

Henderson County Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Meeting

July 9th, 2024, Athletics and Activities Center

Board members in attendance: Jeff Donaldson, Terry Maybin, Corum Smith, Bob Smith, Scott Rhodes, Ralph King, Katie Breckheimer, Mary Davis, Doug Moon, Stephanie Cantwell, Milton Butterworth, Phillip Ellis, and Tricia King

Staff in attendance: Bruce Gilliam, Cory Blackwell, and Brooklyn Bishop

Public in Attendance: Jen Butcher, Annette Huetter

1. Call to Order: 12:03

2. Approval of Minutes: May 2024

Jeff asked for a motion to approve the May minutes as written. Milton motioned to approve, Phillip seconded, and there was a unanimous approval from the board.

Public Input – None.

3. New Business

a. Bell Park Trail Opening – Aug30th – Bruce

We are currently working with Conserving Carolina and David Bell to fill the kiosk with information, vintage photos, and community flyers. This trail will be open soon, with Autumn stating the goal is to have this trail completed by Labor Day. Conserving Carolina is doing most of the work with verbiage and photos for the history of the trail and the planning department has been working to complete maps for the trail and the location in relation to the area. This trail will not be ADA-compliant; however, the kiosk will be in the parking lot for those who would like to visit. Mary asked about the length of the trail and Cory stated it is a little over a mile.

b. Summer/Spring – Camps and Programs - Cory

Our summer camps are currently underway, with Volleyball, Dance, and Art Camp this week. Cory presented the registration numbers for camps

to show how each session is filling up. We just hosted our July 4th event downtown, which was very successful. Cory presented a video of the fireworks finale to the board. The event spanned from Caswell to 3rd Ave downtown with 18 vendors, 4 inflatables, live music, and more. This event had a huge turnout and we have heard nothing but positive feedback from the public. This was one of our largest events, with most all staff working. One issue we have is how crowded Jackson Park is during the event downtown. Henderson County Sheriff's Office, Rescue Squad, and EMS were all present to assist at the event.

Fall soccer registration has begun and late registration will begin on July 29th. Men's and Co-ed softball is continuing, along with Kid's Tennis Club. Cory presented a recap video from this year's Senior Games events. Lynn will be hosting senior activities throughout the week during the summer. The schedule can be found online.

c. Movie in JP – Back to School Bash - Bruce

We will be hosting the Movie in the Park at Jackson Park on August 2nd that will be our Back-to-School Bash. We will be doing a school supply drive to give away backpacks and supplies to those in need attending the event. We are currently up to 450 backpacks that will be available for those in need. Our movie series this summer has gone well. The Etowah Lion's Club and Green River Community Association were a great help with movies at their respective parks.

d. VFW Activities – Brooklyn

We had a Ribbon Cutting for the new VFW facility last week. Scheduling for the facility has started which will be available starting on August 1st for public use. The facility has a large conference room and a large multipurpose room available for reservations, and an internal conference room that will be for VFW use only. We were originally under the impression that reservations will only be offered for civic groups, however the facility is open to anyone. Brooklyn has been working on contact all requests for reservations and scheduling reservations. There will be no fee for the facility but there will be a \$125.00 security deposit for reservations, which includes meetings. Due

to the American Rescue Plan, we are not able to make profit off the facility for 5 years. Today's meeting was originally scheduled at the facility, however it was changed to the AAC as they are finishing punch list items at the VFW. We will give key cards to those reserving the facility for them to access that will be programmed according to their reservation date and time.

Since the county has adopted the facility, it will have some changes from the previous regulations, the biggest change being no alcohol. Jeff asked if this would be a facility for Kiwanis or Rotary meetings and Bruce confirmed that the Kiwanis Club has already been added to the schedule. Tricia mentioned how convenient it will be to have mini-golf next door for reservations. Parking could become an issue and Bruce has mentioned to county managers about inquiring to purchase the empty lot across the street for overflow parking. One suggestion for overflow would be Hendersonville High School, with permission, but this is a high traffic intersection to cross. Milton asked what the hours of the facility will be, and Bruce confirmed 9am to 9pm. We have hired a full-time custodian to work half the day at the AAC and half at the VFW.

4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Ecusta Trail Update - Autumn

Paving has begun on the trail from Horseshoe to Allstar Lane. Bridges are scheduled to arrive in August to be installed hopefully by December. The contractor has not had any issues with the public so far but will let the public know about paving to keep everyone safe.

b. S.O.S. – Support Our Swimmers – Katie Breckheimer

Kaite introduced Jen Butcher who is a member of the S.O.S. group. Jen formally owned Kilwins downtown and she raised 3 sons who all swam for Hendersonville High School. Jen has formerly been a part of a committee that supported swimming in Henderson County. The group recently went to visit facilities in Waynesville and Boone. The Waynesville facility has been operating for 20 years and they were able

to provide information on how to effectively run the facility. The Boone facility has been open for 3 years and was also able to provide helpful information. While at Waynesville, Katie ran into a friend from Waste Reduction Partners who was able to send her information on the best practices when building a facility.

