

Henderson County Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Meeting

February 8, 2022, 12:00pm, King St Meeting Room

In attendance: Jeff Donaldson, Terry Maybin, Scott Rhodes, Tricia King, Philip Ellis, Katie Breckheimer, Hunter Marks, and Corum Smith.

Staff in attendance: Carleen Dixon, Bruce Gilliam, Jason Kilgore, and Kathy Johnson.

1. Call to Order: 12:08

2. Approval of Minutes: Terry Maybin stated that she was not in attendance at the January 2022 meeting as listed in the draft minutes. Terry said her name should be removed from the minutes. A motion to approve the January 2022 minutes with the suggested amendment was made by Terry Maybin and was seconded by Phillip Ellis. The motion passed unanimously.

Carleen Dixon suggested an addition to the meeting agenda. She asked to add an Item C under new business, RFQ Results for the Inclusive Playground. Jeff Donaldson asked if there was any opposition to the addition, there was none.

3. New Business:

a. Ordinance Change Recommendation – Dog Park

Carleen Dixon stated that the current county ordinance requires that all dogs be leashed in public spaces. The County is working on a change in the ordinance in reference to the dog area in Jackson Park that would officially allow dogs to be off leash while in this area or other designated areas. This request will go before the County Commissioners for consideration. Carleen asked if the board would support the request to the Commissioners.

Phillip Ellis made a motion that the Recreation Advisory Committee support the request for an ordinance change to be taken to the county commissioners for consideration. Hunter Marks seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

i. Dog Area Subcommittee

Carleen stated that she would like the Advisory Board to consider establishing a sub-committee to work on rules and regulations for the current dog area at Jackson Park. The subcommittee would work with Parks and Recreation staff members to create guidelines

for Advisory Board approval. Phillip Ellis and Hunter Marks volunteered to work on the subcommittee.

Phillip Ellis made a motion to create a subcommittee to establish rules and regulations for the dog park at Jackson Park. Katie Breckheimer seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

b. Mobile Food Vending

Carleen stated that we have a current need for more concession services within Jackson Park. She suggested creating a subcommittee to continue work on create a policy for mobile vending service in the parks.

Phillip Ellis made a motion to create a subcommittee to work with Parks and Recreation staff to provide information and options on mobile food vendors at Jackson Park for board approval. Tricia King seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. Terry Maybin and Katie Breckheimer volunteered to serve on the subcommittee.

c. RFQ Results for Inclusive Playground

Carleen provided information to board members on the results from the recent RFQ to design the new Jackson Park playground. The top two design firm candidates for the playground project at Jackson Park are Progressive and RVE, Inc. Progressive had the highest scores on the matrix used in the decision-making progress. Carleen is seeking a motion of support to recommend Progressive to the county commissioners as the company to perform the design work.

Phillip Ellis asked who was on the interview committee? Carleen stated, it was her, Jason Kilgore, and Autumn Radcliff.

Phillip asked if the firm had a distinct plan to integrate the new playground into the current landscape? Carleen stated that all interested firms had landscape architects on staff or under contract to provide an integration plan. She added that Progressive stood out because they provided a strong process to create an inclusive design due to similar playground design work, they've done.

Jeff Donaldson asked if this firm would be chosen just for the design phase? Carleen responded, the selected firm would work to design the overall project, playground layouts and would also oversee the construction implementation.

Tricia King asked if they are a local company or if they would use any local employees? Carleen stated the firm that ranked top is based in Charlotte.

Terry Maybin asked if this was a new process to install/add a playground and that she has never seen this process before? Carleen replied that this is the appropriate procedure to follow.

Jeff asked if the selected firm would ask for bids if/when they are selected? Carleen said we would negotiate a contract, and this would go to the Board of Commissioners for approval.

Terry asked what the cost would be? Jeff Donaldson stated this is just the request for qualifications, the contract would come later with final details and funding requests attached.

Jeff asked Carleen, is it your suggestion to select Progressive at this point, the top scoring firm? Carleen replied, Progressive was the top scoring firm from the selection committee, this is the firm the selection committee is recommending.

