

TOWN OF JONESBOROUGH
Historic Jonesborough Visitors Center
117 Boone Street

MEETING NOTICES

Thursday, September 28, 2023, 6 p.m.
Historic Jonesborough Visitors Center

PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING AGENDA ITEMS

Members of the public wishing to speak concerning any item on the agenda during the Public Comment period must sign up by calling the Town Administrative Office at 423-753-1030 with their name, address, and subject about which they wish to speak no later than 2 hours before the meeting if the meeting occurs during normal business hours or by 4:45 p.m. the day of the meeting if the meeting occurs after hours. Otherwise, such member of the public must sign in at the location of the meeting, prior to the beginning of the meeting, by seeing the Town Recorder at meetings of the Tree and Townscape Board, or the secretary or staff of any board, commission or committee constituting any other governing body under this resolution.

Each individual shall be given three (3) minutes to address the Board regarding Agenda items. Comments shall be limited to items on the meeting's Agenda

The Jonesborough Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee will meet at 6 p.m. on Thursday, September 28, 2023, at the Historic Jonesborough Visitors Center, 117 Boone Street, Jonesborough, TN, to consider the following agenda:

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes
3. Wetlands Water Park Financial Report
4. Tiger Park at Jonesborough School
5. Wetlands Water Park
6. Recreation Programming
7. Appointment of Chairperson
8. Other

9. Adjournment

Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 31, 2023

Members Present: Susu Floyd, Jimmy Rhein, Mark Merriman,

Staff Present: Rachel Conger, Blake Dugger

The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m.

Wetlands Water Park Financial Report

Rachel presented the financial report for Wetlands Water Park for the 2023 calendar year. She noted that the year to date net currently stands at (\$8,919.58) compared to \$52,632.32 at the end of August in 2022. She pointed out the expenditures prior to opening in 2022 were \$51,952.14 and \$60,615.17 (not including capital outlay note for a new liner) in 2021 compared to \$166,559.78 in 2023. She explained that she felt the need to point that out as a credit to the work that Blake Dugger had completed in a short period of time to get the park ready and open for the season. The maintenance at the park had not been kept up with for several years, which led to the need to address a number of large issues prior to opening for the 2023 season.

Tiger Park at Jonesborough School

Rachel Conger reported that the new school is coming along very nicely and is scheduled to be completed in October with students occupying the building after Christmas break.

She noted that staff has worked with Equinox Environmental for months on the development of a landscape plan for the school which includes the parking lot, entrance to the school building, the areas around the building and playgrounds, plus the courtyard. It's quite a bit of area, but the campus is also large, so it's appropriate landscaping for the space. The courtyard is the most heavily landscaped area planned. With the U-shape of the school, the courtyard space provides an opportunity to plan for the space to be appropriately utilized during the school day. Because the courtyard is visible from the classrooms and could potentially provide an issue due to noise, there wasn't a way to plan playgrounds in the space. Alternatively, it was determined the space could be utilized well as an outdoor learning space, accommodating several classes at a time. Utilizing berms and appropriate plants that can provide screening and delineation, the landscaping will allow teachers to bring students out into the courtyard for instruction and hands on learning. This is unique in that the courtyard is a safe space and fenced in so that anyone wanting access to the space will still have to go through the main doors of the building. The landscape architects were thoughtful about how to put the plan together

so that the space is maximized, and even has plant material going in that can be used for art classes where the fruit from the plants can be used for dyes and coloring.

Outside of the landscaping, Rachel said that the athletic area is moving along nicely. The baseball, softball and soccer fields were seeded earlier in the season. Staff has bid out the purchase of the construction of tennis/pickleball courts, rubberized surfacing for the courts and the track, fencing, bleachers, playgrounds around the building (preschool, CDC and K – 5th grades), lighting for the fields and courts plus the construction of the concession stand and restrooms.

Once the LPRF grant is officially awarded, she said staff will be able to proceed with formally awarding the bids. Until that time, we cannot incur any costs related to the project.

She also reported that the Town has applied for \$500,000 in additional funding for the playground in the athletic fields area. The original plan was to put a simpler playground in this area. Once we put more time into the plan, it made a lot more sense to bring the charisma up a notch and make room to add more playground features. What we ended up with was an inclusive playground with some adult exercise equipment. It made sense to include the exercise equipment when you consider that the athletic area will be open to the general public outside of school hours. We anticipate people in the community will want to utilize the rubberized track and walking trails for exercise. The addition of exercise equipment will help to enhance the exercise component of the park.

