

TOWN OF COLLIERVILLE
Parks, Recreation, & Cultural Arts Advisory Board
October 3, 2023 – 5:30pm
Agenda

CALL TO ORDER Chairman Derenburger

APPROVE AGENDA Chairman Derenburger

REVIEW / APPROVE – August 8, 2023 Minutes Chairman Derenburger

PUBLIC COMMENTS

ITEMS:

1. Tourism & Special Events Ashley Carver

2. Memorial Bench Program Greg Clark

DIRECTORS REPORT Greg Clark

OTHER BUSINESS Chairman Derenburger

ADJOURN: Next Meeting – November 14th



COLLIERVILLE
PARKS

Parks Advisory Board Meeting – October 3, 2023

Members Present: Chris Armour, Corinne Derenburger, Micah Miller, Katie Mims, Jeremy Smith, Kathy Thiele, Jimmy Turner

Members Absent: Michael Ebbs, Maureen Fraser

Staff Present: Ashley Carver, Greg Clark, Tress Shields

Guest(s) Present: NONE

Corinne Derenburger called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Approval of Agenda

Micah Miller made a motion to approve the agenda. Kathy Thiele seconded the motion. The board approved the agenda.

Approval of Minutes

Katie Mims made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 8, 2023 meeting. Chris Armour seconded the motion. The board approved the minutes.

Public Comments

NONE

Items

1. Tourism & Special Events – Greg Clark introduced Ashley Carver, the Director of Tourism. Her presentation includes tourism and special events. She provided several handouts. Ashley stated that she works with Jennifer Taylor, the Special Events Coordinator, to coordinate over 16 Town sponsored events throughout the year. Jennifer Taylor works with multiple Town departments and other organizations on 17 cosponsored events such as the Balloon Festival and Main Street Concert Series. Ashley reported that we estimate that we serve over 70,000 people at the various events. Recently, we were able to place a subscription to Placer.ai which is data/analytics that tracks cell phones to allow us to collect a lot of data. Ashley was able to provide approximate numbers for Main Street's concert series. Depending on the weather, they had from 1200 to 2100 at each concert.

Ashley Carver informed that the Youth Fishing Rodeo remains a favorite community event. This past event had 184 participants with 659 total attendees. It is a great family outing. Ashley communicated that special events are so important for our residents, but they also foster community and promote the Collierville brand and values. Our events continue to grow and evolve. Our Independence Day Celebration (IDC) had over 18,000 attendees. Ashley acknowledged that the staff faces challenges on how to meet the growing demands for our programs. Attendance at our Father/Daughter and Mother/Son events sell out every year. However, the space remains the same, so we have to think creatively on how to serve more customers and provide them great experiences. Ashley expressed that the Board of Mayor and Aldermen (BMA) are really supportive. They know how important these events are to our residents.

Ashley Carver pointed out that they used a satisfaction survey this past year for IDC. We received over 250 responses. 98% of the respondents said they were satisfied or highly satisfied with the event. We had over 1,100 visitors report that they came from more than 50 miles from their homes. This year, we had a 21% increase in attendance from last year.

Christmas in Collierville (CIC): Ashley Carver indicated that this event is extremely important to our residents. She believes that it is a valuable tourism driver, so we strive to make it better each year. She then reported some of last year's accomplishments which included new colored orbs in an area behind the Depot, music on the Depot platform on select Saturdays when the weather cooperated, Jennifer Taylor responded to more than 1000 letters to Santa, and evening carriage rides. For the second year, we had Kevin and Bethany Paige provide entertainment for the Christmas Tree Lighting. We had a record crowd of almost 9,000 attendees which is a 5% increase over last year. The Holiday Light Tour is always a huge success. Last year, we offered 15 evenings of carriage rides. This year, we will offer more if the weather permits. They will run from November 24th through December 30th with the exception of Christmas Eve and Christmas day.

Ashley Carver stated that Placer.ai allows us to see who is coming to these events. We want to use this for CIC so we can do targeted marketing and hopefully expand the programs. Last year, the months of November and December were peak for visits to the Town Square. More people were on Collierville Town Square Thanksgiving week than at other times. Ashley suggested that it is likely due to a lot of family members in town visiting relatives

for the holidays and because we now do our tree lighting the week of Thanksgiving, families can visit the square and experience all the Christmas lights.

Ashley Carver indicated that with the help of our new cultural arts coordinator, Victoria McDaniel, we were able to add four additional music events as a part of our Christmas programming including a free concert at the Harrell Theatre. She commented that Victoria has hit the ground running and is focused on expanding music and cultural arts experiences throughout our parks. Ashley reported that we have two new large light displays behind the Depot and a large ornament at Tom Brooks Park. She is hoping to make this a part of a selfie tour, ten stops throughout the Historic District to drive traffic there. She will use a survey to get feedback on Christmas in Collierville.

