

Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting – 14 May 2019

Members Present:

- Danny Hein – Chair
- Wayne Rundell – Vice-Chair
- Gregory Copeland
- Greg Cochran
- Heather Layton
- Bob Hurring
- Jared Mull – Parks and Recreation Director
- Mandi Bentley – Recreation Manager

Call to Order: Vice Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

Approval of Minutes: The commission reviewed the minutes from the April 2019 meeting and approved them unanimously.

Public Comment

- Pinky Byrd, representing the Friends of Silvermont, stated the most recent projects at Silvermont include: repairing of the floors, new shutters, and new artwork displays from local artists, among a variety of others. The next item on the group's agenda will be reinstating Dead Fall Days which will be the first Thursday morning of each month. Any volunteers are welcomed to help maintain the grounds of the park. The next project will be the new sign in front of the building to better communicate to the public the purpose of Silvermont. The sign will be consistent with the other signs for county buildings for uniformity purposes. The next big project that will cost money is to help the county facilitate creating a second entrance to the grounds. The Site works plan was approved by the Commissioners and they will be creating a drawing detailing the second entrance. This is a part of Phase II of the masterplan which details a separate entrance and exit to the park. The total phase cost is approximately \$430,000; however, the Friends of Silvermont are wanting to look at the immediate impact of the plan in the form of the entrance and exit. The Friends of Silvermont are wanting to raise money for this initiative to better the park and are now brainstorming various events that could generate more funds. The Friends of Silvermont are wanting to isolate the entrance and exit detailed in phase II of the master plan created by Site works that has already been approved by the County Commissioners to begin fundraising efforts. The Friends of Silvermont will help fund this initiative, but the remaining funds would likely come from the Parks and Recreation Commission Fund. The motion was made to support the Friends of Silvermont to raise money toward the public safety improvement of the proposed entrance and exit of the park, the motion was seconded, discussion ensued, and approved unanimously.

Partner Updates

City Updates – Jim Fatland

- Jim Fatland did not attend so there was no action under this agenda item.

Parks and Recreation Capital Reserve Update:

- Currently the Parks and Recreation Reserve fund balance as of June 30th is \$1,300,000. Approximately \$450,000 will be taken out of that budget for the land acquisition. It will appear as though \$800,000 will be taken out until the Part F grant, hopefully, will fill in.

Old Business

Playground Partnership

- Dan Courtine was in attendance of the meeting. His son, Jameson, recently passed in February and since then, the initiative of random acts of kindness was born titled as “Jameson’s Joy.” Both of his sons particularly liked American Ninja Warrior. The Courtines have been in partnership with Jared to establish a ninja warrior playground in memory of Jameson. There is a location at the Recreation Center that currently has a playground that is in need of an update. Jameson’s Joy is willing to partner with the county and aid in funding this initiative. The playground is more of a fitness, obstacle course that can be utilized by both children and adults which was identified as a need in the county. There is only one of these playgrounds located in North Carolina. A video was presented detailing what the park would look like and include. This could easily attract individuals outside of the county. The proposed budget was provided to the members in attendance. The overall cost would be just under \$215,000. It is proposed the county fund approximately 65% which would be right under \$140,000. The Jameson Joy Foundation Funds would be responsible for raising 35% of the funds which would be approximately \$75,000. This is the number one program need for the county as well as an excellent opportunity for partnership. The park is designed for varying degrees of difficulty and can be modified based on ability level. The question was posed for the Carolina Panthers funds that are given for playgrounds around the area. Jared stated that option was explored with the Courtine family, but this company didn’t have the same level of customer service as the other companies as well as the sign and benches in honor of Jameson was included in their overall price as well with Burke. Chairman Hein stated this project directly aligns with the purpose of the commission and he cannot imagine a better initiative to get behind than this. Allowing the Jameson’s Joy Foundation the opportunity to partner will allow more autonomy of the project. The motion was made to strongly support this proposal as presented and that it be at the agenda at the soonest County Commissioner meeting, the motion was seconded, and approved unanimously. Jared will advise the commission when the issue will be brought to the county commissioners in support of this initiative.

Barclay Road Property

- A map was provided to the members in attendance. The Barclay Road property is directly in between the two other public river sites in the county. Despite the property being off the market currently, the seller is willing to sell the county the property. Jared had a meeting with Clark Lovelace, the head of the Commerce, and other fish and wildlife experts to discuss the potential of this property. It appears there are significant amount of other projects at this time and the fish and wildlife individuals are tied up, which may extend this project for a while. The price of the land is \$26,000. The total estimated cost which includes walkways, parking, ramps, and floating dock, among a variety of others is \$142,800. This site would have access for motorized boats as well. It was a consensus that this location as well as the price is ideal. The motion was made to recommend to the County Commissioners to purchase the Barclay Road property, the motion was seconded, discussion ensued, and approved unanimously.

New Business

Silvermont Update

- Brenda Skeffington was able to provide the commission with an overview of the operations that have grown at Silvermont. Currently, there are 468 people that are actively coming to Silvermont. A new software system has been implemented to track the number of events, participants, and is able to scan participant's barcodes which includes their profile which aids with safety. There are 25 different programs at this time. Since Parks and Recreation has taken over, approximately seven classes have been added. There is an exercise program every day of the week. There is an activity during lunch which is provided by the hospital and WCCA. There are several music programs. In the works is an intergenerational program which is the reading connection which will include seniors that have already been approved as well as a music program. Mountain Music has approximately 45 attendees. The schedule of events is available online through the Parks and Recreation website. It has been very beneficial to have a full time staff member at this location as well as a part time employee to aid in the maintenance of the park as well as the continuance and improvements of the programs. There are educational pieces available as well, including: dementia/Alzheimer's discussion, physical therapy talks, VAYA Health, among a variety of other seminars.

Recreation Update

- Closing ceremonies for Senior Games was held last night where the awards were given out. There were 130 participants over the age of 50. There are two teams going to nationals in Albuquerque, New Mexico for basketball as well as a shot put and discus participant. Nationals are held every two years at various locations. The last two teams placed gold and silver nationally.
- Upcoming programs: Battle for the Belt adult summer basketball league will begin on June 3rd with the first game tipping off at 7 pm. Summer camp registration is still open. There are three camps currently full. There will be eight camps in total with a total of 250

spots and 196 of those spots are now filled. Guard U basketball camp will also be offered July 29th and 30th. This camp will be held by former professional and collegiate basketball players. This will be a half day camp.

City Update:

- Jim Fatland did not attend so there was no action under this agenda item.

Director Update:

- Our parks from a standpoint of pruning have decreased since the city horticulturalist retired from the county. Jared will be contracting out for basic upkeep to make the parks look a little nicer and presentable. The maintenance staff do not have the time nor are they trained in horticultural to be able to do the work themselves.

Member Comments:

- Danny Hein reported there is a lot of things happening within the county and it will be imperative for the Commission to encourage the County Commissioners to move on the agenda items listed above. Personal input from the commission and community members can only help further the discussion for these projects. Chairman Hein also thanked the commission members for their continued effort and work. He also thanked Jared for his work.

Adjournment: The motion was made to adjourn, seconded, and approved unanimously at 7:38 pm.