The layout and features of the athletic area playground were addressed in the meeting. The plan includes playground equipment for children ages 2 and up, with a majority of the equipment designed for children ages 5 – 12 years. The area is over 12,000 square feet. There is also a covered pavilion area planned for the area adjacent to the playground where parents could potentially sit in the shade to watch their children play. The playground was positioned as central to the athletic area as possible so that if parents are watching one child playing baseball or soccer, they'll be able to see a child playing on the playground.

Rachel explained that there are a lot of moving parts and pieces at the present time. We're really working to move things along so that the athletic area, playgrounds and Tiger Park are completed as close to the opening of the school as possible.

Wetlands Water Park

Blake Dugger spoke briefly about the Water Park and noted he would have a more extensive report at the end of the season, at the next Parks and Recreation meeting. He indicated there were some things he was looking at addressing or changing for the 2024 season. This includes such things such as the food café. He noted that he wanted to consider potentially contracting out the operation of the café operation in the future. He

noted that it's difficult to staff the park anyway, but that the café is particularly difficult. He indicated that finding a competent café manager who has the seasonal availability is tricky, but finding seasonal café workers is just as hard. He indicated that he had spent many hours in the café himself, working and cooking food.

Jimmy Rhein asked specific questions about the hurdles that need to be overcome in the café for it to be operational. Blake responded that the staffing issue is the biggest issue. Mr. Rhein asked Rachel what her thoughts were on potentially contracting out the operation of the café. She responded that there needs to be a lot of thought into making such a big change. She noted that part of the original purpose of Wetlands was to provide recreation programming to Jonesborough residents, and while doing so, providing jobs to many of those residents, with many of those being teenagers and youth. She said that she thought there is time before the 2024 season to think through the hurdles that need to be overcome for the next season and try to solve the issue other ways, keeping the operation within the Wetlands regular operation. She said that Blake was hired just a few short weeks before the water park opened, giving him little time and opportunity to interview and hire his own staff and properly vet his own staff. She said in the coming months, he would have time to assess and evaluate the 2023 café staff and work with the 2023 management to come up with a way to approach the 2024 season to implement a successful season.

There was further discussion by Blake related to maintenance issues that need to be addressed in preparation for the 2024 season. He indicated he has populated a maintenance list and has turned that over to Craig Ford and Glenn Rosenoff for action on their part. On the subject of maintenance and upkeep, he indicated that with the age of the park and the condition, there isn't a whole lot to attract people from out of town. He said that many of the slides don't have the attractiveness that they probably initially did when the park opened. He said he sees the park more as just a local park to attract Jonesborough community members. In addition, he indicated that he didn't see any reason to have the extensive marketing for the park that is currently in place. He said that putting rack cards in Visitors Center in the area is a waste of money and that marketing dollars just need to be focused locally, to the Jonesborough community. He also noted that Johnson City was currently working on a plan to develop a water park facility. He said there is no way to compete with that and that the focus for Jonesborough should be to just maintain what is there and not work towards expansion. He said that he had heard talk that there might be a place for Jonesborough to do a splash pad within the Water Park area. He said he felt that would be a waste of money and that Johnson City and Kingsport already have splash pads that they offer to their communities.

Jimmy Rhein asked for some clarification on a future marketing plan for the park. Blake indicated that what he envisioned is taking marketing dollars out of Virginia and North Carolina and really paring down the marketing budget and focusing those few dollars in Jonesborough, that there isn't a need to market outside of Jonesborough. Mr. Rhein asked Rachel what her thoughts were on that approach. Rachel indicated that in previous evaluations of the attendees at the park, they actually are coming from Western North

Carolina, southwest Virginia, and the closer tri-cities area. She said that in the past, staff has conducted license plate checks and zip code captures at the ticket counter to get a really good idea of where people were coming from. From there, she said an accurate marketing plan can be developed that accurately reflects the population of attendees at the park, and continue to attract individuals within the park's target market. Blake indicated he has done license plate checks himself.

Rachel also noted that work had previously been completed to look at expanding the park to continue to attract folks to the facility. She said more recently, staff had looked at an interactive water feature that could operate not only as part of the water park, but also independently outside of the regular water park season. She said what was originally explored was a feature that required minimal staff and could be offered at a lower ticket price prior to Memorial Day and after Labor Day. She said she had discussions with Glenn Rosenoff on looking at expanding the park with a similar feature and he was responsive to the opportunity.