Patton Pool is in rough shape which is presenting an increased need for an indoor swimming facility. iDaph Events held a triathlon at Patton Pool and many of the swimmers were unable to complete the full length of the swim. This is due to lack of proper training since there are not proper facilities in the county. Katie will send out a written report about their findings along with the building report. The group is putting together a presentation packet to be able to share with the community. Katie would like to make a trip to the Jackson County facility this fall when it opens. The group would like to host an event later this year with possibly an Olympic swimmer as a speaker. They are also interested in hosting a 30-year reunion for the New Zealand swimmers.

Mary mentioned that both Waynesville and Boone are part of a larger recreation facility with various other amenities, which is what she believes would be the best fit for the county. Mary also mentioned that while traveling, she has found many recreational facilities that have been sponsored by hospitals or insurance companies. Katie stated that all the facilities they have visited are in WNC which shows it is possible in this area. Corum mentioned the Lila Patterson Center which has great pools for all, including a handicap pool.

c. Etowah PARTF Update - Bruce

We have been working on getting the drawings for the basketball and pickleball courts, which will be the first step. The fitness stations have been ordered and will be placed along the walking trail. The library will be ordering the reading panels soon and we would like to install the fitness stations prior to the reading panels. The playground has been ordered and we are hoping it will arrive around October or November. The playground surfacing will need 5 to 10 days of weather above 40

degrees to be installed. We are excited to see progress and a grateful that the community of Etowah will get a park they deserve. We will provide updates to the Friends of Etowah and the Lion's Club as we know more.

d. Outdoor Recreation Update - Cory

Cory has continued to host the Skate Club and registration has filled up with waitlists. The county hikes have been going well with full registrations. Cory presented videos from both the Skate Club and a few different hikes. He has had interest in possible sponsors for the hikes. Milton asked Cory to continue to send the flyers for the hikes to be placed in the Pardee employee newsletter. The goal of the hiking program is to help people network and feel safer on trails for those who may not want to hike alone. Mary asked if more hikes will be hosted in Kanuga as she thinks they may start to see us as a partner. Cory was grateful they allowed him to hike but he is unsure if future visits will be possible.

5. STAFF UPDATES AND EVENTS

We hosted a Summer Slam Pickleball Tournament at our AAC gym. Our Movies in the Park series has gone well with our movies at Dana and Jackson Park coming up. Katie asked if we own the screen and Bruce confirmed that we rent the screen but have looked into purchasing our own. The East Flat Rock Church partnered with us for the East Flat Rock movie and gave out popcorn to everyone who attended. The Friends of Etowah hosted concessions for their movie and Ward from the Etowah Friends group sold water at the July 4th event that was donated back to the Parks Department. We are grateful for the Friends groups in each community as they are always helping grow their respective parks. Lindsay at the Edneyville Community Center will be hosting several programs including Water Day, Back-to-School Luau, Creek Explorers, and Ag in the Classroom. Big Rigs and Digs was a great event that had a huge turnout.

6. MEMBER COMMENTS

Jeff mentioned the Pump House Fitness Center recently opened 3 pickleball courts and Taproot is building around 3 new courts as well. Taproot also has an inclusive playground and 2 pools, but they are likely for residents only. We would love to see more pickleball courts around the county. The City of Hendersonville is building courts as well at Patton Park. We will be doing some maintenance on the top tennis courts in Jackson Park.

Mary mentioned how great the disc golf course is at the East Flat Rock Park. It is open, flatter, and is providing some shade where it can still be used on a hot day. The walking trail will be installed soon around the edge of the course. We are seeing a lot of traffic to the disc golf course which we believe is helping deter some of the negative activity that the area has had. With the start of the new fiscal year, we can begin purchasing again so we can get started on the walking trail.

Milton asked if we need to create a bigger volunteer network as our events grow. Bruce mentioned that it is difficult for staff to work certain events like July 4th since it is a holiday and a long event. Mary mentioned that she has assisted at a few events which she has enjoyed and recommended we reach out to the Advisory Board when looking for volunteers. She mentioned it is a great way for the board to see what the staff is involved in. Milton stated that this would also be a good time to reach out to different community groups we are connected with. It is a challenge to ask for volunteers when events are on a holiday.

Bruce mentioned that we will need to be under contract by December 31st with the funding for our soccer complex. We are unsure where we will be using this at this point. We will need land big enough to house our soccer program. We will be back to Jackson Park this fall soccer season. Katie asked if the soccer field at East Flat Rock Park is used. Bruce stated it is heavily used but it is not a standard size field. We are still in the dark about most of the plans with this funding and where we stand with the land search. We recently had a lady fracture her ankle while walking across the Jackson Park soccer field, where she stepped in a hole. We are doing our best to keep the field maintained but they are worn out. Phillip asked if there is a secondary plan if

no land is found by December. Bruce stated that we are still in the dark about what would happen. Berkley Park has been discussed as a possible option, but it is owned by the Henderson County School System. Bruce personally doesn't believe they would return the money if the land is not found and we hope it would be used for something possibly existing or in a different recreational area.

7. ADJOURN: 1:12pm

Next Meeting: September 10th VFW