

Henderson County Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Meeting

January 13, 2026, Athletics and Activities Center

Board members in attendance: Jeff Donaldson, Phillip Ellis, Mary Davis, Bob Smith, Corum Smith, Terry Maybin, Milton Butterworth, and Stephanie Cantwell

Staff in attendance: Bruce Gilliam, Jason Kilgore, Cory Blackwell, Abby Buxton, Nora Sjue, Brooklyn Bishop, Riley Dale, Ben Bryson

Public in Attendance:

1. Call to Order: 12:03pm

2. Approval of Minutes: September 2025 and November 2025 Notes
Jeff asked for a motion to approve the September minutes and November notes as written. Bob motioned to approve, Mary seconded, and there was a unanimous approval from the board.

Public Input – None.

3. New Business

a. Ecusta Trail Update and RTAC Info – Jason

The trail has continued to see a lot of activity. Speed limit signs of 15mph purchased by the Friends of the Ecusta Trail have been installed along the trail. There are two speed limit radars on the trail, one is near the Horse Shoe end and another is by Trailside Brewery. Mary stated that it would be good to install another radar across from the Trailside one facing in the correct direction. Approaching Trailside is a downhill slope so users would be gaining speed from that direction. These signs and radars are more for safety and awareness rather than enforcement. A Park Deputy will be filming a video for social media to discuss and inform about the speed limit signs. Special event applications for the trail are now open.

b. Hurricane Helene PARTF Grant – Nora

We are interested in applying for a grant through PARTF to assist in funding the Berkeley Park Sports Complex. For the application, we would be arguing that we are having to relocate our soccer program to Berkeley Park due to the damage Jackson Park soccer fields sustained in Hurricane Helene. The justification could include what it would mean for soccer to be moved out of a flood plain and the other qualities that Berkeley Park has to offer.

Jeff asked how much the grant award could be and Nora stated the total pot is \$4 million but can be distributed to multiple applicants. This grant is a 50/50 match so we would be asking for \$150k to cover one of the buildings needed at the facility. Mary asked if we received any FEMA money to cover damage at Jackson Park. Some aspects of the park received reimbursement like the ball fields, but the soccer fields did not receive any funds to cover damages. Phillip suggested reaching out to Soil and Water to assist in the grant to point out the flood plain. Milton asked if there is an opportunity to ask for more funding from this grant than only \$150k. We are going to apply for a more reasonable amount to improve our chances of receiving the grant.

Nora would need a motion to approve of applying for the grant. Milton motioned that the Recreation Advisory Board recommend to the Board of Commissioners that we apply for the grant to aid in funding for the Berkeley Sports Complex. Phillip seconded the motion, and all approved.

c. Sponsorship Banners and Donations – Nora

We are still in need of additional funding for the Berkeley Park Sports Complex. The project will be finished with what we have currently, which is the facilities but not the amenities. The lights alone would be \$2 million in funding needed. The Commissioners will likely provide funding to cover unexpected rock cost found during grading. We are trying to focus on finding big ticket donors for 6-figure donations, but it has been a challenge. Any sponsorship would be helpful. We would display banners or some other form of advertisement for donors. There is a breakdown available for sponsorship levels. Nora would like to finalize a

banner sponsorship agreement. The scoreboard would be a prime spot for sponsorship and likely a way we can interest donors. Jeff asked if selling the name rights was an option, and Nora said as far as she knows that it is not an option, but it could be a conversation if there was an interested party. We will need to hire an employee for the facility.

d. Budget Information for 2027 – Abigail and Nora

Nora and Abigail have been working on a project that started as an asset inventory that would be completed for all county departments. They have been currently inventorying everything that Parks and Recreation does. The ongoing maintenance of our facilities has been a major part of this project. One goal from this project is to ensure the Board of Commissioners understand the extent of our department's duties and responsibilities to assist in making requests for needs. They have been looking into what changes can be made to ensure we are on par with cost metrics in comparison to other departments and how to increase revenues to offset our outgoing costs. Day-to-day maintenance requirements are the most unseen side of our department. Having this inventory completed would allow the BOC and budget office to recognize what our needs are so we can budget appropriately.

