

Bristol Tennessee Parks and Recreation
Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes
August 5th, 2021 – 6:00 P.M.
Slater Community Center – Room 208

Present: Susi Chandler, Logan Tudor, Clyde Downs, Doug Harmon, Curt Rutherford, David Akard, Charlie Taylor, Margaret Feierabend

Staff: Terry Napier, Cody Widner

Guest: Lee Powers

Absent: Sherry Willinger, Kate White, Amy Shi, Ronda Tittle

I. Called to order at 6:05 PM

II. Minutes of the May 6th, 2021 meeting approved.

- Motioned by Susi Chandler, with David Akard seconding the motion.

III. New Member introductions: Members of the board introduced themselves to those that were recently instated. The Commission board welcomed Logan Tudor, Doug Harmon, and Charlie Taylor to their first meeting.

IV. Old Business

- **Nature Center Expansion Progress Report:** The research library is finished, with a grand opening expected soon. Terry Napier believes the large variety of books and information will be a substantial draw for college students and academics.
- **Beaver Creek South Greenway Progress Report:** The trail expansion has been put on hold following community input, but may be looked into further at a later date.
- **Food City Dog Park Update:** This project has also been stalled, primarily due to staffing issues. Once some of these problems have resolved, remaining projects such as the dog pond installations will continue.
- **TCA 39-17-1551:** Though the initial ordinance was vague, new legislation has allowed council to ban smoking at a larger variety of city areas. Terry confirmed that ‘no smoking’ signs will soon be installed at many park & city gathering areas.
- **Maintenance:** The majority of the parks & recreation maintenance crews are focusing on the Haynesfield tennis courts. The focus of this maintenance project is the conversion of tennis courts to pickleball courts, as well as general repairs and painting.

V. New Business

- **Apiary:** Terry touted the success of the apiary. The Friends of Steele Creek Park group has also purchased a building to keep on-site at the apiary.
- **Shelter F Rebuilding:** The Lions Club has approved up to \$10,000 to completely rebuild this destroyed shelter. Their primary request was for a drinking water station to accompany the building of the pavilion.
- **Summer Music Series:** The Sounds of Summer music series has kept the department very busy. This is primarily due to the portable stage requiring a setup & teardown for every event. Despite this, the stage has been well-received by community members, both inside and outside of the department.

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- **Kickball League:** Partnering with Believe in Bristol, the parks & recreation department has created an adult kickball league consisting of 10 teams. The games have taken place every Tuesday and Thursday over the past month at Rotary Field. The department is now considering implementing a flag football or wiffleball league for the fall.
- **Pickleball Courts:**
 - **Patterson & Haynesfield:** Currently in progress, with expectations of 1 tennis court & 3 pickleball courts.
 - **Roosterfront:** This court is the next to be converted.
- **Wellness Center:** Terry Napier outlined the reasoning and need for the proposed purchase of the Wellness Center currently owned by Ballad Health. He noted benefits such as ADA accessibility, a swimming pool, & potential room for the farmer's market in the parking lot. Despite this, Terry did note that with costs expected of 1-2 million dollars, as well as additional staffing needs, some challenges would be expected. The department plans to proceed with inspections and cost estimates before moving further forward.
 - Margaret Feierabend noted that it would be beneficial to have an indoor pool, especially if Haynesfield Pool were to close in the future.
- **Proposed Pickleball Facility:** The board discussed the spike in popularity of pickleball, attributing it to accessibility to a variety of age groups. Terry branched from this by outlining a proposed facility consisting of 12 to 24 additional courts for tournaments and events.
 - Curt Rutherford expressed concern about the suggested location near Ida Stone Jones, due to the impact the land use would have on nearby schools. Terry responded that he thought that they could come to a location solution that would make all parties happy.
 - David Akard suggested starting with 12 courts, proposing the possibility of them being covered, and also using less land.
- **Steele Creek Park Golf Course Conversion:** Terry Napier spoke briefly about his goals for the future of Steele Creek Park. He hopes to hire consultants to speak with a variety of groups regarding what to improve and prioritize. The primary result of this would be the closure of the park's golf course. Due to being in a continuous deficit with much-needed equipment repairs approaching, the golf course has become a focus for closure. A project proposal is expected to be presented to city council in January.
 - In the event of an overhaul of the space, Terry suggested ideas such as a campground, zip line, wedding venue, or even a water park area.
 - Charlie Taylor noted that in the event of the closure of Haynesfield Pool, another waterpark area would be great for the community.
 - Lee Powers commented that '4-H' related activities such as archery could be beneficial.

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- **Staffing Shortages:** A few slides were presented by Terry Napier, outlining the staffing shortages that the department faces. Many of the previously discussed projects of the meeting have been hindered by the fact that there are several openings for both full and part-time employees. These shortages are in a variety of areas such as grounds improvement, custodial, and general maintenance.
 - The discussion on these limitations led to conversation regarding wages. Several members of the board discussed cost of living increases, as well as the earnings that workers should receive.

VI. Board Comments:

- **Margaret Feierabend** – Says she enjoyed the discussion and looks forward to addressing the staffing and wage issues city-wide. She also commented on the continued effects of COVID-19 on both day-to-day operations, and the future.
- **Susi Chandler** – Inquired about Rooster Front playground renovations. Terry responded that the insurance of those at fault would be covering the damages from the accident. He expects the new playground to be built in a better location across the street near the Charlie Robinette Shelter.
- **Clyde Downs** – Asserted his belief in the importance of prioritization and focus on individual projects in order to efficiently accomplish tasks. Terry Napier responded with his assurance that the department could succeed in doing this, and consistently has in the past.
- **Logan Tudor** – Stated that he wants to learn more, and is glad to be a part of the Parks Commission group.
- **Doug Harmon** – Doug remarked how he has enjoyed his first experience with his first meeting.
- **Curt Rutherford** – Stated that he found potential Steele Creek Park improvements ‘logical and exciting’. Despite this, he continued to be hesitant towards the idea of pickleball court installations on property owned by the school system.
- **Charlie Taylor** – Agreed with others that the current staffing issue is a priority and will hinder all of the projects, if left unaddressed.

VII. Next Meeting Date – September 2nd, 2021

VIII. Adjourned 8:50 PM