

Henderson County Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Meeting

July 11th, 2023 Dana Community Building

Board members in attendance: Jeff Donaldson, Corum Smith, Terry Maybin, Doug Moon, Robert Smith, Katie Breckheimer, Phillip Ellis, Milton Butterworth, and Tricia King

Staff in attendance: Bruce Gilliam, Jason Kilgore, Cory Blackwell, Autumn Radcliff, and Brooklyn Bishop

Public in Attendance: Rachel Gardner

1. Call to Order: 12:10

2. Approval of Minutes: June 2023

Jeff asked for a motion to approve the June minutes as written. Terry motioned to approve, Doug seconded the motion, and there was a unanimous approval from the board.

3. Public Input

Rachel Gardner – Rachel is from the Henderson County Health Department and has been performing walk audits through the different county parks with groups from key demographics including disabled, aging, and other important populations from the community. These are to gain feedback on improvements needed beyond ADA compliance in the parks to help the department when planning updates to facilities.

4. New Business

a. Senior Activities - Cory

Lynn Metcalf, our senior and special needs program coordinator, has put together a great calendar of activities for seniors. We are trying to work with the Council on Aging to help cater the needs of everyone in the community. These activities will also align with Senior Games and SilverArts activities to allow opportunities for those activities year-

round. We want to branch out of Jackson Park as these programs grow and provide indoor options when we reach the winter.

b. Outdoor Recreation Update - Cory

Summer camps are active with Dance, Volleyball, and Art camp taking place this week. Tomorrow there will be a water day program at the Edneyville Community Center. Fall registration is now open for soccer.

Cory will begin guided hikes on the last Wednesday of each month. A guest speaker David Lee from Conserving Carolina will be joining the first hike this month at the Hickory Nut Gap. Next month, published birder Mike Erwin will join the hike at Bearwallow Trailhead. Cory is also looking to plan some outdoor biking opportunities. Liberty Bikes has been generous enough to offer discounted rates for rentals. Lynn is working with a contact at Lake Summit to offer some kayaking opportunities. We want these outdoor opportunities to be open and inviting for all for different skill levels and those who may not be comfortable hiking alone.

Jeff asked what trails these hikes will take place on. Cory informed the board that the first hike will be the Upper Hickory Nut Gap, August will take place at Bearwallow, and possibly moving to DuPont for future options. Katie asked if these would stay inside the county and Cory confirmed we would like to keep all options inside Henderson County.

c. East Flat Rock Park – Disc Golf and Walking Trail - Jason

The Jackson Park disc golf course is one of our most used amenities and adding a course in East Flat Rock would allow players more options in the county. This park would be great for a beginner/intermediate course and Jason has met with a designer who has created a temporary layout. Phillip asked who the designer was for the course and Jason confirmed it was the same group that created the Jackson Park course. Milton was able to provide some insight on the notoriety of the course designer and their experience. Jackson Park is a well known and highly ranked course among many and Tricia mentioned that many people in Asheville consider it to be their favorite course.

We want the course to work well with the land and work with other amenities in the area as well. This is in the preliminary planning stages. Bob asked how we are able to manage the popular course in Jackson Park. Jason explained this is a first come first serve amenity, but the disc golf players are great to work with. They have been very clean, polite to each other and others, and great to police each other to keep the course well maintained.

Katie mentioned that she has had recent conversations with birders who frequent the Oklawaha. They mentioned that disc golf makes them nervous, and she is not sure what a good solution to this issue would be. Jason added that this issue has a long history and has been a topic of discussion since the course was created. There was some back and forth that was mostly resolved but there is some remaining tension between some involved. Jackson Park and the Oklawaha are prime areas for birding. Katie would like for us to consider the birding community when making park accommodations and having continuous communication with different groups.

Milton mentioned that it would be helpful for birders to create group events to encourage participation and increase their recognition. Katie stated that this is an issue for walkers in the parks as well. Katie would like more insight on if it is a possibility for a walking trail and disc golf course to coexist in East Flat Rock. Jason said that the plan for the complete exterior of the added land will be a walking path. Bruce confirmed that they worked with the designer to ensure the course would be planned with the walking path in mind. Jeff mentioned that a member of the birding group previously attended the meetings to bring a report which might be a good idea to start again.