They have not determined what the final product of this analysis will be, but they will present to the RAB their completed project. Bob said that he considers this to be like a master plan. Phillip disagreed, stating that he feels this is a necessary piece to getting a true master plan that would be contracted out. We could provide them with this analysis to have them provide us with a design. Mary agreed and stated that this data will be great to provide for a possible master plan. With some small changes to the fee schedule, we could bring in an additional \$20k at the low end. Small changes could make a big difference in funding the projects we need. Mary would like to compare fee schedules to nearby counties.

e. Bike Park JP – Cory

Cory is working with Pisgah Area Sorba to potentially add a bike park in the space behind fields 8 & 9 in Jackson Park. The former bike park area is not useable and City of Hendersonville property. Pisgah Area Sorba would do the fundraising, construction, maintenance, and stewardship of the project with us providing programming in the space. A bike park would be the least impactful amenity to the natural space, and the tree cover would provide natural shade for the park. This would not affect any other amenities in Jackson Park.

Milton asked that hole 14 of the disc golf course not be moved, which Cory confirmed would not be touched. Stephanie asked what the liability would be in comparison to other bike parks in the area. This would be a much smaller scale and more of an introductory course that is far less dangerous than other area bike parks. We hope that having a smaller scale course will encourage education on the sport and reduce injury. Jeff asked what cost we would be responsible for. We would only pay for the design cost and Pisgah Area Sorba would handle the rest. Stephanie would like Cory to get in contact with her to speak more about this project.

Cory is looking for a motion to move forward with working with Pisgah Area Sorba and to get approval from the Board of Commissioners for this project. Mary made a motion to approve Cory to continue to work with Pisgah Area Sorba and present this to the BOC, Terry seconded the motion, and all approved.

f. America 250 Grant – Nora

Nora applied for the America 250 Grant for our upcoming July 4th celebration, and we were awarded \$10k. The next couple of months will be spent planning the event and the funding will likely go towards musical acts and special swag to give out. Bridgette has been doing the bulk of the work and planning for the event. We have already received the quote for the fireworks, and we plan to add an additional musical act to the event.

4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. East Flat Rock Park and Playground Update – Jason

A social media video was posted to express to the public that the dinosaurs will be returning when the East Flat Rock playground is completed. The playground was delivered last week, and installation will begin next week. We will also be adding a seat wall around the playground. The turf surfacing will be installed during the first week of March. The full installation will take around 4 to 5 weeks. Concrete work will be completed to increase access from the parking lot to the playground, restrooms, and shelter. The new playground will be 30ft high and Terry asked if this would be our biggest playground. It will be in height but not in square footage. We will be the first location in NC and SC to have this playground model.

b. Berkeley Park Update – Jason

The first soccer field has been laid, and the lines are being sewn in. We expect all turf to be completed in 65-85 more days. We will be attempting to update the baseball field as much as we can since it is not a part of this project. The project is currently on schedule and lighting bases will be delivered in mid-February. We don't currently have the funding for the above ground lighting pieces. Mary asked how short on funding we are, and Jason confirmed around \$4 million.

5. STAFF UPDATES AND EVENTS

Ben Bryson and Riley Dale are our new interns for this semester. Ben is getting his master's at the University of South Carolina. He played basketball in undergrad, and he was a student at West Henderson High School. Riley is getting her master's at North Greenville University, and she played golf and softball at East Henderson High School. Ben will be helping with our basketball program, and Riley will help Bridgette with our events. They will be working with us through May 8th.

The Edneyville Community Center is hosting a Dolly and Me Tea Party along with our regular programming. Cory has released his 2026 Hiking Henderson County schedule and registration is now open for the February hike. Senior

Games will be kickstarting soon with registration beginning January 19th and on March 4th, we will host our Registration Luncheon at the VFW. We will be hosting the Silver Arts Showcase at Blue Ridge Community College again this year. Lynn also hosts free senior activities every week.

Late registration is now open for Spring Youth Soccer and Sprouts registration is open until March. We are currently looking for referees for our soccer season. Youth Basketball is currently ongoing. Our middle school teams for youth sports are reserved for those that did not make their school teams. Cory is coaching a team this year and Phillip asked if we are having issues finding coaches for soccer as well. We may have one team during a season where we must have a staff member become a coach. We have added an additional gym for basketball which has helped shorten the days to allow us to be completed by 2pm. We have a new program running, our Adult Pickleball League, which has gone well so far. We did not have enough interest in Adult Basketball this year, so we replaced it with Pickleball.

We will host 3 sessions of our Daddy Daughter/Family Dance on February 6th and 7th at our AAC Gym. This event will be a Wizard of Oz theme complete with characters. This is a great event and the registration for the Saturday evening dance is now full. We have spoken with the businesses across the street to allow attendees to park there as well during the dance. We will be hosting our Egg Hunt Event on March 28th at Jackson Park.

6. MEMBER COMMENTS

None.

7. ADJOURN: 1:24pm

Next Meeting: March 10th, 2026