Ashley Carver communicated that this year she received a large grant from the State which she will use to focus on tourism and marketing. She informed that she is using about \$10,000 of those funds to implement a marketing campaign to promote Christmas in Collierville. Ashley then mentioned some of the tourism accomplishments. She received a fully reimbursable grant of \$95,000 from the Tennessee Department of Tourism Development. She reported that the Shelby County Board of Commissioner has been very generous. With the help of Commissioner Bradford, she received over \$35,000 that she was able to put into renovating the Depot. Ashley noted that she was able to invest in professional museum quality exhibits to display in the Depot so that we can invite more people in and learn about the railroad heritage which is so important to Collierville. She expressed that we have had a lot of great press including online features with Southern Living and Style Blueprint Memphis. We partnered with Collierville Chamber on a full page ad and an article with great photos which featured all of great restaurants and destinations on Town Square in the October issue of Food & Travel Magazine. Also, Ashley revealed that we have a destination website: www.colliervilletn.gov/explore.

Ashley Carver asked the board members if they had questions. Kathy Thiele asked for more information about the music series. Ashley explained that they are working with Matt Morgan who is working directly with Victoria McDaniel and Greg Clark. We have a contract with Ron Jewell as a consultant to outline what a music series would entail; what is the budget; how to attract artists, how to promote it, etc. She articulated that it is in the planning stage. They want to go to the BMA to present to them what it could look like; how it benefits our community, what it could cost, etc. Then, the BMA would determine whether

to move forward with this type of event. We are in an information/fact finding mode right now to establish what that relationship will look like with the Collierville Arts Council. Greg Clark indicated that nothing has been decided. He added that we are sending Victoria to a conference in North Carolina in November. It is a music conference which features a showcase of artists, talent, and agents. Greg specified that the thought is that there are times we can use the Harrell Theatre four or five times a year to offer a one-night concert or other type entertainment event. We are not able to commit to anything until we have the BMA's permission.

Micah Miller inquired about the increased attendance at the youth fishing rodeo. Ashley Carver answered that we have had to do registration in a different way because we get so many participants for the event. Previously, we allowed onsite registration, but the lines to sign up had gotten so long. Now, we have moved to online registration. We do the event in late April at W.C. Johnson Park at the lake with two fountains. Ashley conveyed that we get quite a few businesses/community groups that offer to sponsor the event, provide volunteers, pass out bottled water, etc. That concluded the presentation. The board members thanked Ashley.

2. Memorial Bench Program – Greg Clark gave a brief history of the program. In 1994, the Town Square was renovated and there were wagon wheel type benches all around the square. The Town allowed the Town Beautiful Commission to accept monetary donations for memorial plaques to be placed on those benches. We had two different things going...either a bench plaque or a tree plaque. Town Beautiful did that for around ten years. Then, we sold out all the benches on the square and auditing issues came up, so the program eventually phased out. Also, it became a maintenance nightmare for us. Our maintenance division had to periodically remove the benches for repair and upkeep, and we would receive complaining phone calls related to that. Thereby, we completely got out of the plaque business. Recently, we started getting calls about bench and tree plaques. Greg expressed that he basically brought this to the board to determine if this is something that we want to bring back. He suggested that if folks want to make donations in memory of someone, we could provide a plaque here at the Cox Community Center and add the names to the plaque. The board members discussed various options. Greg thanked everyone for their ideas.

Director's Report

Greg Clark reported that this Thursday night is the Hall of Fame Ceremony at the Harrell Theatre at 6:00 p.m. John Meeks and Bucky Parsons are the two new inductees. Greg announced that we received a design contract with Barge Designs for the Wolf River Pedestrian Bridge. He will keep everyone updated with that project. The Pickleball project has started, and we anticipate completion around mid-December. W.C. Johnson turf fields are completed and back in use. Cox fields 4 and 5 are completed; fields 1, 2, and 3 are at a standstill. They got into wet dirt, so the contractors want a \$370,000 change order for soil cement. We are looking into other options. Greg stated that he is out of town next week at a National Recreation and Parks Association conference.

Katie Mims asked for an update on reviving the batting cages at Cox Park. Greg said that he met with some of our Public Services employees. They will meet with a contractor to provide us a quote. We will get the cost on that and will go from there. Jeremy Smith inquired about the criteria for nominating someone for the Hall of Fame. Greg replied that he will get a copy of the nomination form. Jeremy mentioned that he has someone in mind that he would like to nominate. Greg announced that the next meeting is November 14th. Also, applications to Town boards will become available towards the end of this month. He said he would let everyone know when they are available.

There was no additional business. Jeremy Smith made a motion to adjourn. Chris Armour seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:26 p.m.