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Ecusta Trail Update

Both grant applications that were submitted for federal funds were approved. Construction bids were posted on Friday and a mandatory pre-bid meeting will be scheduled for next week. Since this is federal funds, all bidders must be prequalified with the DOT. All money must be spent on what is grant eligible. One grant is a 100% match, while the other is 80/20 and it is likely the federal government will allow one to be used as a match to the other. It will take time for these grant processes, but construction should be starting by fall and spring for the start of paving. When designing the first section, they have run into a lot of stormwater issues and businesses. All bridges will need to be replaced along with other safety measures that need to be implemented. Bids will open in August. The ARTAC will meet tomorrow to discuss what is known about the grants and they are still working on MOUs with connected organizations and governments.

Milton inquired if there will be any cost gaps after the grant funding. Autumn said that she doesn't see there being any gaps. The DOT will be managing a lot of the grant funding and these grants will become available at different times. He also asked if any of this new funding will affect the timeline of our side of the trail and Autumn confirmed it should stay the same. The main priorities are safety and standards. The first piece connected to Main St will be build to 64. They are still working on engineering, but DOT will be administering everything. An assessment was completed on the bridges for the trail and every bridge except for the one over the French Broad will need replaced. Phillip asked what the basis for this was and Autumn confirmed this was a discussion with engineers. They looked into the weight of lighter duty emergency vehicles, trucks and mowers to look at the load. These will not be built for larger emergency vehicles so a full emergency assessment plan for the trail will be conducted to ensure smaller vehicles are used and determine the best course of action in the event of an emergency.

b. ECC Sport Court Completion - Jason

A photo of the finished court was shown to the board. We were able to use the funds provided by the Edneyville Community group to complete the court. The biggest issue remaining is resolving what bathroom will be provided for the court. We have added four-square, we will add permanent cornhole boards, and this will allow multiple activities to be used at once. Nets are in the process of being ordered as we had to wait until the new budget year. Jeff asked if this would have operating hours or open play and Jason confirmed it is always open. The parking lot is now paved and connected to Ida Rogers Dr.

c. Etowah – PARTF Grant - Jason

There is no definite plan yet, but Jason has meet with design groups and working to get different pieces together. No definite timeline yet but we should have a design soon.

d. ACC Update – AC and Goals

The basketball goals have been removed from the floor and we now have hanging goals. This has been great for keeping them out of the way and pickleball players have been very pleased. The City of Hendersonville is installing 6 pickleball courts in Patton Park, which should help with demand. The gym now has new goals, a new roof, and air conditioning.

e. Friends of Dana Park – Donation of \$6000 for Trees and Benches – Bruce

We received a \$6000 donation for Dana Park. We would like to add additional benches and planting more trees throughout the park.

f. Sport Complex Update – Jason and Bruce

No new updates yet. We have not yet found any land yet, but the county is looking. This will mainly be used for soccer, but we hope we can add more amenities. Katie asked if the 70 acres bought by Mills River Park was one of our facilities. Bruce confirmed that this is not our park or land. Bruce communicates regularly with other park entities in

the county like Mills River and the City of Hendersonville to see what they offer. The city will be adding on to Berkley and Patton Park soon. Phillip asked who the point person for this would be and Bruce confirmed it would be Chris Todd. Phillip mentioned that the city is developing a master plan for their Parks and Recreation department.

6. STAFF UPDATES and EVENTS

Bruce stated that the July 4th event went great even with the rain. We set up the balloon first thing in the morning and by 2pm, the balloon had fell. We were able to get the second one up by around 6pm. Dustin Gosnell put on our fireworks show and he was having to cover the cases during the day during the rain. The fireworks this year were 8in shells compared to last year which were 3in shells. Downtown we had 14 food trucks, 4 inflatables, and 6 Sheriff deputies and 6 HPD officers. Both downtown and Jackson Park were very busy. Parks and recreation staff will meet tomorrow to discuss the event and plan for next year. One issue in planning was lack of deputies in Jackson Park due to the crowd.

We will have a movie in Dana Park next week and our last summer movie in Jackson Park on August 4th. There will be softball tournaments in Jackson Park the next two weekends.

7. MEMBER COMMENTS

Phillip mentioned that he visited Jackson Park for July 4th and was pleased with the fireworks show. He stated walking into the park was great but leaving was a challenge due to lack of pedestrian paths and dim lighting. There were a few vehicles who attempted to drive down the Oklawaha trail.

Katie provided brochures on the walking trails in Jackson Park, but they are from 2016 and not completely accurate anymore.

8. ADJOURN: 1:19

Next Meeting: AAC Facility, August 8th