

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

Tuesday March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021 12pm, Edneyville Community Center

**In attendance:** Jeff Donaldson, David Hill, Terry Maybin, Stephanie Cantwell, Katie Breckheimer (via phone), Corum Smith, Robert Smith, Scott Rhodes, Hunter Marks, and Philip Ellis.

**Staff in attendance:** Carleen Dixon, Megan Bishop, Jason Kilgore, and Autumn Radcliff.

**Speakers in attendance:** None

**A. Call to Order:** 12:07 pm

**B. Welcome New Staff –** Megan Bishop

**C. Approval of Minutes:** With Katie Bruckheimer’s corrections, a motion to approve February 2021 made by Terry Maybin, seconded by Bob Smith, unanimously approved.

**D. Consent Agenda:** None

**E. Public Input:** None

**F. New Business:**

### **1. Friends of Etowah Park Proposal**

Caryl Mobley from the Friends of Etowah Park submitted a proposal to place bluebird nest boxes throughout Etowah Park that Carleen shared. They would work with the Parks Supervisor for proper placement in the park and the Friends would maintain them.

Jeff asked about the total cost of the project. Carleen stated they are seeking to get funding from the North Carolina Bluebird Society.

Terry motioned, seconded by Bob, unanimously approved the proposal.

### **2. Copy of Final Requested Budget**

- Carleen wanted to highlight the key changes or requests for the P&R FY 2022 budget. An additional Full Time Park Technician 2 position has been requested to assist with growing tournament and other demands in the parks.
- HCPRD plans to take over the youth softball league in the fall as the organization has struggled for a few years. So, some funds have been added to the budget to cover these costs.

- Staff will begin obtaining quotes to replace the AAC turf field in the next budget year (FY 2023), this is noted in the narrative as a heads up that this will be coming as a request in the FY23 budget.
- The Board of Commissioners approved funding for the next step in the Oklawaha project for this current fiscal year, so that request is not included in FY22 request.
- Another big request is to replace the maintenance shop at Jackson Park due to size restrictions and the condition of the facility. The request is \$750,000. The current 1100 square foot building is the main maintenance shop for the entire parks operation and cannot hold any of our equipment. Philip asked where the shop is located. Carleen stated that it is in Jackson Park, when you drive through the park there is a drive with a fenced off area. Most of the equipment is outside since there is not room to keep it inside. Jeff asked if we are planning to rebuild the shop in that same spot. Carleen stated that our recommendation is to possibly move it to the gravel parking area by fields 8 and 9 because we need a larger, flatter area with room for parking. Terry asked about the age of the shop, and if it is as old as the park itself. Carleen stated that it likely is when the park opened in 1975.
- The budget request also includes a playground replacement request since funding was not available to replace the one that had to be removed from Jackson Park last year. Phillip asked if we have a specific model selected already based on the budget numbers. Carleen stated that she has looked at renderings so we could acquire a budget number, but an exact model has not been selected yet as we would go through a public process to finalize the design.
- Another request is a drag machine so staff can do laser grading in house instead of contracting out. This piece of equipment will cost \$26,000 but will eliminate the need to contract out, saving \$20,000 per year for at least 6 years.

It was noted that we have several part-time parks positions open and one full time position that has been vacated. We are actively recruiting and if you know anyone please send them our way.

We also contract out for the mowing for all the parks; a new contractor will be starting the mowing on March the 15<sup>th</sup>.

Jeff asked if Carleen has received any feedback regarding the capital outlay request. Carleen stated that she has not.

## **G. Unfinished Business**

### **1. Greenways Update – Autumn**

The Oklawaha budget has been approved to start preliminary design work and to seek other grant funding to hopefully find solutions to these issues that will last.

The Mud Creek Greenway Feasibility Study is complete, and information is up on the website. This did not commit us to do anything further, that decision is up to the Commissioners. The presentation of the study will be at French Broad River MPO, the MPO board will receive presentation on April 22. Commissioners McCall and Andreotta will be there.

