

Bristol Tennessee Parks and Recreation
Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes
November 4th, 2021 – 6:00 P.M.
Slater Community Center – Room 208

Present: Susi Chandler, Logan Tudor, Doug Harmon, Charlie Taylor, Margaret Feierabend, Amy Shi, Sherry Willinger, David Akard, Justin Hutchinson

Staff: Terry Napier, Cody Widner

Guests: Evan Eleff, Marc Bond, Susie Fisher

Absent: Kate White, Ronda Baker, Clyde Downs, Curt Rutherford

I. Called to order at 6:04 P.M

- Called to order by David Akard, with Susi Chandler seconding the motion.

II. Minutes of the September 2nd, 2021 meeting approved.

- Motioned by Susi Chandler, with the commission board approving unanimously.

III. Old Business

- **Shelter F:** The renovations have been fully approved, with Terry hoping that the project will be completed in time for spring shelter reservations.
- **Smoking Ban Update:** Signs prohibiting smoking in a variety of park and common areas have been purchased. They are in the process of being installed and should be fully displayed very soon.
- **Pickleball Court Update:** The department is finishing up with the remodel of Haynesfield court.
- **Wellness Center:** Terry Napier confirmed that the city has decided not to purchase the Wellness Center. He stated it was not feasible, noting monetary commitments to other current projects.
- **Staffing:** There are still a variety of staffing shortages throughout the parks and recreation department, with 6 full-time positions currently available. In addition, the department had to lend workers to the city to help with seasonal leaf collection. Terry also noted that he hopes once additional staff has been hired, the department will be able to resume working on the Food City Dog Park.

IV. New Business – Steele Creek Park Amenities Feasibility and Prioritization Study Stakeholders Meeting

- The Sports Facilities Companies has been selected to study and assess the feasibility of proposed changes to Steele Creek Park. Collaborating with Lose Design, they have met with the Bristol, TN city council, parks & recreation staff, and the Friends of Steele Creek Park.
- Evan Eleff with The Sports Facilities Companies gave a brief introduction of his group, stating that they originated out of Clearwater, Florida, overseeing 1500 employees across the country. A large portion of this oversight is through managing facilities that they helped create or redesign.

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- Marc Bond, representing Lose Design, outlined the history of his company. He noted that they were established in Knoxville, TN but are rapidly expanding. The business is experienced with parks & recreation master plans, as well as customizing those plans to the client's individual needs.

V. Feedback on Steele Creek Park Feasibility and Prioritization Study

- **Charlie Taylor** – Stressed the importance of focusing on maintenance and the longevity of projects.
 - I. Evan acknowledged this concern, and introduced ideas such as capital improvement and capital replacement, and how these concepts could be used in this situation.
 - II. Marc noted the importance of balancing durability and maintenance, while still meeting a desired aesthetic.
- **Sherry Willinger** – Questioned who would manage these newly integrated areas. Sherry also suggested that nature and education be forefront in the suggested projects.
 - I. Terry responded that certain things may not be run 'in-house', but that it would be ideal to focus on what is needed before deciding who would run the specific areas.
 - II. Terry also added that they are hoping to tie education & nature information and signage into as many projects as possible.
- **David Akard** – Acknowledged that the Steele Creek golf course is due for replacement. David noted that he sees more opportunity than what we currently have.
 - I. Evan agreed with this notion, while also observing that it is imperative to balance what is done without going beyond our means or abilities.
- **Justin Hutchinson** – Hopes that whatever is implemented is not a niche fad or hobby, but is something that has both draw and longevity potential.
 - I. Evan agreed with this, noting that space should always be optimized, especially in limited areas.
- Multiple members also brought up the ongoing issue of dealing with the geese in the area. Terry responded that he is in contact with groups to have them removed, but that it may take some time.
- Alongside the feedback requested by Evan Eleff, Terry sought out suggestions on what specific projects should be implemented.
 - Ideas suggested by the commission board included:
 - I. Zipline spanning the lake
 - II. Campground (tent area, campfires, etc.)
 - III. Botanical gardens
 - IV. Biology research area

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VI. Additional Data & Information

- Evan presented a slide on local and regional market data to show who in the surrounding area would be more likely to visit Steele Creek Park. Information such as income would be able to determine this likelihood.
- Evan noted that while household income in the area is much lower than average for the United States, the cost of living is also significantly less. Despite this, Evan noted that he believes new offerings must be cost sensitive and take this data into account.
- The concept of mobile analytics was introduced by Evan. This idea is based on data being taken from mobile devices that enter and leave the area. This information showed that 70% of visitors live within 20 miles of the park, leading to the assumption that the majority of visitors are locals.
- Mobile analytics can also determine age, gender, and a variety of other information, depending on what can be taken from the mobile device of the visitor in question.
- Evan Eleff and Terry Napier both stressed how this data and information could be used to determine what projects to proceed with, cost to visitors, as well as a variety of other benefits in planning.

VII. Adjourned 7:53 P.M. by David Akard.

VIII. Next Meeting Date – January 6th, 2022