

Henderson County Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Meeting

Tuesday, November 14, 12pm, AAC

In attendance: Jeff Donaldson, Chair, Corum Smith, Terry Maybin, Sue Myers, Phillip Ellis, Tommy Laughter, Tricia King. County staff present: John Mitchell, and Laura Rice, Erin Hendrix, Tim Hopkin, Karen Saine, Bridgette Galloway, Matt Russell, Jason Kilgore. Planning Department staff present: Autumn Radcliff and Stedman Smith, and Allen McNeil.

Unofficial call to order by John at 12:04.

Parks and Recreation Update by John Mitchell:

- Movie in the Park and Halloween Carnival was a success, around 400 people.
- Soccer season wrapped up this month and had a bounce house on the field to celebrate.
- Jason, our Maintenance Supervisor, received his certification of Playground Safety Inspector. Some equipment may be moved, if Jason sees something unsafe, he will take care of it.
- Greenway issues, short story: an attempt has been made with solid waste but it made it worse. There is a pond and lots of standing water with no evaporation. We don't have a concrete plan except to try to get it back to usable. We did have a 50-year storm event which caused more flooding. We had one interview with WLOS about it. The commissioners have approved a study into the area. We will be doing a feasibility study about a possible rerouting and will discuss that with the board when we have more information.
- Tricia planned and Laura facilitated a Walk-Ride to school that had lots of interest. The first one had almost 100 people. John suggests getting funding from Safe Routes to School and Laura indicated that she is already checking.
- We have a new small dog area at Jackson Park that was expected to be put in today and should have been done yesterday. But we are slowly moving to a full-blown dog park. Terry and Sue comment on signage, John agrees.
- The Arts and Crafts Bazaar is Saturday and we are excited about that.
- Youth Basketball registration is now closed and we are moving forward with that program.
- The NCCX Grand Prix will be December 9th and 10th at Jackson Park and will be lots of fun
- We have the New Year's Apple Raising with Corporate Sponsors and will be a great event with a special MC and live music. Phillip asks if the first one was last year. Laura confirms and adds that there will be two parts, an adult and a children's event. John adds that there will be heaters, hot chocolates, games, and more.

Official call to order by Jeff at 12:15. Motion to accept previous meeting's minutes. Terry accepts and Sue seconds.

No public input.

New Business:

Jeff introduces a new board member, Tricia, and asks her to say a few words about herself. Tricia says that she's lived in the area for three years, but her husband grew up here. They have an 8-year-old and a 12-year-old and enjoy the parks and recreation in the area. She is a landscape architect and has worked on environmental greenways.

Jeff welcomes Tricia and Phillip and suggests that, since the recreation updates are done, we should move right in to nominations for the committee. Terry nominates Jeff, Tommy, Phillip, Terry, and Jenn. Jeff reminds everyone that this will be the committee in place in case of a hearing. Jeff motions to accept, Sue seconds.

John Introduces Karen for her presentation on Farm City Day.

Farm City Day was brought over from the Cooperative Extension and was held during the National Farm City week celebration. In 1955 they coordinated a one-day event in the Roses parking lot and held it there for a few years before they moved it downtown. They moved it to Jackson Park in 1988. Karen has been co-director for 24 years. Lots of people from the board are involved. Terry's mother-in-law made aprons, Corum and Sue served on the board. It is co-sponsored by the Cooperative Extension and Parks and Recreation. It involves FFA High School teachers, soil and water, the Sheriff's Office, 4-H, and the NC Cooperative Extension Board.

There are typically two fields of vendors. It used to just be non-profits but now they accept businesses. The logo was created 20 years ago and serves as good branding. It is always held on the first Saturday in October. Starts with the ceremony and the VFW color guard. We give awards for years of service. We have a dignitary's corn shucking contest and the winner gets a prize. The police department always wins. Offers old and new tractors and educates kids about farming. 4-H provides a petting zoo. There are fundraisers and fire-safety classes. There are also heritage craft demonstrations. This year we had blacksmithing and an older guy that has old and vintage tools for public viewing. Quilters are there making quilts and spinners have wool and sheep. We had three local food trucks. We use the entire interior of the park for Farm City Day. It's spread out over 30-40 acres and maintenance helps set up and tear down. We offer a catch and release in the pond for kids. We have local entertainment and 4-H did a fashion show.

