



Called City Commission Meeting Highlights with McCracken County Fiscal Court

Tuesday, April 16, 2019, at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall

Discussion About the Future of Parks and Recreation

The Paducah Board of Commissioners and the McCracken County Fiscal Court held a joint meeting to discuss the future of parks and recreation in Paducah and McCracken County. The elected bodies discussed the Parks & Recreation Master Plan process that is underway. In October 2018, the City approved moving forward with a professional services agreement for the development of the Master Plan. Since that time, a variety of public engagement initiatives have occurred including

- Online surveys and surveys distributed in person at various events;
- A statistically valid mailed survey (results are not available yet);
- A public open house in January with approximately 180 Paducah and McCracken County residents in attendance;
- Meetings with a citizens steering committee; and
- Meetings with more than dozen stakeholder groups interested in parks and recreation.

City of Paducah Parks & Recreation Director Mark Thompson provided an overview of preliminary results of the online survey and the surveys distributed in person at events. So far, 1408 surveys have been completed with 46 percent of the respondents living within the Paducah city limits. Nearly half of the respondents said that they visited parks at least 20 times in the past year. Regarding the condition of the parks, 51 percent said that they give the parks a “good” rating.

A section of the survey asks folks to provide input on what types of facilities would be used at a new recreation center. The top answers are walking track, gym, family activity pool, and lap pool. When asked what upgrades should be completed at existing parks, the top answers are new/improved restrooms, walking/hiking trails, and security cameras and lighting. Another question asks what should be developed or expanded with indoor swimming pools, walking and hiking trails, soccer fields, and baseball/softball diamonds as the top answers.

After hearing the preliminary survey results, the two elected bodies spent more than an hour discussing parks and facilities. Items of discussion included

- Funding mechanisms and challenges including the inability for Paducah to impose a restaurant tax due to State law;
- Amount of land needed for soccer fields in addition to baseball and softball fields;
- Previous studies and master plans;
- Existing Paducah Regional Sports Plex facility on U.S. Highway 60;
- Friends of the Park organization development and endowment creation;
- A review of existing facilities, parks, and land parcels;
- Public-private partnership options;
- Recreational programming options such as canoeing, kayaking, pickleball, and lacrosse; and
- Facility locations to best serve the population.

To continue this discussion, the next joint meeting of the Paducah Board of Commissioners and the McCracken County Fiscal Court is tentatively set for Tuesday, June 18 at City Hall.

Visit <http://paducahky.gov/parks-master-plan> for more information about the Parks & Recreation Master Plan including links to online engagement opportunities.

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