

Henderson County Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Meeting

March 12th, 2024, Athletics and Activities Center

Board members in attendance: Jeff Donaldson, Terry Maybin, Katie Breckheimer, Doug Moon, Mary Davis, Stephanie Cantwell, Tricia King, and Milton Butterworth

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

Public in Attendance: None

1. Call to Order: 12:10

2. Approval of Minutes: February 2024

Jeff asked for a motion to approve the February minutes as written. Milton motioned to approve, Mary seconded, and there was a unanimous approval from the board.

Public Input - None

3. New Business

a. Spring Sports and Camps - Bruce

We have finished our winter basketball season and Bruce presented a photo from the middle school girls' clinic he and Cory hosted. Summer camp registration opened on March 1st and has been very popular with Adventure Camp filling up within the first 10 minutes. We have a variety of Camps this year and several Art Camp sessions, which has received a lot of interest. Youth soccer started March 4th with practices all around the county. Bruce was able to show the County Commissioners the current practice schedule along with photos of the grass in Jackson Park to show the need for soccer fields. We will still be playing all soccer games in Jackson Park, but practices have been spread to county schools and almost every county park.

We have various tennis programs coming up for kids and adults beginning soon. Spring adult co-ed volleyball has started and has had a huge turnout. Adult softball registration will begin soon. Jason planted grass seed last week and ran into the issue of geese flocking to the fields. This is a concern due to geese eating the grass seed and the geese littering the fields when we have an Egg Hunt Event on 3/23. Katie mentioned she had a similar issue in her neighborhood which they were able to resolve by putting out a fake coyote decoy to scare away geese. Jason stated he has contacted Wildlife to get help resolving this issue.

b. Bike Park - Cory

Cory stressed how useful an updated bike park could be to our county. Cory was able to get a few stakeholders who are part of the local bike community to sign a document to support funding for the park and expressing their willingness to help fund, design and build this park. Seth Alvo from Berm Peak has volunteered to do extensive work for these updates. Cory would like to have the board's support to continue to push for this renovation to turn the bike park into a highlight for Jackson Park. Katie asked what Cory's plan for this project will be. Cory stated they have submitted this in the budget and Berm Peak is willing to add funding and assist with the design and build. The track was originally made for BMX use, which has died off in this area, but Cory would like to transition the park toward mountain biking and strider biking up to age 15. We would be putting in the funding for dirt resources and Berm Peak would handle the rest.

Mary asked what was needed from the board at this point. Bruce and Cory stated we were mostly looking for support on this project at this stage. We requested \$40k in the budget for this project, which is a small fraction of what it would cost if we did this project alone. We need to create programming opportunities for disconnected youth and teens, which a bike park would accommodate. Tricia mentioned when she moved back to the area, the bike park was one of the first facilities her family used, and she would love to see it brought back to life. Cory has gotten Neko Mulally, a 3-time Mountain Bike National Champion, on-

board to support this project who will be a great asset to bring attention and support. Terry asked if the board needed to send a letter of support to the commissioners. Bruce would like to receive support from the board before budget discussions begin. Tricia asked if we include the bike park in our Adventure Camp. Cory confirmed that it is not part of the camp. Milton asked if there is a first phase that could happen or do we need to wait for \$40k to start. Jason and Cory stated Berm Peak is asking for \$60k, we would provide \$40k and they would rely on raising the additional \$20k, which Cognitive Brew House is offering to assist with. Tricia asked if we have anyone who would be a potential partner and Jason has looked into this.

Milton suggested we make a motion to recommend the commissioners to support the bike park improvements to improve community health, encourage youth outdoor activity, and more. Stephanie asked what the liability is on these parks, as she has seen EMS be sent to these parks for injuries regularly. Cory said most other bike parks in the area are much more advanced whereas this would make our park a base-level starting track. The park now is more unsafe than it would be after an improvement project. Mary asked if the board could be sent the letter and map Cory as presented. Mary is working with the group Bike Walk HVL, who is encouraging the city to add city wide access so kids can bike to school. They will meet again on 4/2 and will host a launch at Trailside Brewery and she would like to propose to bring this information to the group. Tricia mentioned that Mountain Community School started a group like this 6 years ago that got families very involved in walking/biking. Stephanie mentioned reaching out to the schools would be helpful as they have received grants for bicycles recently.

Cory stated that this would be the perfect opportunity to push this project with the support and stakeholders he has currently involved. Doug asked if any of the dirt from the Edneyville stream project could be used but Jason said it is too sandy. Jeff asked for a motion, Milton moved to send a recommendation to support the proposed bike park

improvements considering the level of community partnership we have at this time. Tricia seconded the motion and all approved.

c. Spring Maintenance Update with Facilities and Fields - Jason

Spring sports are about to begin, and maintenance is preparing for soccer season and prepping baseball fields. The first tournament of the season was scheduled for this past weekend but was cancelled due to weather. The next tournament will be in two weeks and little league has started practice. The park is getting older and there are more fixes needed as use continues. Concrete was poured in Tuxedo Park yesterday for the shade structures that are set to be installed Friday that the Green River Community Association purchased for us. Work is about to begin on the East Flat Rock walking trail and the disc golf course work will begin soon.

