

Recreation and Parks Advisory Board

Regular Meeting, May 10

Citizen's Comments (Huey Sides): Mr. Sides shared concerns with the Board regarding the walkway through the Cedar Hills Greenbelt in the Elm Grove area. The walkway, which was originally created by citizens, now is overgrown with invasive species that block walkers and present a fire hazard. Jon Hetrick responded that although the Parks Department can't address the invasive species because of limited resources, he will try to have the Department clear the walkway. Jon suggested that Mr. Sides consider organizing a volunteer group, similar to the Greenways volunteers, to maintain the walking trail.

Board Approvals (All): The Board approved the Board Work Plan for the current year and the 2017 Annual Report. The Work Plan primarily outlines the ongoing projects of the Parks Board.

TVA Policy (Jon Hetrick): TVA has asked for public comment on its Public Land Protection Policy, as well as suggestions regarding the level of enforcement of the policy expected from TVA. Jon asked Board members to consider policy issues that include abuse and destruction of TVA public land from trash dumping, off road motorized vehicles / ATV abuse, and unauthorized vegetation removal. Alan Tatum suggested that education of the public would be an important step in preventing abuse of the properties. Comments are due to TVA by June 8, 2018.

International Friendship Bell Peace Pavilion (Alan Tatum): The goal for the dedication of the new pavilion is August 23, to coincide with the visit of the Japanese delegation. The project is moving slowly, but the circular patio is laid out, the grounds plan is in place, rebar for the horizontal cantilever is in, and bench backs are ready. Work is progressing on the carbon fiber beams.

Rails to Trails (Jon Hetrick): The proposal from the rails to trails contractor may be approved at the May 14 meeting of City Council.

Trail Development (Ray Garrett, Kevin Hoyt, Ken Reuter, and Brad Spears): (1) The Clinch Valley Trail Alliance (CVTA) will address the abuse of the Haw Ridge trail by hikers and cyclists who use the trail under wet conditions. CVTA will inform the public of trail conditions through social media and will revitalize Haw Ridge trails by improving drainage. (2) A trail has been proposed to go along Poplar Creek, through the Wheat Community to the Black Oak Ridge Conservation Easement (BORCE). (3) The East Fork Poplar Creek easement has been signed by the Kennel Club. Ray will make a presentation to AMVETS who are reluctant to sign the easement. Boy Scout volunteers will work on the trail.

Events (Jon Hetrick): (1) USA Cycling individual time trials will be held in Oak Ridge on June 21. The national championship event is in conjunction with other time trials and a criterium in Knoxville on subsequent days. The event will begin at 7 a.m. on the 6.9 mile course that goes along Melton Lake Drive and Union Valley Road, requiring temporary rerouting of traffic. (2) The Secret City Festival will sponsor activities all week, including Battle of Bands, Concert in the Park at the pavilion, a robotic competition at school and a robotic demonstration at the festival, the Sportsmen's Club Golf Tournament, and Friday and Saturday night concerts. (3) Graduation Celebration is one week before the Secret City Festival. (4) The Flatwater Storytelling Festival is scheduled for June 1-3, at the Oak Ridge Playhouse.

Director's Report (Jon Hetrick): Approval of the plans for the Blankenship Field turf replacement will be soon. Plans are going forward for the new Senior Center.

Other: Dan Robbins reported that Greenways volunteers have logged 8600 hours of service in trail maintenance. Ant hills are still bad.

~Mary Lou Daugherty, Observer