

Henderson County Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Meeting

Tuesday, March 13, 2018, 12pm, AAC

In attendance: Jeff Donaldson, Corum Smith, Terry Maybin, Phillip Ellis, Ralph King, Katie Breckheimer, Jennifer Hensley. County staff present: John Mitchell, Carleen Dixon, Laura Rice, Erin Hendrix, Autumn Radcliff, Jason Kilgore, Tim Hopkin

Meeting called to order at 12:15pm.

Minutes taken by Erin Hendrix

No Public Input

Motion to approve February minutes made by Phillip seconded by Jennifer. Unanimously approved.

Board Member Changes by Jeff Donaldson

We would like to welcome Katie Breckheimer to the board as well as congratulate Jennifer for being reappointed for another term. Sue Meyers has retired her position as well. James Cox has been appointed in her stead but we have been unable reach him.

Greenway Presentation by Katie Breckheimer

Katie is a part of the Friends of the Oklawaha Greenway. Their mission is to protect the greenway that we have, promote the greenway that we have, and expand the greenway that we have. A greenway is a linear park that can have multiple surfaces. They are a draw for tourism and contribute to our local economy. A study shows that people stay longer and come back more often when the community has a well-kept greenway. The economic growth outweighs the cost of the greenways. Homes and business values increase by 20% if they are near a greenway. Hendersonville is completing with other bike-friendly destinations.

Over 20 organizations have had groups and events on the Oklawaha. A study of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area showed that, when asked, the residents desired more walking and greenway trails. Greenways are also a wonderful place for environmental education. The Audubon Society has named our greenway a birding hotspot.

NC Medical Journal states that for every dollar spent on assessable bike and pedestrian trails, we save three dollars on direct medical costs. Our inactivity and excess weight costs society in medical costs. The Greenway is currently 3.5 miles and connects four parks. There is a proposed expansion to connect Jackson Park to Blue Ridge Community College. The second feasibility study looks at an expansion to connect Berkley Mills Park up to Westfeldt Park. The town of Fletcher is looking to extending the Cane Creek Greenway. The Town of Mills River has just approved a Phase I to look at the 280 multi use path that would connect Westfeld Park on route 280. The Ecusta trail is attempting to convert and old rail road which would connect Hendersonville to Brevard. And the final piece is a look at expanding the Oklawaha from Blue Ridge Community College to the park at Flat Rock. There is a discussion about having a trail from the park in Flat Rock to Carl Sandburg's.

There has been growing support for greenways. Friends of the Oklawaha have been reaching out to different groups to see if this is something that the community supports. So far, we have received about 35 letters of support. They are all on our website. Greenways are paid for by federal funds from the department of transportation can provide up to eighty percent with the community responsible for the other twenty percent, which can be matched by local government and private partnerships. A bond referendum can also be used.

Greenway Update by Autumn Radcliff

There are three items on here that I will be addressing that all tie in together. I am sure you know about the feasibility studies for the northern and southern portions of the greenway. We have selected a consultant. Unfortunately, the downside of using NCDOT money is that we have to get everything approved through them. The process is time-consuming and there is a lot of administrative overhead. They must approve the consultant and be part of the selection process and also approve the contract that we sign with them. If the Commissioners decide to move forward with the process, it will make it easier because we will have already started the process with the state and things will go more smoothly. Things will start to move much more quickly in the next couple of months.

We have multiple projects going on, so the timing of this is very important. We also are still working on the Master Plan for all of Parks and Recreation. There is a separate side-plan that will focus specifically on greenways. With that, we will have the two feasibilities going on, and we have just applied for another grant, which will be our third grant for Kunz Farm. After that, hopefully we will have enough to construct the bridge across the river and have a paved trail around the property. And that will connect to Westfeldt Park and will be the northern part of this project. There are several existing groups that are willing to help us with the work on this project and we would like to build on that.

Approval of Community Members by John Mitchell, Carleen Dixon, and Autumn Radcliff

John gives a brief overview of the current selected members and their backgrounds. There are two slots for Recreation Advisory Board members, but that can be expanded as necessary. Autumn says that it will be at least one meeting per month. Phillip nominates himself and Tricia King, who is not present. Jennifer asks if there can be more than two. Carleen

answers that they will take more than two. Jennifer volunteers herself. Carleen asks for a motion to approve the committee members to include the recreation advisory volunteers. Jeff asks for approval. All approve. None oppose

Carleen asks that, before they switch topics, they review a map of the area around the greenway that highlights the flooding issues. There is a detour route to get around the flooded area what is marked on this map. We would like to find a way to get it out and visible for the time being before we fix the larger problems. John says that they have tried three times to fix the flooding issues. First, they unplugged the dike thinking that less water would flood the greenway. Instead, more water just came in. Then, we thought that the problem was too much silt. So, the solid waste department came in to remove all the silt. However, that caused even more flooding. Lastly, they thought that they could simply re-plug the dike and return to the state that it was originally which was problematic but not as problematic. However, this action essentially created a lake. We are looking at better, more permanent fixes for these issues. This map for the detour is simply a short-term solution and not something that is considered sustainable.

PARTF Update

Research was started in January and we have hired a firm to work on a conceptual plan. The things that we have to do are public meetings. We have flyers/surveys for the public input meetings and that will allow us to find out what the public would want to do with this PARTF money. We will do a prioritization exercise to narrow down what the needs truly are. We will host two meetings that are open to the public. We will also do a walk-through of the park with our consultant that we encourage this

board to attend. We will meet at the Jackson Park house at 3pm on the 19th. We will also be reaching out to all of our stake holders in the park to seek their needs in the park.

We have to take this grant forward to the commissioners on their April 2nd meeting. That means that we will not have another Advisory Board meeting until after this proposal goes to the Board. Would you like to have a special meeting to review the proposed options before we take this to the Board of Commissioners. Yes, Jeff says, we should have a meeting beforehand. The date is chosen as Tuesday, the 27th of March. There will be dollar amounts as well as a map of what the options will be based on the input from the public meetings. The board is encouraged to attend all of these upcoming meetings.

Recreation Update

There is a handout from Jason and Laura that will give you a brief overview of what's going on there. We still have not heard back on the Kaboom grant for East Flat Rock, so we will hopefully hear something about that soon and be able to give you a better update. The president of Henderson County Youth Softball in Etowah has changed to Pricilla Davis and we will be meeting with her this week. The Etowah Lions Club MOU has been signed by the commissioners, so that item is complete. The position that was Karen Saine's has been changed slightly and is in HR's hands and should be posted soon.

Meeting adjourned at 1:28pm