Terry Maybin made a motion to support the recommendation for Progressive to be selected as the design firm to be brought to the County Commissioners for approval. Hunter Marks seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Phillip Ellis asked if members of the Recreation Advisory Board that specialize in this type of work could be included in the design process and meeting with the select firm? He feels they could help establish goals, restraints, budgets and mainstream the process. Carleen replied that she would welcome their input. Phillip Ellis, Tricia King, and Hunter Marks volunteered to work with recreation staff and the selected firm on the project.

Katie Breckheimer shared an update on land access work that Conserving Carolina has been doing for the potential section of the Oklawaha Greenway that would connect Jackson Park to BRCC.

4. Unfinished Business:

a. Greenways Update

1. RTAC meets tomorrow and will review the draft encroachment policy that the BOC will review and approve. 2. staff looking at grant opportunities for the remaining 2 sections. Applications due end of March and first of April. 3. staff is working on PE contract and waiting for NCDOT to review and approve so that the BOC can review and hopefully approve in mid-March.

b. Soccer Subcommittee Update

Bruce Gilliam stated that he and members of the soccer subcommittee, Phillip Ellis, Tricia King, Stephanie Cantwell, met with Eric Clonch, ABYSA board member, and

Tricia King last week to discuss soccer programming in Henderson County. Bruce added that the subcommittee has also met with county coaches regarding soccer programming and facility needs within the county.

Phillip Ellis stated the meeting went well with Eric Clonch and feels there is no longer animosity to work through with ABYSA. He added, the subcommittee is still not sure of their final request to the advisory board but feels it will include working with ABYSA in some form or fashion in the future. Phillip said that ABYSA is facing the same field needs and scheduling obstacles as we are in Henderson County due to program growth.

Bruce stated the Parks and Recreation Department soccer registration is open and ongoing with around 400 participants so far. He added that many of our smaller age groups are already at capacity. Tricia King stated that ABYSA has around 400 participants as well.

Tricia King stated she is researching data and gathering information on creating a multisport complex in Henderson County. She is reviewing other nearby complexes, such as in Charlotte, and getting data to share with the advisory board. She feels there is a real need for more soccer facilities in Henderson County.

Bruce agreed the county is growing and there are facility needs in all sports.

Phillip Ellis said their group would meet one more time before the March advisory board meeting and will plan to provide a formal recommendation at the March meeting.

c. Jackson Park Playground Fund Raising Update

Carleen stated fundraising activities are ongoing and she hopes to be close to the \$250,000 mark by March. She asked board members to encourage volunteer groups and community members to continue their efforts. It looks like the fund-raising committee would like to get to \$500,000 for the project.

Board members asked what the price tag was for the Flat Rock playground and the Mills River playground projects? Carleen replied that she wasn't sure but could research the question.

Carleen said as we move forward, we could ask for support in different ways like a community member sponsoring a piece of the playground.

Phillip asked how much has been raised to date? Carleen said, approximately \$40 with a possible grant of \$150k; so close to \$200k.

Katie Breckheimer asked if Carleen had two playground projects on her budget request to the county commissioners? Carleen stated there are three playground projects on the 2023 budget request, East Flat Rock, Etowah and 'old' Edneyville.

Carleen stated the budget project funds and priority is based on park size and public attendance. She said the cost for updates to these parks would not be as high as the Jackson Park project.

Katie Breckheimer asked which of the three parks is the highest priority? Jason Kilgore stated that the priority level is, East Flat Rock Park, then Etowah Park and then the old Edneyville park. The East Flat Rock Park is the oldest park and needs updates, Etowah has drainage issues that need to be addressed as well as structures that are not sufficient for its attendance numbers, and the old Edneyville park is a pocket part and is not used as much as the other two, so it is in the best shape of the three. He said most of our parks were created in the 70s or 80s and need to be updated.

Katie feels the Jackson Park project will gain a lot of attention, but we also have other needs that should not go unmet. She believes we need a Parks' strategic plan with an outline of priorities for each year. She agrees that our parks need to be replaced and shored up for the future.

