

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

**June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Edneyville Community Center**

**Board members in attendance:** Jeff Donaldson, Katie Breckheimer, Scott Rhodes, Doug Moon, Milton Butterworth, Ralph King

**Staff in attendance:** Bruce Gilliam, Jason Kilgore, Cory Blackwell, Autumn Radcliff, and Brooklyn Bishop

**Public in Attendance:** Betsy Gerwig

**1. Call to Order:** 12:09

**2. Approval of Minutes:** April 2023 & May 2023

Jeff Donaldson asked for a motion to approve the April and May minutes as written. Katie motioned to approve, Ralph seconded the motion, and there was unanimous approval from the board.

**3. Public Input**

No formal public input.

**4. New Business**

**a. Soil and Water Grants for Parks – Betsy**

Betsy Gerwig is an Engineer for Soil and Water for Henderson County. Soil and Water was brought in to help work on stream restoration within Henderson County parks. A stream restoration project will be done at the Edneyville Community Center. The engineering design has been completed, the permits have been submitted, and they have received notice that the Wildlife Resource Commission is good with the design and proposed plantings. The next phase will be construction that will hopefully begin in October, plantings will begin in the fall and winter, and they will return to fill in any planting spots necessary. Betsy presented the board with a portion of the design.

There will be two projects within Jackson Park. The first is a streamflow rehabilitation assistance program referred to as StRAP. This was funded by the General Assembly last budget cycle for stream debris removal,

stream bank stabilization, and restoration. The funding was also provided for PL566 program. Soil and Water applied for \$2.2 million for the large stream in the county and they received approximately \$370K which was enough to cover Jackson Park. This work focused on the drainage ditch by the soccer fields and the streams leading into this drainage. The work began in April and is nearly completed. The water levels have dropped since debris was removed and they also removed trash from the stream as well. Jason said the drainage ditch itself has come down about 18in. There was a large beaver dam blocking the stream that has been removed which has helped with the water levels and the water flow. Jason mentioned that future funding should go into stream upkeep due to the positive impact already made in the park with flooding. Katie asked if the burning in Jackson Park a few weeks ago was from this project. Betsy confirmed that the burning was for the debris from the streams that was decided to burn rather than be removed. Jeff asked if this has helped with flooding on the greenway. Jason said he is hoping that this should have a significant impact on helping water flow to reduce flooding. Milton mentioned that we will likely see future improvement continue due to this project. Milton asked how long it had been since a removal project had been completed. Betsy mention this was the first year Soil and Water received StRAP funding. Jeff asked if the drainage ditch was behind field 7. Jason showed the location of the ditch using the map Betsy provided.

Katie asked what other work had been done to prevent flooding on the greenway. Betsy mentioned that they applied for a grant with DWR for a feasibility and engineering study. They received notice last week that they have been awarded the grant and the Board of Commissioners had already approved a match when the application was submitted. Once a contract is received and a company is hired, the project can begin. The purpose will be to learn how to manage storm water better, better floodplain connectivity, and created better storage with wetlands. This will hopefully create some recreational opportunities and evaluate stream restoration opportunities. Betsy had a meeting last week with Mike Huffman from Water with the City of Hendersonville and other

agencies to evaluate Jackson Park. The City will soon begin restoration work on Mud Creek which could have an impact on the dog park area in Jackson Park. They will also be looking to possibly make a connection with the Ecusta Trail that might connect to Jackson Park. There are several connections that are being considered for Jackson Park that will need to be considered for the design plan including connecting Jackson Park and Blue Ridge Community College. Ralph mentioned that restoration work has been done on Crest Rd. Milton asked what would be required if we requested annual maintenance. Betsy mentioned that Transylvania County contracts every year to have work under \$5000 done as issues arise.

**b. EFR Park New Land Acquisition**

We purchased 13.5 acres at East Flat Rock Park and recently hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony for the land addition. Bruce showed the press video of the ribbon cutting for the board. Bruce and Jason met with a disc golf designer at the park to see if a course would be possible on this land. The disc golf course at Jackson Park is one of our most used amenities. We would like to use the land for a 9-hole disc golf course and walking trails. There have not been many discussions of using this land for soccer. We did not receive the accessibility grant for EFR, but commissioners were generous enough to purchase this land as an addition.

Katie asked disc golf and walking paths are compatible and Ralph mentioned he had the same question. Bruce confirmed that it would be designed to accommodate both. Ralph asked if the walking path would connect to the existing one by the gazebo and Bruce confirmed they could connect. Milton added that Jackson Park is widely considered the best disc golf course in Western NC and Jackson Park along with competing parks feature walking paths near disc golf. Disc golf players are conscious of their surroundings and are responsible when playing the sport. A few county schools now have courses, and an addition of a course would allow people to play at other locations besides schools. Milton mentioned that having two pads at each hole is a great idea that will allow multiple tee spots that makes it like a full 18-hole course.

**c. Friends of Dana Park – Donation of \$6000 for Trees and Benches**

Leroy Nicholson donated \$6000 to Dana Park. Bruce met and walked the park with Leroy, and he mentioned adding in benches and additional trees along the trail. It has been put in the budget in our 4-year plan to update the Dana Community Building.

**d. Maintenance Shed – Jackson Park**

The pad was completed about a month ago and contractors came in and erected the structure. We are now waiting on roll-up doors. The building is in the parking lot of fields 8 and 9 in Jackson Park. This is a much-needed facility to accommodate our equipment.

