

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

Tuesday May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021 12pm, Etowah Lion's Den

**In attendance:** Ralph King, Jeff Donaldson, Stephanie Cantwell, Katie Breckheimer, Corum Smith, Robert Smith, Scott Rhodes, and Philip Ellis.

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

**Speakers in attendance:** None

**1. Call to Order:** 12:10

**2. Approval of Minutes:** A motion to approve the April 2021 was made by Bob Smith, seconded by Corum Smith, unanimously approved.

**3. Public Input:** None

**4. New Business:**

**a. Nomination of Officers for FY22**

- Chair nomination: Jeff Donaldson, nominated by Stephanie Cantwell, seconded by Corum Smith
- Vice Chair nomination: Terry Maybin, nominated by Corum Smith, seconded by Ralph King

**b. Friends of Etowah Park**

Ward Seguin spoke to the Board about a group of Etowah community members that have formed a new group, Friends of Etowah Park. The members are comprised of HOA and local business members. The Friends group is looking to create an updated master plan for the park and would like input from the board. The group has developed a survey to gauge interest in the activities of the parks. He spoke to the extensive use of the park and their vision to offer more activities as well.

He welcomes input from the board and expresses his interest to work together.

Stephanie suggested creating a more generic survey to distribute to a larger set of people, including softball and baseball parents that travel from other places in the state and use Etowah Park.

Katie stated she was impressed with how fast the trail was improved here and praised their advocacy in getting things done.

**c. Mobile Food Vendor Discussion**

There is currently an ordinance in Henderson County that only allows mobile food vendors during special events. Other than that mobile food vendors are not currently

allowed in the park. There is a growing interest in providing this service; the purpose of this discussion is to gauge interest on approaching the BOC to change this ordinance. Carleen prepared a list of questions to start the discussion and gauge interests.

Would this be year-round use or seasonal use?

Stephanie asked if this would coincide with events on the weekend.

Carleen stated that it will depend on how we want to set up the program, if we want to rent out spaces per day, month, etc.

Scott stated that he thinks people would appreciate it, but a possible concern would be programs that run the concession stand like little league. Aside from that, he stated there were a lot of positives to bring this to the county parks.

Bob asked for a cost benefit breakdown.

Carleen stated most organizations charge an application fee of \$150-200, and then are allowed to select a time and place to set up. There are also variations such as weekends versus weekdays.

Philip asked if this would be a new source of funds that could be used for a special project.

Carleen stated that it would go back to the general fund, not directly back to P&R.

Philip asked if this would require a new position to handle the additional workload.

Carleen stated that this would be done in-house with current staff.

Stephanie asked who runs the concession stands currently.

Carleen stated we currently have a contract with Henderson County Youth Baseball (little league) at Jackson Park and they tend to sell out on busy weekends. The Etowah Lions Club operates the concession stand at Etowah Park. Staff would work with the contracted organizations regarding scheduling. This would also provide opportunities for people to grab lunch and walk in the park on weekdays.

Stephanie stated that weekend and weekday scheduling should be separated, with the weekend rates being increased. She also said that the concession stands at Jackson Park often do run out of food and thinks that mobile food trucks would be highly used during tournaments.

Jeff asked if we have researched policies from other counties.

Carleen stated Megan and the front desk staff have researched other policies, but no one has a policy similar to what we are looking to implement.

Philip asked what those have looked like.

Megan stated that other counties have a position just to schedule mobile food vending, but they are much larger. Buncombe County does not have a policy, they do have vending in the parks, but they do not schedule. Once we begin scheduling, we will also need to enforce the schedule as well.

Corum stated that the administrative component will increase work and expressed concerns about increased trash in the parks. He stated that maybe a few parks would be fine but not every park.

Carleen stated to start with we could do a trial basis in a few key parks. She plans to create a limited number of regulated spots to prevent a free for all.

Jeff asked about the Health Department regulations.

Carleen stated that we would not allow mobile food trucks to set up and leave their units in the parks overnight.

Ralph asked if we are thinking about every day of the week including weekends.

Carleen stated most food trucks have other locations they visit as well so they would likely only want one or two days a week. So, it could be different food trucks each day.

Corum asked if the vendors would be responsible for cleaning up.

Carleen stated clean up would be a part of the contract.

Autumn stated it might be helpful to choose one or two weekdays for food trucks to be in the parks.

Carleen stated we would include a schedule.

Jason stated an organization in Florida received a percentage of the profits from mobile food units and that those profits went to non-profits who filled out applications.

Carleen stated in our research that most organizations charged 15% of the food trucks total profit each month.

Megan agreed, stating that the 15% charge was standard among local government organizations of various sizes throughout the state.

Scott stated that the food trucks would be very popular during adult softball as well.