We have put down grass seed at the Jackson Park soccer fields and the bare spots have started to fill in. Jason has fertilized 3 time since the fall season and the grass is looking very green. There is a pre-construction meeting next week for the Jackson Park tennis courts and construction is set to start right away. The new maintenance shed has now been insulated. The gravel parking area by fields 8 and 9 will be paved in April. There is a paving project from the Jackson Park House to the end of 4th Ave. Terry asked how long it will take for the disc golf at East Flat Rock Park to be completed. Jason stated it will be a quick process once we receive the drawings back. Milton and Mary mentioned the City is installing a course in Berkeley Park. Our course will be 9 goals but with double pads so it can be played as 18. Bruce mentioned scheduling will be difficult on tennis courts during construction with both Hendersonville High and East High sharing the 4 available courts.

We also have Apple Valley and Flat Rock Middle Schools who practice baseball in Jackson Park, along with a growing Little League program that has switched to Babe Ruth. Katie asked if the high schools assist in maintaining their soccer fields and Jason stated they are turf fields. Bids are due tomorrow for a new mowing contract for all our greenspace

mowing. Tricia mentioned Mountain Community School and Bruce assured the board that we have been doing our best to accommodate them this year by allowing them to play a few basketball games at our AAC gym. They normally use the Jackson Park soccer fields, but this year we will schedule a few games for them at the AAC turf field.

4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Dana Park Community Building - Jason

Demolition began today by removing the flooring and ceiling. There was a check presentation last week for the \$120k donated for this project. This project will completely renovate the inside with a new kitchen, ceiling with exposed wood beams, and more. This is set to be completed by the first of May.

b. Etowah PARTF Update – Jason

Jason has gotten most everything set and needs to place a few orders on equipment. We are very close to breaking ground and once that begins it should be around a 6-month build-out. We hoped to have the exercise equipment along the walking trail set but the project has been moving slower than expected. Jason presented pictures of the proposed playground for Etowah. This playground will go up and be multiple stories to best use the surface area available. It will have a concrete walkway around it and picnic tables. It has swinging pieces but no traditional swings. We hope this will be a destination playground for kids in the community. This is a smooth platform all the way to the top making it accessible for all. We want to ensure the Etowah community is appreciated and receives a great update. Doug asked the cost of the playground and Jason stated it will be around \$280k including the poor and play surfacing and shade structures.

c. Jackson Park Trails Update - Cory

The new map of Jackson Park has been created and posted online and in the kiosk at the park. We can now begin creating the QR codes with the titles of the trails. Cory had facility services create a sign that has been installed directing people from the main road to the dog park and bike

park. Katie asked if it would be more attractive if we painted the plywood of the kiosk. Jason and Cory agreed and plan to paint the kiosk. Katie asked about posting signs at each trailhead and Cory confirmed that Arnie from maintenance will begin creating these signs with a QR code that leads to the main park map. Katie asked if Cory had a timeframe and he stated not exactly but he wants to begin work soon. Katie mentioned the Land Trust has acquired land and the progress to moving the greenway to Blue Ridge Community College is getting closer. We will have to start thinking about how we will lead the greenway through Jackson Park.

Katie asked about the sidewalk discussion for the playground. Jason got quotes on the work for this sidewalk. We did not qualify for the grant we approached for this project, but we have not abandoned this idea. Milton got some feedback about the grant and believes we could emphasize the downtown connection to make a case for this project. Mary mentioned that if the road leading into the park from 4th Ave is going to be resurfaced, we should consider adding a bike/walking line to lead to the greenway. Jason agreed and he believes we could widen the shoulder on each side to allow more room. Milton and Tricia suggested bringing this to attention at Bike Walk HVL. Katie asked if this would need to be done by the City and Jason stated he could do this with our equipment. The section with the walkway is City property which is why the sidewalk ends.

5. STAFF UPDATES AND EVENTS

Senior Games and Silver Arts registration has begun, and we will host a kickoff luncheon soon. Lynn is also hosting senior activities and Cory presented the March schedule, which is also posted online. Milton asked if we would send flyers directly to him that he could add to the Pardee newsletter for additional advertising. Lynn also has Abilities Tennis beginning soon. Tricia asked how many we have registered for Tennis so far and Brooklyn confirmed 10 for registration. Lindsay has several classes and events upcoming at the Edneyville Community Center, including a St. Patrick's Day Party and Earth Day event.

Bridgette has planned the Egg Hunt Event which will be on 3/23 in Jackson Park. This summer we will host Movies in Parks again.

Cory has been hosting community hikes each month, with two coming up in March and early April. Milton would love to promote this hiking program within Pardee. Tricia mentioned that creating short promotional videos for our programs to catch the attention of younger groups. Cory hosted classes with the Wildlife Commission, including fly-tying, that were very successful, and he hopes to offer more soon. Cory will be starting a skating program in April at Patton Park, which the City has allowed us to use for this program. This will be a great program to add outside of traditional sports to possibly interest at-risk youth. Tricia stated this is a great program for the teen age group that we lack in some of our other programs. Katie asked if roller skating could be done at Patton Park and Cory confirmed that it can. Stephanie mentioned that JCPC would be a great place to present this program to possibly receive funding. This is a great opportunity for at-risk youth to get involved in a positive way.

6. MEMBER COMMENTS

Katie mentioned the Swim Complex Sub-committee will be meeting tomorrow at 1pm in the AAC. Doug was a great addition to the meeting last month to help show the swim history in this county. Earth Fest will be on April 20th downtown. The bird trail ribbon cutting will be the morning of April 27th on the Oklawaha trail.

Jeff was able to visit a few youth and adult basketball games this season and congratulated Parks and Recreation on hosting very professional and well-done games. Stephanie mentioned her son had a great time playing in the youth league this year and stated the high school referees did a wonderful job.

Meetings will now be held every other month, with the next meeting being held in May.

7. ADJOURN: 1:24

Next Meeting: May 14th, 2024 – AAC Classroom