## **2. Ecusta Update – Autumn**

Things are moving along. The survey has been completed and there are a lot of maps to go through. Conserving Carolina has completed a title search for everything and staff in the attorney's office can begin to upload everything into the DOT database. As soon as that is uploaded, they will request a funding authorization to the federal highways, and once that is approved it will be about two weeks then it is free for the transaction to happen.

It will then go to the surface transportation board to go through the rails to trails program. We hope to have it all done in this current FY.

Hopefully this will all happen sometime in April, and in May we will be removing rails and ties hopefully. In January we will apply for additional STBG money for the next phases.

## **3. Etowah Trail Update**

The commissioners approved to replace the trail and we are moving forward. Staff have worked out a path that will only require taking one tree down while avoiding the wetland areas. This pathway will also provide access to the restroom area from fields 3 and 4. We are working with finance to post the bid for the work soon. This is a great addition for Etowah.

## **H. Staff Updates**

### **1. Jason**

We have been very busy getting ballfields ready. Staff has finished the dugout roofs in Jackson park and have gotten a lot of compliments. They have also replaced the windscreens in the outfields. These windscreens have 5 ft tall field numbers made into them, so it is easier for people to find the correct field. Laser grading has been completed and we will be utilizing all of the fields. Soccer clinics have started, and our league play will start just after.

We are looking for staff, 17 years old and up, to work tournament weekends. If you know of anyone looking for a temporary job to make money on weekends send them out way. One full time position is available as well, we really need some help!

We have been having field lighting issues. 66 lights have gone out in Jackson Park and 22 in Etowah. The department has spent over \$20k fixing lights and capacitors in the last year as the system is very aged and the costs are significant.

Carleen stated these lights are both ballfields and tennis courts.

We have some drainage issues between fields 8 and 9 in Jackson Park. A pipe separation has caused a sinkhole and we have a contractor coming out to look at that. Another significant issue has been the water issues in Etowah. Water runs the entire length of Etowah park and has caused erosion and sinking soil. We need to replace a section of the drainage pipe to hopefully alleviate some of these issues. With the water table being so high, drainage is very tough in this area.

## **2. Admin Update – Megan**

### **3. Departmental Update – Carleen**

As mentioned before, we are dealing with unexpected issues like washouts and lights. We are short on maintenance staff and we will also have a supervisor position open for P&R, as Casey has resigned.

Tournaments are about to start up, first one on March 20.

We have HHS playing softball at Jackson, HHS and EHHS playing tennis at Jackson, and football and soccer at the AAC turf field. There is a good relationship between HCPRD and HCPS with sharing facilities and I am thankful to work with people like Scott Rhodes. Indoor activities are also gearing back up.

## **I. Member Comments**

Terry asked when we will open up indoor rentals, such as the Edneyville Community Center.

Carleen stated that we are working on this, the main challenge is accountability. We are working on how to ensure that capacity limits and other guidelines are being followed. We do not have the funds or staff to staff facilities to ensure that people are following the guidelines as of right now.

Jeff asked Autumn for an Ecusta Trail timeline estimate.

Autumn stated it is already being used for walking but the planning department is asking the state to review their application ahead of time so that everything is ready to go in October.

Autumn states essentially a year from October you should start seeing construction being done. Activity will be seen this May as the ties are being torn up. If we are able to secure the additional grant funding everything will keep moving and avoid any further slowdowns. We are lucky that the funding was available, and we were able to secure it when we did to get all of this going.

Autumn - If you haven't seen, the Butler bridge road has to close down and that will be effective next Monday. This shut down is scheduled to September 1<sup>st</sup>.

Autumn - A conditional rezoning request for the asphalt plant has been submitted – information is on the website with meeting dates and information.

Jeff asked about the planned surface for the Ecusta Trail.

Autumn stated that it will be a paved surface.

Terry asked if there was an update on the VFW.

David said some additional issues have occurred and that the county is waiting to make a decision. He stated that it is a good building, but it does have some issues.

**J. Call to Adjourn: 12:45pm**