Katie asked if we would have a lottery system for scheduling.

Carleen stated that we would require vendors to complete applications including permits, insurance, photos of the unit, etc.

Corum asked if the Health Department will be involved. Carleen stated yes.

Ralph asked if we would allow only county residents to vend or anyone.

Carleen replied it would be up to the board to decide. We could limit it to only those that reside in the county or not.

Stephanie asked if we have talked to some of the breweries to see what they do and if they charge a fee

Carleen stated that a lot of them do not charge a fee, but some do.

Katie mentioned the potential issues with trash and suggested creating some guidelines to limit trash such as banning Styrofoam, using products that are biodegradable and/or requiring units to bring their own trash cans.

Philip stated that some food trucks don't give you very much trash and suggested using that as a standard for scoring food trucks for selection.

Stephanie also asked how we are holding our tournament directors responsible for trash at their weekends as well.

Carleen stated that we would evaluate potential vendors with all of the decided criteria.

Jeff asked for a motion to move forward for this.

Corum made a motion for staff to move forward with developing a draft Mobile Food policy that this board could review for support at one of the upcoming meetings, seconded by Stephanie.

#### **d. Needs Assessment Handout – Carleen**

Carleen handed out the Completed Needs Assessment that contains the results from the surveys that went out in late 2019. She directed board members to read through the report and prepare to discuss at the next meeting.

### **5. Unfinished Business**

#### **1. Greenways Update – Autumn**

The French Broad River MPO received a presentation last month on the Mud Creek Greenway feasibility study. The City of Hendersonville showed some interest for additional engineering or construction of the section in their jurisdiction.

Planning staff met with WATCO about the Ecusta Trail last week, and the Board of Commissioners will meet next week to discuss the final details for Conserving Carolina to purchase the bridge. It looks like that will happen at the end of May. WATCO will remove the rails and ties in August.

We are looking at more grant opportunities, SDBG is still our best bet. There is \$10.9 million available. There is a lot of movement behind the scenes, everything is on track.

#### **2. Etowah Trail Update - Carleen**

The Commissioners approved the budget amendment to fund the increased price of the project. Allison Contractors was awarded the contract, they are currently working on Hendersonville High School and once this is complete they will start Etowah.

Katie asked where the money for it came from.

Carleen stated that funds we were not able to utilize in professional services were used to pay for the increased cost.

### **6. Staff Updates**

#### **1. Jason**

We are still extremely busy, including some new projects. We are installing a new bridge in the inner loop at Jackson Park and trying to squeeze in a few more projects with the little funds we have left.

We have a new employee to work on weekends and he has been great with the current staff as well as people in the parks; Robert Bestor.

Katie asked about the mowing contract.

Jason stated the contractor we had two years ago was second on the bid process so when the first one quit, we were able to contract them.

Jeff asked who makes the decision on whether a field is playable or not.

Jason stated that a lot goes into the decision and staff makes every effort to make it happen but also err on the side of caution. The decision is a team effort but Jason has the final call.

## **2. Adult Sport Updates – Matt**

After 14 months we are finally able to start leagues again! We started with a soccer league for kids that have started playing games. Adult softball will start next Monday, and we have about 20 teams. Adult Basketball is also starting and there are 20 teams as well.

There are about two weeks left of the AAC gym restroom restoration which will be easier to clean and look a lot nicer.

## **3. Admin Update – Megan**

We have had a huge increase in revenue! In the first ten days of May we have totaled \$21,000 in revenue, and for a comparison we totaled about \$17,000 for the entire month of April. The leagues and rentals have had a lot to do with this.

We have also opened our community centers up for rental again and we have already had a lot of reservations.

The board also decided to hold next months meeting at Dana Park on June 8<sup>th</sup>.

## **4. Departmental Update – Carleen**

The Green River Community Association has voted to fund two shade structures at Tuxedo Park. They want to allocate them over two benches in the park. Terry Maybin was a big part in this. It is a cantilever beam with a canvas top that is weather resistant.

The City of Hendersonville is working with the Land of Sky to apply for a grant from the NC DOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant and requested a letter of support from the Recreation Advisory Board. If approved, it would enhance potential points of connectivity as well as connecting residents to key destinations.

Katie motioned to support this. Philip seconded.

## **7. Member Comments**

Katie updated the Board about the Chief Belle trail, she contacted Conserving Carolina and stated that they are fundraising to get the parking lot and trail developed.

Carleen stated there is a plan to create a parking area near the entrance to the trail.

Stephanie stated that STAR Camp will be starting soon, and the kids will be coming to eat pizza at Jackson Park every Monday.

Corum asked staff to look into a piece of property in Mountain Home across from the post office that he thinks the County owns.

**8. Call to Adjourn: 1:12**