



Called City Commission Meeting Highlights with McCracken County Fiscal Court

Monday, June 17, 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 continue the discussion about the future of parks and recreation in Paducah and McCracken County. Both elected bodies met April 16 to discuss the preliminary results of the Parks & Recreation Master Plan that is underway. At this meeting, the elected officials heard additional information including some of the results from the statistically valid mailed survey. Regarding that survey, a total of 749 people completed it with 200 of those respondents living in McCracken County outside of the city limits.

A section of the mailed survey asked folks if there is the need for a recreation center with 71 percent of the respondents saying yes. The features that would be used at a new recreation center are as follows in order of preference: walking track, cardio room, warm water therapeutic pool, and family activity pool. When asked if there is a need for a sports complex, 54 percent said yes with the top features (in order) to be baseball, softball, and soccer fields.

Mayor Brandi Harless said that the City has set aside \$750,000 in the Fiscal Year 2019-2020 budget for the design of new recreational facilities.

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

Transient Room Tax Discussion

Linked to the discussion about the future of parks and recreation is the discussion of how to fund new facilities. Both elected bodies discussed an option of dissolving the existing Convention & Visitors Bureau, which is a joint entity, and creating two separate tourism commissions, one run by the City and the other by the County. The goal is to increase revenue for local tourism which would be used in part to pay the debt on a proposed sports complex. The sports complex could include a softball quad plex, baseball quad plex, and tournament-worthy soccer fields. With this option, each tourism commission would be able to levy a transient room tax, a tax that is paid by guests staying at hotels and motels.

Currently, there is a 6 percent transient room tax collected by McCracken County. Out of the 6 percent tax, 3 percent supports the Paducah Convention & Visitors Bureau, 2 percent supports debt service for the Carson Center and the Expo Center, and 1 percent supports the Convention Center operations. With the creation of two tourism commissions, there would be the opportunity to levy a possible 10 percent transient room tax since there would be an additional 3 percent for the newly created tourism commission and an additional 1 percent for Convention Center operations. The estimate is that the additional 3 percent for tourism would generate \$1.2 million which would fund a full-time employee for the new tourism commission, marketing, and the debt for a sports complex.

City Commissioner Gerald Watkins asked to see information about how this proposed transient room tax compares to transient room tax rates levied across Kentucky and surrounding cities.

The Paducah Board of Commissioners and the McCracken Fiscal Court voiced their support in moving forward by digging deeper into the structure and details that would need to be addressed in the proposed development of two tourism commissions.

Update about E-911

Since this meeting already had lasted two hours, the discussion about the financial challenges of funding E-911 was cut short. Mayor Harless said a meeting will be held in the next few days between the McCracken County Sheriff, Paducah Police Chief and other officials to resume the discussion.

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