We have maybe 10,000 people attend and spend about \$1.14 per participant. We are already planning for next year. Corum believes that Farm City Day is an asset to the community and appreciates that Recreation puts it on. Jeff thanks Karen for her presentation.

Master Plan:

John says that we have embarked on a 12-16 month process to create a Master Plan and Autumn is leading this project.

Autumn- Laura will be presenting on the history of parks in Henderson County.

Laura- Clive S. Jackson had a vision and between 1962-1974 that vision was realized. It started with the Historic Stillwell House and 80 acres. It is the largest in programming facility in Henderson Count. In 1980 we acquired the old Edneyville park behind the Firehouse. Dana was established sometime in the 1990s and Westfeldt was built. Westfeldt features community parks shelters and benches. Etowah in 1994 was a longer process and we broke ground in 1995, opened in 1998. East Flat Rock park was built in a low-income area next to the historic school building. Phillip asks if the county owns the building. Laura says no, but it is adjacent. In 1994 the Oklawaha Greenway was .75 miles between Jackson Park and 7th Ave. It was funded with Partf grants. In 2008, the community in Edneyville wanted a place to come together and meet, and so we have the Edneyville Community Center. The

project is still ongoing and we are working on adding a gym and a pool. Karen programs there and rentals of the building are popular.

In 2012, the county purchased the AAC so we closed the Stoney Mountain Center and moved most offices to this building. Funds were given for the field and lights and are used heavily. The Upper Hickory Nut Gorge trail is opened and our involvement is the parking lot and NC Conservancy. Trees are currently down over the trails. 2014 was the groundbreaking. Also in 2014, the US 64 River Access was opened. Recently, Dana rebuilt the walking trail and added a playground and construction was completed at Tuxedo park which offered a ribbon cutting and celebration. Bell Mountain Trail is unmanicured and offers an opportunity to experience nature in a different way.

Corum- Great job, this makes me proud and happy to have commissioners who have been willing to invest in recreation.

John agrees and thanks Laura for her presentation.

Autumn asks if everyone got to see the survey that was sent out via email. They wanted to be sure the questions were not leading and that the board approved of the questions. The survey should be available by the end of the week and will be posted on the county website, the planning department's webpage, and parks and recreation's webpage. The general questions that we are trying to answer are how are people using the parks, what amenities are lacking, which parks they are using. We want to utilize all of our facilities. We are not asking for names but we are looking at ages of the respondents. Phillips says that the length of the survey could be better, that it might be too long. Autumn says they reviewed it for redundancy and the survey will show the percent completed for our records. It will keep the survey questions that they don't answer. We realize that surveys aren't the best, but people in the community like surveys, even though it's not foolproof. But it gives the husband and the wife their own say and kids can fill it out as well, which gives us the demographic info that we need. Jeff asks if the questions are in the order of importance. Autumn says that they limited it to the top 3 or 5. Jeff asks about the number of results and tracking. Autumn responds that all respondents will be recorded in the percentage no matter how many questions they answer. Terry would like to know how we will be getting the word out. Autumn says that the survey is the first step and parks and recreation will be sending it out. It will go to schools and through a press release. Tim has helped schedule meetings, the first one will be on December 5th. Board members are encouraged to attend. We would like to see what people say and not just what we think is important. All meetings will start at 6pm and will be held in Fletcher, Etowah, Edneyville, and the AAC. John says that we will send a calendar to the board. Corum asks if we will have a presentation at these meetings. Yes, Autumn answers, so that people can see and ask questions. Jeff asks about concessions. John says that we have received the MOU and that we will vote on it in January when Ken is here. The changes to the document were not substantial. John asks if there are any questions or comments. Stand adjourned? Sue and Terry accept. Meeting adjourned at 1:03pm.