Carleen added that a discussion on how to create a master plan has been one of her goals. She feels that once the 2045 County Comprehensive Plan is completed the Planning Department might be able to help.

d. Balloon Ban Update

Katie Breckheimer stated that due to a new appointment with Mountain True, she will not pursue her balloon ban request at this time. She said the ban would require a change in county ordinances and commission approval which could be a long process and she doesn't have the time right now to devote to the project.

5. Staff Updates

a. Parks Update

Jason Kilgore stated the maintenance group is currently working to support the special events programmer with the upcoming You + Me dance. His group helps with the gym/props set up and tear down in support of the programming. Jason added, there has been a rash of water line breaks within Jackson Park and although it is typical this time of year the repairs require time for his group to repair. He said that field upkeep and maintenance for the upcoming spring seasons is ongoing. He added that new mulch has been added to all playgrounds in the park.

Phillip Ellis asked what is done for soccer field preparation. Jason stated they will roll the fields to flatten the ground and then aerate each surface. He said fertilizer will be applied in February and overseeding was completed in the fall.

Bruce Gilliam stated that he could not say enough good things about Jason and his maintenance staff and their hard work throughout the county parks.

b. Recreation Update

Bruce Gilliam provided the recreation update stating adult and youth basketball is going on now and soccer and HCYB youth baseball sign-ups are underway. He said HCYB have enough for two girls' softball teams in each age group at this point.

Tricia King asked about baseball registration numbers. Bruce said HCYB's numbers are high so far and they have around 340 so far.

Corum Smith asked how many staff Jason had? Jason said he had 8 on staff in maintenance including himself but could always use more. Mr. Smith stated his staff should be complimented for all they do, and they deserve a raise.

Bruce stated that registration for the Senior Games and Silver Arts begins soon. We will have a meet and greet at AAC for participants and will help with registration at that time.

c. Department Update

Carleen said she has hired a new administrative assistant, Megan Burnette. Megan will start on Monday, February 14. She added that Zack High has resigned his position as a programmer and will leave in two weeks. That athletics programmer position will be posted to the county site for hire.

Carleen added that the demands on the parks are growing, and we have massive scheduling going on now across the board. She is meeting with Bruce and Jason frequently on how to structure and handle all the needs.

A big Thank You to Terry Maybin for her work at Tuxedo Park and all the work going towards the completion of the multi-sport court. Terry said she had the support of a great committee of community members. She added that it took over 20 years to get a park in Tuxedo and it has become the heart of the community.

6. Member Comments

Phillip Ellis stated that releasing a balloon into the air is litter and we should dissuade that action in our parks. He asked that we not approve balloon release requests.

Tricia King asked if we ever had groups come to the parks for clean up and litter education. Carleen said she'd have to brag on her team's hard work keeping the areas

clean. She hasn't seen a need for a clean up day because of all their hard work. But that we do host a group once a year at Jackson Park. Terry Maybin added that there was a little pick-up event at Tuxedo Park in the fall.

Katie Breckheimer asked if the Parks and Recreation budget had been presented to the commissioners. Carleen stated there is no formal presentation the final request is submitted to the budget office with all our requests. Katie asked about the 4-year capital budget. Carleen noted that this is not done every year, but she will keep the board updated.

Jeff Donaldson stated that in all his years in real estate in Henderson County he has never seen the demand like he has now for homes. He said the situation is about to explode with the need for young families and fears the impact to our community. He sees an impending increase in facility use and the need for more and more programs. Jeff feels we should be sharing this information with the County Commissioners for future planning.

Phillip Ellis stated that unless we get some zoning approved, we will have a sea of asphalt without support from our commissioners. Phillip asked if we could add an agenda item to the next meeting to continue the discussion.

Carleen said she could make that an agenda item.

Katie Breckheimer said that we know people are coming to our area and we need to make sure there is a balance to protect our open spaces and our natural spaces from being overrun. Katie said we need public input regarding the issue for the 2045 commission planning process.

Carleen stated that as a part of the 2045 planning process members of the planning department will attend one of our spring meetings and recreation advisory board members will have a chance to share their ideas and concerns with committee members.

7. Call to Adjourn: 1:20 pm

The next Recreation Advisory Board meeting will be held on March 8, 2022, at the King Street Meeting Room, 101 N. King St., Hendersonville.