12:07

**2. Approval of Minutes:** February 2023

Jeff Donaldson made a motion to approve the February minutes as written. Doug Moon seconded the motion and there was a unanimous approval from the board.

**3. Public Input**

No formal public input.

**4. New Business**

**a. Introduce Mike Morgan – New Communications Director HC**

Mike Morgan has been in the role of Communications Director for Henderson County since January. Mike comes from a television background and has a strong interest in sports. He will be working with the department to create videos of each park and for some of our recreational programs. Terry asked if this was a new position within the county, it was confirmed that this is new. Tricia inquired what we would use these videos for. They would be posted to our website along with social media and could be forwarded to other media contacts as well. We will need to have discussions before we begin about permissions regarding children being recorded.

**b. EFR Park – New Land Acquisition - Bruce**

We unfortunately did not receive the accessibility grant we applied for. The county has purchased 13 acres that is connected to the East Flat Rock Park behind the soccer field in order to expand the park. It is currently undetermined what the land will be used for, but several options are available such as walking/biking trails or possibly disc golf. Terry asked if this purchase would eliminate the trailer park or any businesses. David was able to confirm that it would have no impact on any residences or businesses. Stephanie mentioned that we will want to keep safety in mind. There is a homeless population in the area that have been the source of issues

in the park in the past. Milton asked if the playground was at risk of being removed since we did not receive the grant funding that was applied for. Jason assured the board that we can continue to use the playground if it stays in compliance. Compliance issues were the reason the Jackson Park playground was removed. We did receive the PARTF Grant and a dollar to dollar grant from Game Time which will allow us to be matched for every dollar we spend on playground equipment to use at Etowah Park.

**c. July 4<sup>th</sup> – Fireworks Activities - Bruce**

Two weeks ago, fireworks were tested in Jackson Park at the dog park in preparation for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July event. This test was very successful and county management was able to see the fireworks clearly from different downtown locations. For this year's event, all festivities will be hosted downtown in partnership with the City of Hendersonville, but fireworks will now be shot from Jackson Park. Dustin Gosnell will be doing the fireworks and he just recently received new licenses to be able to provide larger fireworks for this year's event. Fireworks will now be visible from Main Street directly rather than having to move to the alleyways.

**5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**a. Ecusta Trail Update – Autumn**

The RTAC cancelled the meeting they had planned for tomorrow and will meet later to provide updates. Engineers are currently working on getting proper permitting to include Church St. in the design. They are hoping to work with the DOT when they begin paving Church St. this year and King St. next year. The City of Hendersonville has also been doing some utility work which should fit nicely for construction when paving starts and they will assist with proper striping to direct the paths. The RTAC will be meeting in May on permitting and construction timeline.

They have been working very closely and building a relationship with the Friends group who will be very active during the process. Connections with the City of Brevard have been made as well since they are leasing the section on the Transylvania County side. Brevard is under contract currently to design their section of the trail. There has been no word back on possible grant funding yet. The next step would be working with all involved parties to make sure communication is clear on all sides of the trail for signage, rules, trail etiquette, etc. On the Henderson County side, the trail is not technically open, and signage has been posted but, there is no regulation for this. The Transylvania County side is not open, but Autumn is unaware if this is being regulated.

Doug mentioned the issue of parking for the trail. On Kanuga, there is an Ecusta Trailhead parking lot that is paid parking. Autumn confirmed this lot belongs to the City and is one of the reasons all parties involved need to be on the same page. It is possible for lots like this one to charge if they are on private property. They are hopeful that businesses along the trail will open their lots and public restrooms for those using the trail. The engineer has established a need for additional parking, and this will be looked into but, currently funding is not available to include this. There have been discussions about business owners reaching out to churches about possibly using their parking lots when services are not being held.

**b. Jackson Playground Update – Jason**

We are around 70% complete. The concrete is about 97% complete at this time, there is one small section we left open to allow stone to be brought in. Surfacing will start Monday and should take about a week and a half to complete, and the concrete will then be completed next week. We will have a 160ft long net that will be put up to protect from foul balls from the softball field. The poles will be set on Thursday, and once that is completed and the concrete has set, the netting will be put up likely next week. On Tuesday, the FFA groups from East, North, and West High Schools will be assisting with a park beautification project in Jackson Park. They will be planting 400 plants all around the park including the playground. This will be around \$6000 worth of plants and this partnership will save us around \$25000 for installation expenses. All playground equipment is in, we are just waiting on surfacing to be completed. There are a variety of interactive pieces on the playground including musical pieces. This is very exciting for the county and will be a staple for the parks system. We are very grateful for Pardee donating some exercise equipment pieces for the playground.