Parks and Recreation Programming

Soccer Programming

The soccer season is underway and teams have been practicing at Persimmon Ridge Park. David Barnett, president of the Jonesborough Soccer Association, provided an update at the last meeting in regards to changes their board had put into effect for the current season, working to improve the entire program.

Thinking ahead to programming at Tiger Park, staff has begun discussions with the Soccer Association regarding expansion of soccer programming at the new facilities. Discussions have centered around the spring 2024 season as the soccer fields will be available for use at Tiger Park. It's exciting to see the plan coming to fruition as the only recreation soccer programming available in the spring in the area is offered through Johnson City. Families in Washington County will have more options now and those in and around Jonesborough will have the convenience of not having to drive to the other side of Johnson City.

Summer 2024 Programming

Part of the intention for Tiger Park is to be able to program more opportunities for our residents, centered around athletics. As we've discussed previously, Tiger Park will have an open field area for soccer, but when that area isn't being used for soccer, there is the potential to expand into lacrosse as well. In addition, with that area being designed as a flex space, it could be used for summer camps.

The tennis/pickleball courts offer the opportunity to offer classes, tournaments and camps as well. With pickleball growing so fast in popularity with our own residents seeking available spaces to play, we are tasked with trying to keep up with the demand.

The gym, football/soccer, baseball and softball fields also offer space for programming. We will likely be working with the Jr. Pioneers to offer football during the fall months. Outside of the school's athletic season, those fields will be available for programming.

What the Town has done well in the past to execute programming, not just in Recreation, but with the Repertory Theatre, Senior Center and McKinney Center, is form partnerships to offer and enhance programming. For a lot of the programming we're working on, we're working with existing partnerships we've developed. It takes out a lot of staff time involvement on the execution and puts the planning portion on our staff, which is great. What ends up happening is our staff has a lot of control on the front end on how things are done and the partnering organization is taking on the task of execution. The key here has been and will be communication and our staff maintaining involvement.

We're really excited about the potential for Tiger Park and what this means for the Jonesborough community.

Pickleball Courts

Sometime back around 2015 the Recreation Department converted the basketball court at Stage Road Park to a pickleball/tennis court. We had experienced some issues with vandalism on the basketball court, specifically the goals, for a number of years and were looking for solutions. We had received a lot of feedback from different community members through various meetings that they wanted to see tennis courts in Jonesborough. At the time, pickleball was just coming on the scene and we the Senior Center was looking for ways to program pickleball. The conversion of the court made sense and has really served us well since that time.

Simultaneously, we were working on the plan for Lincoln Park alongside the Community Design Assistance Center out of Virginia Tech. Including a pickleball court in that park made a lot of sense and we were hearing from community members at those planning meetings that they wanted more places to play pickleball. Since the opening of Lincoln Park this past spring, our pickleball courts have seen exponential growth. On a lot of days, if you go by Lincoln Park, the court is in use and on the evenings and weekends, you are likely to see a line of people waiting their turn to play. Again, community members are asking for additional courts to play.

As you know, we have tennis courts planned for Tiger Park and it makes sense to have them lined not just for tennis, but also pickleball. We will have 8 pickleball courts at Tiger Park.

We have looked at other areas at our existing facilities to potentially retrofit or add pickleball court(s). There is a basketball court at Persimmon Ridge Park that is fenced in and includes an area adjacent to the court. The way the area was designed was for the jail to bring inmates in on a bus, park it within the fence enclosure and allow inmates to play basketball on the adjacent court. That area hasn't been used for that purpose in years. The basketball court is still highly used, but the fenced in area adjacent, is not. The area is big enough for a pickleball court, but the asphalt needs to be resurfaced. What we're looking at is potentially a \$7,000+ expenditure to retrofit that area. This would include resurfacing the asphalt, lining it off, plus adding the pickleball net. There is already a parking area in place for users.

Pedestrian Walkways/Lost State Scenic Walkway

The Town has recently completed construction of sidewalks on East Main Street from the Baptist Church at Boone Street to Forest Drive. That project has been a long time coming, something staff has been working on for over 10 years.

Part of the requirements for residential developments include sidewalks along both sides of new residential roads. The developer can choose to only build sidewalks along one side of the street and give the monetary value of the development of the second sidewalk to the Town. This money is set aside by the Town for the maintenance and development of sidewalks. The East Main Street sidewalk development was partially funded through these “in lieu” funds.

