

Bristol Tennessee Parks and Recreation
Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes
May 6th, 2021 - 6:00 P.M.
Steele Creek Park Nature Center

Present: Curt Rutherford, Justin Hutchison, David Akard, Ronda Baker, Margaret Feierabend, Susie Chandler, Sherry Willinger

Staff: Terry Napier, Cody Widner

Absent: Kate White, Caden Myers, Bennett Cowan, Amy Shi, Clyde Downs

I. Called to order at 6:15 PM

II. Minutes of March 4th, 2021 meeting approved unanimously.

III. Old Business

- **Steele Creek Park Comprehensive Plan:** The plan has been pushed back for the time being, primarily due to COVID-19 delaying all public meetings. Terry hopes these will resume once the reopening process has progressed.
- **Nature Center Expansion Progress Report:** Many more projects have been completed, such as the wildflower exhibit. Staff are also in the process of logging the books, many of which the Friends of Steele Creek Park group has contributed or purchased. Classroom additions are also being undergone.
- **Beaver Creek South Greenway Progress Report:** Invitations for a meeting have been sent to those with properties intersecting any point of the trail. The meeting is planned to be held at the Slater Community Center on May 25th at 6:00 PM. Terry expects some negativity from property owners. He encouraged members of the commission group to attend and show their support and ideas.
- **Food City Dog Park Update:** Some fencing and landscaping projects are still being undergone. Terry believes that the park will open by the end of June or the beginning of July.
- **COVID Reopening:** Most of the buildings within the city are opening, but in a limited capacity. Terry went over some of the Slater Center's reopening process. This includes limited attendance and social distancing, with some classes and programs remaining closed for the time being. This has affected attendance, with a relatively low turnout of participants during the opening week.
- **TCA 39-17-1551:** City Council has approved the 'no smoking' ordinance that has been brought forward. This will prevent smoking on playgrounds within the city limits. Margaret Feierabend & Susie Chandler commented that this does not include chewing tobacco, nor does it condemn vaping or electronic cigarettes. Terry confirmed their statements, but did note that the loose terms of the ordinance would allow areas such as pools and other park areas to be considered playgrounds.
- **Maintenance Projects:** Park maintenance projects continue to progress. The restroom remodel at Holston view has been finished. The scoreboard repairs at Friendship Park have also been completed in time for it to be used this season.

IV. New Business

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- **Shelter F Damage** – Terry summarized the damage done to Shelter F in the recent storm. Unfortunately the insurance deductible was too high to consider, and did not make it into the budget for replacement.
 - **Lions Club Sponsorship:** Fortunately, Terry has spoken with the Lions club in regard to a sponsorship for them to cover the costs of the rebuild. They seemed agreeable to this, going so far as to suggesting the instillation of a water fountain.
 - **Renaming:** Terry requested the commission group approve giving naming rights of the Shelter to the Lions Club once they have come to an agreement. Sherry Willinger made the motion, with Susi Chandler seconding.
- **Tree Debris:** The parks maintenance crews have been working hard to eliminate the majority of the tree debris created by the recent storms. All of the smaller debris has been moved, but a few larger areas remain.
- **Apiary Update:** Terry and Jeremy Stout spoke in depth regarding the comeback Steele Creek Park has had with its bee population. Jeremy has recently acquired a swarm from a private residence, as well as another that had spawned at Shelter B within the park. Not only this, but 3 additional swarms have arrived on their own in areas close to the apiary. This totals to 5 bee swarms that now call the Steele Creek Park apiary their home.
 - David Akard inquired about the long term goals of the apiary, to which Jeremy and Terry relayed their hopes of placing hives at schools and fire stations within the city limits. This plan could serve an educational purpose, but would also lead to a pollination radius of nearly the entire city.

V. Steele Creek Park Presentation:

- Jeremy Stout gave a presentation to the group highlighting the importance of both Steele Creek Park and its Nature Center. He reinforced just how grand the park is both in size (2300+ acres), and diversity (over 400 discovered species of insects). Jeremy noted that the goals of the nature center primarily focus on research, conservation, and education. Certain terms were introduced, such as biogeography (distribution of a species and ecosystems in a geographic area), as well as concepts such as keystone species (species that have a large effects on their environment). In addition to this, Jeremy also introduced the idea of thinking of Steele Creek Park as an ‘island’ nestled within an urban area, and the effects this has on the species within the park. Following the lecture, Jeremy offered a short Q&A with members of the audience.

VI. Next Meeting Date – July 8, 2021

VII. Adjourned 7:31 PM