**e. Mobile Vending – add more for weekdays and weekends**

Mobile vending has been very successful in our parks. We have been receiving more applications lately and we spoke at the last meeting changing our policy to add additional trucks to the parks. This would allow for 2 trucks on weekdays and 3 trucks on the weekend. We have had a lot of activity and events in the parks lately that allocate a need for additional vendors, and we would like the board to vote to change the policy.

Katie asked if we would be able to move forward without a vote due to a small meeting attendance. We do have a policy for mobile vending so it will require a vote. Bruce suggested that we could push a vote to next month and add additional by his determination. Bruce made it clear that we are not attempting to compete with Youth Baseball with their concessions and have even asked vendors not to supply the same products. Jeff asked if approval was needed to move forward on this before July 4<sup>th</sup>. July 4<sup>th</sup> will be a special event which is a different policy. Doug suggested that the board allow the director to move forward under a trial basis until there is a quorum to have a proper vote. Motioned to approve the trial basis, seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the members present. Katie was glad to read

in the last months minutes that the vendors have been working hard to keep their areas clean.

**f. Bell Park Trail**

Bruce met with Conserving Carolina last week and they have begun work on the Bell Park Trail in Saluda. They will be building a deck at the river by the falls. Bruce will meet with them again to discuss the progress. The trail is near the bridge so there are some concerns about parking. Katie was concerned this project would have to wait until the Saluda Grade trail was finished so she is very glad to hear this work has begun.

**5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**a. Ecusta Trail Update**

Autumn has been working to wrap up work with the design consultant, get permits in place, and everything needed to bid out construction in July. They have put in the request for construction authorization with Federal Highways which will then go to Department of Transportation board agenda in July. They have run advertisements for 3 weeks for the construction bid and hopefully a bid can be awarded near the first of August to allow work to begin. Paving will likely not occur until next spring.

Katie mentioned that she read that the greenways will live under Parks and Recreation. Autumn said that they are unsure now, but it will fall under multiple departments. It is a linear park, and the county has leased the greenway. There will be some MOUs in place with the City of Hendersonville and Laurel Park. The county is also working closely with the City of Brevard because we want a continuous trail. The Friends of the Ecusta Trail will play a key role for being the face of the trail and maintaining the website and PR side of the trail. There will be a lot of ongoing maintenance with the trail. All bridges have been replaced except for one over the French Board River which will eventually need to be replaced. The county will need to work with partner groups to plan for funding for projects like this and regular maintenance.

Jeff asked if this first phase of construction will go all the way to the Henderson-Transylvania County line. Autumn clarified that it will only go to the first crossing of US 64 in Horseshoe. Milton mentioned that there was a committee to discuss signage and ethics and asked if there is still a need for that. Autumn confirmed that what that group discussed was presented to them and they have been sharing that information with the City of Brevard. The Friends group have also had subgroups to discuss this as well. Everyone agrees that there won't be technical rules and regulations but more of etiquette considerations.

**b. ECC Sport Court Completion**

Bruce asked members to look at the court before they leave the facility. The basketball goals are now up, and the painting will hopefully be done this week for the pickleball courts. The fencing has been delivered and will soon be placed. The parking lot has been paved and we are in progress of painting those lines. One issue to consider will be restroom access.

**c. Etowah – PARTF Grant Startup**

Jason has met with different groups including playground designers. He also met with an engineer to develop an overall plan. We have the budget numbers and are trying to make everything fit in budget. As soon as the budget is released in July, we will begin this project. The Friends of Etowah and the Lions Club are very pleased with the new addition of a bocce ball court. Milton mentioned that community members have asked if we would ever offer pickleball lessons. Bruce said we have a pickleball camp currently for children. We also have open play at the AAC gym and Edneyville Elementary School gym. Players are fairly accommodating to new players in assisting them. We would like to add in pickleball courts in Jackson Park, but we have been approved to update the tennis courts.

**d. ACC Update – AC and Goals**

Air conditioning has been installed in the AAC gym. We will be updating our basketball goals from two floor model goals to now installing goals that will be in connected to the top of the gym. This will be great for safety reason as well as the current goals are an impediment for pickleball, and they require 8 people to move each goal. The garage door has now been fixed and a new roof has been installed.

## **6. STAFF UPDATES and EVENTS**

The Jackson Park playground has been extremely successful. Bruce averages around 500 – 600 kids visiting each day. Bruce showed the board a video of the grand opening event. We are grateful for Milton and Pardee for the exercise equipment installed at the playground. Cory will be our new Recreation Supervisor and will be adding several outdoor programs that the department needed.

The July 4<sup>th</sup> event will take place downtown and fireworks will be shot from the dog park area in Jackson Park. The park will be closed from the house to the 4<sup>th</sup> Ave entrance.

## **7. MEMBER COMMENTS**

Katie mentioned that Mike Morgan is doing a great job on the county news videos. Milton wanted to brag on the Parks and Recreation staff. He mentioned that he works with several different community groups, and they are very impressed with our staff and how attentive and caring the staff is in what they do.

Doug wanted to acknowledge the significant impact that Leroy Nicholson has made for Dana Park and that he should be recognized for his contributions.

## **8. ADJOURN: 1:24**

Next meeting July 11th at Dana Community Building.