Considering the construction of the new school and the potential for students to be able to walk to and from school or for community members in and around Jonesborough to access Tiger Park via sidewalk, staff has been working for some time now to ensure there is pedestrian access to the school. When you look at the residential areas around the new school, you actually have quite a few existing homes and subdivisions in close proximity to the school with new developments already in progress.

The focus has been on pedestrian access to/from downtown via West College St and access to the school along North Cherokee Road. The Town currently has the North Cherokee Road sidewalk project out to bid.

Staff is working on the plan to connect the school to downtown. That route would likely start at the crossing of North Cherokee Road with Thompspon Meadow lane, cross North Cherokee to the Saylor’s Place development, continue through the development to where May Drive dead ends, progress south down May Drive then turn east onto West College Street to Oak Grove Drive and from there to West Main Street. Funding for this has not been secured.

As developments continue to go up around Jonesborough, thoughtful consideration needs to be given not just to connectivity to parks and downtown for pedestrians through sidewalks, but consideration needs to be made for recreation trails. Sidewalks along roadways have a completely different feel when you compare them to recreation trails. More consideration is typically given to ambiance, the surroundings, and finding ways to create walkability for pedestrians in areas less dominated by vehicular traffic. In addition, it's more likely that people would utilize paved recreation trails for recreation use (exercise, bikes, etc.) than a sidewalk.

Chuckey Depot

The Chuckey Depot will debut its new exhibit “Appalachian Crossroads: Railroad in Johnson City” on September 1st. There will be an opening reception from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. on September 2nd. This will correspond with the Heritage Fair going on in downtown. This exhibit will be up through late February of 2024.

On September 9th, Cherry Smith is putting together a fundraiser concert for the Chuckey Depot Museum at Lincoln Park from 4:00 – 5:30 pm. The community is invited to come out and see “Tunes, Tales, and Rails.” It is free of charge, but there will be an opportunity to make a donation to the museum during the concert.

Chuckey Depot Museum Hours:

March - September

1 – 5 p.m., Thursday, Friday, Sunday

11 a.m. – 5 p.m., Saturday

October – February

1 – 4 p.m., Thursday, Friday, Sunday

10 a.m. – 4 p.m., Saturday

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Recommendation: None

Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee

Agenda Presentation

Date: September 28, 2023

Agenda Item: 3

Subject: Wetlands Water Park Financial Report

See attached financial report for Wetlands Water Park.

Recommendation: Approve the financial report, as presented

Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee

Agenda Presentation

Date: September 28, 2023

Agenda Item: 4

Subject: Tiger Park at Jonesborough School

The Town was formally awarded the Local Park and Recreation Fund Grant through the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation for the 2023 grant cycle. The grant will provide \$2.5 million for the development of Tiger Park that will be located on the campus of Jonesborough Elementary School at the new location.

Jonesborough's LPRF application is for funding assistance that essentially completes the development of recreational/athletic facilities located within Tiger Park. There are four playground areas within Tiger Park, one of which is located in the middle of the four major field areas and the tennis/pickleball courts. This playground has many climbing and fitness features and is focused on healthy exercise for young people while games are going on the surrounding fields. The other three playgrounds are around the school and with a focus on age and ability. The preschool playground is designed for very young children and is located adjacent to the two preschool classes in the school. It and the other playgrounds close to the school have outside access through the fencing to facilitate community use. The playground next to the Comprehensive Development Classes has equipment designed for any child, but it has additional equipment intended to enhance the experience of a disabled child. The large K-5 playground area that includes basketball goals, tether ball and sheltered seating is close to the multipurpose field area where youth soccer practices and games will be held frequently.

The Tiger Park project also includes the lighting of all four field areas: baseball, softball, large football/soccer, and the multipurpose field area for numerous "field" sports. Two tennis/pickleball courts will be constructed, fenced, an acrylic surface applied, and lighting installed. A concession and restroom building will be constructed in a central location between the field areas, and a picnic pavilion sized for four (4) hexagon tables will be constructed close to the concession. The project includes applying a ½ inch rubberized surface to the asphalt track around the football/soccer field to help reduce any potential muscle and/ or bone damage, especially with younger children and seniors. Recreation accessories like bleachers, bike racks, benches, trash cans, score boards, etc. are also included in the project.

The Town cannot incur any costs associated with the grant until we have a fully executed grant, which should be around October 1st. Our contract will be dated October 1st.