Tricia inquired if there was a layout plan for the planting and Jason confirmed there is a plan. Tricia also asked if we would be able to recruit any of the volunteers to later assist with the maintenance of the plants. Jason has two individuals that will focus on the plants for the next few weeks. Nine trees were planted yesterday, and the shrubs will be included in the project next Tuesday. The schools will arrive at 8:30am to help and we will provide lunch for all students. This will be a fantastic project and something the students can look back on and make a mark in the park to last. Stephanie offered to volunteer at least 2 students from Star Camp to assist this summer. We would love to have the opportunity to turn field 5 into a miracle field and add surfacing to allow all kids to use the field. Jeff inquired what the surfacing material is, and Jason confirmed this is a rubberized surface. This will be 4 inches of

washed stone with 4 inches of rubber on top. This is great for maintenance and safety.

**c. ECC – Sport Court – Bruce**

Don Henderson donated 65k to Henderson County to make improvements to the Edneyville Community Center including paving and the addition of a new sport court. Paving for the parking lot will begin soon. We are looking to add three pickleball courts with full court basketball on the ends for the sport court. We are very thankful for the communities like Edneyville who contribute to our facilities to encourage updates and improvements. Tricia inquired if anyone was aware of the pickleball to tennis court ratio in the county. There is a very high demand for pickleball in the county. We would like to be able to add courts dedicated only to pickleball to help meet demand. We still have a large demand for tennis court usage as well from several groups including county schools. The two lower courts in Jackson Park have been lined for pickleball as well. If we had to estimate, likely around a 5:1 ratio with pickleball having a higher demand. Milton asked if pickleball was more inexpensive compared to tennis. Bruce confirmed that the materials are cheaper, and one tennis court could be converted into two pickleball courts.

**d. Etowah – PARTF Grant - Jason**

We did receive this PARTF Grant. We will be able to pair this grant with the manufacturers grant we received to help upgrade our Etowah Park playground. We will be adding two pickleball courts and resurfacing the basketball court. We will be adding a small picnic area near the parking lot. This will also be used to help with the accessibility route of the park, drainage issues, and adding in some exercise stations around the walking trail. This was submitted to the budget to begin after July. We look to start the drawings and plans in May and start the project around end of July, start of August.

**e. Tuxedo Park Update – Jason**

The Green River Association has helped tremendously with the new court in Tuxedo. There are now brick pavers to go up from the court to the parking lot that have been installed. We poured a concrete border around the outside of the court and some community members assisted with the installation of those bricks. They have also installed a walkway from the covered shelter to the flagpole. We are extremely grateful for all the help the community members have provided in raising funds and assisting with park improvements.

**f. Sports Complex – Bruce**

The county is still looking for land for our new sports complex. We are very grateful for the County Commissioners holding the funds for this project. We have over 600 kids participating in our spring soccer league this year. Due to rainouts over the last weekends, we will play a double header in Jackson Park this weekend, where a softball tournament is also being held. We are excited to find the proper land for the project to help with our growth and allow more room for programs. Growth is coming to Henderson County, and we want to have facilities to support higher demand for a variety of activities.

## **6. STAFF UPDATES and EVENTS**

Bruce is grateful for Brooklyn taking the role of administrative assistant and managing the front office along with financials of the department. Jason has done a fantastic job in his new role as assistant director. He has been a major assistance in running the department and assisting with projects. We have hired Lynn Metcalf as a new programmer to assist Donnie Jones with special needs programming and senior programming. Lynn will start May 8<sup>th</sup> and will be located at the Edneyville Elementary School and will be running some daytime programs from different parks. The recreation program supervisor position has also been filed and that individual is going through HR processes currently. This position will assist with evening programs, outdoor activities, and grant writing. Katie is very pleased that we can grow our staff.

Upcoming events include our Jackson Park Playground Ribbon Cutting on May 13<sup>th</sup>, movies in the park will start off in East Flat Rock Park on May 19<sup>th</sup>, and our upcoming July 4<sup>th</sup> event downtown. We have registration for adult softball ongoing and senior games events will begin shortly. Please stop by next week in Jackson Park for the beautification project if you have the opportunity.

## **7. MEMBER COMMENTS**

Jeff suggested that we plan to have future meetings at different park facilities in order to see the new updates we have made to our parks. Jason suggested hosting our May 9<sup>th</sup> meeting at Jackson Park shelter 4 to see our new playground for those who may not be able to attend the ribbon cutting ceremony May 13<sup>th</sup>.

Katie mentioned that Hendo Earth Fest will be held on April 22<sup>nd</sup> from 10am – 3pm on North Main Street. The county has a new Styrofoam densifier that will host a demonstration on Thursday. Collections will be every second Tuesday of the month for clean Styrofoam to reduce waste.

Stephanie has received many questions about when restrooms at field 4 in Jackson Park will be open. Those will be reopened once we get power to that building. Stephanie also mentioned that food trucks have been a wonderful addition to Jackson Park.

**8. ADJOURN: 1:20**