

Bristol Tennessee Parks and Recreation
Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes
September 2nd, 2021 – 6:00 P.M.
Slater Community Center – Room 208

Present: Susi Chandler, Logan Tudor, Doug Harmon, Curt Rutherford, Charlie Taylor, Margaret Feierabend, Amy Shi, Sherry Willinger

Staff: Terry Napier, Cody Widner

Guest: Ed Depew

Absent: Kate White, Ronda Baker, Clyde Downs, David Akard

I. Called to order at 6:02 P.M by Susi Chandler

II. Minutes of the August 5th, 2021 meeting approved.

- Motioned by Susi Chandler, with Curt Rutherford and Charlie Taylor seconding the motion. The motion was approved.

III. Old Business

- **Steele Creek Park Comprehensive Plan:** Proposals are currently in the works. Selections will be made based on credentials rather than focusing on cost. Terry would like to have a review ready to present in January on the practicability, feasibility, cost to maintain, and capital improvements.
 - Margaret inquired about whether this proposal would just encompass evaluation of the golf course. Terry clarified that all areas of the park would be assessed.
 - Terry and Margaret briefly discussed maintaining and protecting the natural areas of the park and including groups such as the Friends of Steele Creek Park for their input.
- **Nature Center Expansion Report:** More projects for the interior of the building are being planned. Terry commented that an outdoor classroom project is also anticipated to begin within the coming months. This will allow for additional learning space for visitors from local schools.
- **Shelter F Build:** Approval of the Shelter F rebuild is on the agenda for the next city council meeting.
- **TCA 39-17-1551:** The legislation is fully passed. Signs displaying the new regulations have been designed and will soon be placed in a variety of locations.
- **Wellness Center:** The negotiations remain in a 90 day evaluation process. A cost estimate is expected soon. Terry stated that the indoor pool has held water fairly well in most areas. The 90 day evaluation process will expire shortly, but Ballad Health will likely allow for an extension.
- **Staffing:** Despite several new hires, the staffing shortage continues. Several members of the parks and recreation crew have been quarantined over COVID-19 concerns, while others have been shifted to alternate locations to prepare for the Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion.

- **Projects & Maintenance:**
 - **Summer Music Series:** Despite several weather-related cancellations, the downtown music events have been very popular with the community. There are more performances still scheduled, with the Sounds of Summer series continuing through the end of September.
 - **Kickball League Update:** The kickball league was a huge success with 150 participants, comprising over 10 teams. The final tournament ended with an extremely close championship match. Other sporting events such as a backyard baseball league are being considered. These may start in the fall or spring, depending on concerns over COVID-19.
 - **Pickleball Courts:**
 - **Patterson Park:** These courts are currently open and played on regularly, but Terry noted that further repairs will be needed to insure future usability.
 - **Haynesfield Park:** Surfacing and paint are scheduled to be completed soon.
 - **Rooster Front:** The single tennis court will be converted into 3 pickleball courts.

IV. New Business

- **Skate Park Presentation:** Ed Depew offered a presentation of the school system's proposed track project. The 400-meter track would include 6 lanes, and would be located adjacent to the Bristol, Tennessee skate park. Ed requested the city give up a section of the skate park to accommodate the building plans. In return, the school system would cover the costs and construction to rebuild the skate park on a different section of the property. This proposal would allow the school system to have their proposed track, while the city would benefit from improvements to the skate park. This would also allow the skate park to remain the same size.
 - Charlie Taylor suggested the idea of moving the skate park entirely, which Ed Depew and Terry Napier contended would not be out of the question.
 - Doug Harmon motioned for approval of the school system's proposed project with Charlie Taylor seconding, with room for revisions/changes as necessary. The motion was approved.
- **Pickleball Court Location:** Terry further discussed the idea of a multiple pickleball court complex, with a suggested location near Ida Stone Jones and Bristol Tennessee middle school. This has been met with some hesitancy, primarily because the proposed greens location is used by the school's athletic programs, such as girls' soccer. Terry responded to this, suggesting the possibility of including an auxiliary gym to be shared by both the school system and the city. Terry also noted that a compromise can be made and restated that the pickleball court complex did not have to be at this specific location.

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V. Board Comments:

- **Amy Shi** – Conveyed her excitement regarding the proposed track project that Ed Depew discussed at the beginning of the meeting.
- **Susi Chandler** – Susi remarked that the greens area is in an important location and would be difficult for the school system to give up.
- **Logan Tudor** – Believes the proposed pickleball court complex location is not suitable for the greens area. Logan noted that the area was useful for student athletes and that the courts could serve the community better elsewhere.
- **Doug Harmon** – No further comments.
- **Curt Rutherford** – Gave his thoughts on the importance of partnerships between city governments and school systems. Curt also expressed support for the skate park proposal presented by Ed Depew.
- **Charlie Taylor** – Believes the skate park would work better at a different location entirely. Charlie also suggested several landscaping and retaining wall alternatives for the school system’s proposed track project.
- **Margaret Feierabend** – Commented on the popularity of shared-use facilities, specifically how most communities do not work as well together as Bristol does. Margaret also touched on the importance of communication, noting how it has been hindered by COVID-19.
- **Sherry Willinger** – Sherry said she was in favor of keeping the field by the middle school available for the students, and that the proposed pickleball courts may be more suitable elsewhere. She also expressed her disappointment to see that the golf course could be potentially leaving Steele Creek Park.

VI. Next Meeting Date – November 4th, 2021

VII. Adjourned 7:53 P.M.