As previously reported, the Town has done as much work ahead of our grant award to ensure we'll be able to hit the ground running once we have a fully executed contract. We have formally bid out all of the purchases that require bid procurement, as this typically eats up a lot of time as part of the process.

We anticipate much of the work associated with Tiger Park will be completed by the time students occupy the school in January. Because of timelines associated with manufacturing and production, it will be a tight schedule to execute all of the components of the project.

As part of the formal process of the LPRF grant, staff was required to take the project to the Planning Commission for their stamp of approval. The project was presented to the Commission at their September meeting and received unanimous support for the project.

The landscaping for the school, funded outside of the LPRF grant, but through the budget for the construction of the school, has been bid out. This is quite a large landscaping project that should take 3 – 4 weeks to install. We anticipate the plants coming in around the end of October and completing the project around mid-November. This time of the year should provide favorable planting conditions.

Recommendation: None

Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee

Agenda Presentation

Date: September 28, 2023

Agenda Item: 5

Subject: Wetlands Water Park

Following is a proposal for conversion of the locker room at Wetlands by Blake Dugger. In addition, he's included an update on closing the water park.

Locker room conversion proposal:

From what I have been told, the locker room has not been in use for the last few seasons. It has been used as a storage room. The room was in total disarray when I started. This season we organized and made better use of the room. However, post season the room was cleared of all junk and broken lockers. It has been painted and now is a useable 240 square foot room.

My proposal is to use this room as a party room. Rates are based on Kingsport aquatic center which has similar rooms. I did not use Johnson City as they currently do not have a similar facility. This room would be available twice daily for every operation day of the season. Resulting in a \$3,500 weekly revenue once full booked.

The current party rental is not sustainable. Rates and times are as follows:

Cost: \$220

Times: 2 hours during operation

Includes admission for 12 people, food (hot dog, chips and drink), and a ¼ sheet cake

Additional guest \$15 each

The party was sat upstairs with the general public. We only booked about 30 all season. Wetlands currently charges \$220. This amount minus potential food earnings and cake (\$126.18) only gives Wetlands potential to earn \$93.82 per party.

My proposal is much more efficient and practical for an average family wanting to have a party at Wetlands. I propose we do away completely with the current day time party and allow patrons to rent the party room. This allows for patrons to have more people and a private room away from the general public. No longer provide cake and food, but rather give the families an opportunity to get make their party individual and unique with their own cake and food.

Rates & Times

Cost: \$250

Times: 2 hours

12:30 – 2:30 or 3:00 – 5:00

20 Guest – \$10 per person after 20

Other Updates:

Closing Process is basically complete.

The pool is drained.

The chairs, trash cans, tables, and lounges all moved to an appropriate location to provide maximum coverage from the elements.

Café has been cleaned thoroughly and food waste disposed properly.

Tanks returned to Andi Oxy

General overall cleaning of the facility as whole.

The female inmate crew and Officer Kathy Phillips has been the greatest asset to Wetlands this season. They not only did almost all of the start up they also cleaned bathrooms in the mornings, helped with the shut down and painted the locker room.

However, many long-standing maintenance issues need to be resolved. I have turned these in to the maintenance department and other stakeholders within the town. I will provide an update when there is a plan established on possible solutions to these issues.

Recommendation: Discussion on proposal of use of locker room and rates for the 2024 season.

Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee

Agenda Presentation

Date: September 28, 2023

Agenda Item: 6

Subject: Parks and Recreation Programming

Tiger Park Programming

Work continues by staff on planning for programming at Tiger Park for 2024. As previously reported, the Town is working to implement a spring 2024 soccer program to kick off recreation programming at the park. In order to offer a spring season, registration would have to begin early in the calendar year, in late January/early February. That would put practices beginning in mid-March with games beginning in April, running through May.

As for recreation programming the remainder of the year, work has begun to plan for pickleball programming, including instructional leagues and tournaments.

We are also working to include Junior Pioneer Football programming on the football field.

What makes the most sense, given the size of our staff and resources, is to partner with other organizations to expand our recreation programming. Our hope is to work with folks who are already implementing pickleball in our area, particularly the programming offered through the Senior Center.

Thinking ahead to summer camps and programming, and thinking about possibilities with partnering with groups who might directly benefit from our programming, it might be beneficial to work with Crockett's soccer teams to offer summer programming at Tiger Park. Not only would it be beneficial to offer that service to our community, but also potentially benefit Crockett's program.

Staff will continue to work to fully program the park, filling it with activities throughout the year that will benefit both the school and Jonesborough community.

Recommendation: None