

The Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Advisory Board for the Town of Nashville held a Public Forum Wednesday, November 13, 2019 at 7:00 pm in the Town Council Chambers. Members Present: Chairman-Kirby Winstead, Vice Chair- Mary Richardson, George Jefferies, Lynn Hobbs, & Council Member Liaison Kate Burns. Staff Present: Randy Lansing-Town Manager, Marguerite Bishop-Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources Director, and Julie Spriggs-Planning and Development Director. Others Present: Thomas Gillespie-Nash County Recreation Director

1. Chairman Winstead called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Chairman Winstead thanked everyone in attendance for coming out. Chairman Winstead asked that each person who wished to speak please sign in; once called upon, he asked that when they approach the podium that they state their name and address for the record. He then turned the forum over to Mrs. Bishop to provide everyone with an overview about the forum.

2. Public Forum
 - a. Proposal Summary

Mrs. Bishop explained that the department is currently exploring a proposal with Nash County to outsource team field athletics. The Town and the County both operate Parks and Recreation Departments that are funded through tax payer dollars. Mrs. Bishop explained that the Town and the County currently compete in similar programming of traditional team field athletics for youths and adults. She explained that the proposal is not merging the Town with the County; however, if the proposal is accepted it will allow the Town to refocus and develop non-competing programming (specifically programming that has been requested by the citizens). Mrs. Bishop stated that the Town would continue to own the physical park areas that it currently has.

Mrs. Bishop explained that the Town typically sees a decline in participation in team athletics after the age of 7. The Town currently offers football, cheer, and soccer in the fall and t-ball, softball, and baseball in the spring. The County would be able increase athletics by providing tackle football in the fall, flag football in the spring, and t-ball, softball, baseball, and soccer year round. Mrs. Bishop reminded members of the audience to sign if they would like to speak on the proposal, and to remember once called upon by Chairman Winstead to state their name and address once they approached the podium.

Mr. Lansing stated he wanted everyone to understand that the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Advisory Board has reviewed the proposal in a prior meeting and felt it would be best to receive public input before making a recommendation to the Town Council. Tonight's forum is to hear what our citizens think about it.

Chairman Winstead called Ms. Helen Rabil. Helen Rabil of 404 South Alston Street, Nashville, NC approached the podium. Ms. Rabil stated, "I am a native of Nashville, born and reared. I am opposed for the merger. My son; I even played with the Town of Nashville when I was growing up. My sons played with the Town of Nashville, and now I have a son who is the scorekeeper for the football team and the baseball team for the Town of Nashville. He has been there for 10 to 15 years. If the merger comes about he may lose his job. I will say my son is a gentleman, who is, has a learning disability, which many people don't know but the front part of his brain does not function. But by me being a teacher; I have, we gone have down several paths and he is where he is right now. He is very concerned about losing his

job cause he loves working with the people here in Nashville. As I said I grew up playing softball with the teams, my children played football and softball and I feel like Nashville is growing. Someone came to me a while ago and said hey we don't have the enrollment like we use to; I believe Marguerite said so. But I feel like with Nashville growing like it is, we will get more people to come in. Because the people from Nashville, love Nashville, and people from Rocky Mount are moving from Rocky Mount to Nashville. So that's why I'm opposed, I feel like we can grow by being one thing one people and I am sad that there is a fee for registration and that the County fee is much higher than the Town's. Thank you." Chairman Winstead thanked Ms. Rabil for her comments.

Chairman Winstead called Mr. Otis Chancey. Otis Chancey of 601 Western Avenue, Nashville, NC approached the podium. Mr. Chancey stated, "Good evening, thank you for allowing me to speak this evening. First of all I'd just like to say that after having worked with Marguerite and in a couple of capacities over the past year or so, I believe her to be one of the brightest stars in our universe. And I believe that she is really on to something here. Now I'm a resident of Nash County, I mean Nashville, I pay taxes here in Nashville, I don't have children here in Nashville, so I can't speak to that part. But I do have four grandsons and so, you know if I can imagine them in this place and in this time; the thing that stuck out to me more than anything else was when Marguerite, or the proposal you know talks about health and wellness, and school readiness. Health and wellness, and school readiness; I think the sooner that we get to our kids the better off they are going to be and to turn over the athletics part to the County, keeping in mind that the County is no slouch itself, ok. To me would be a great thing for us to do. We will still have I'm sure the same quality of athletics but the focus now would be on getting to kids ya know a little bit earlier and getting to them in a different form than we are doing right now, and hopefully that will produce better citizens later on for our community as it grows. I mean I've always admired this Town from afar just driving through when I didn't live here, and feel proud to call myself a Nashville resident. I grew up in the slums of Newark, NJ and we didn't have a whole lot. But every summer the police athletic league would put on these programs to keep us off the streets and to keep us out of trouble. And every couple of summers or so, we'd be able to go way up in the mountains somewhere and just get away from the all that heat, the humidity and badness that was going on in those streets, just get away. So I think that made a great impression on me, a great impact on me and I believe that if we just give this thing a chance, we are going to be a better community for it." Chairman Winstead thanked Mr. Chancey for his comments.

Chairman Winstead called Wyatt McGhee. Wyatt McGhee of 714 Bayberry Lane, Nashville, NC approached the podium. Mr. McGhee stated, "Thank you Mr. Chairman Winstead, Town Manager Lansing, and Parks Recreation Director Bishop, for the opportunity to speak tonight on this topic. I'm really excited about this proposal, because I have been actually advocating about this for years, at least for a couple of years. I have spoken with both representative of the Nashville Council and also Nash County staff and Commissioners. And I have been a Coach with Nash County, I'm a resident of Nashville, but I've been a coach with Nash County for 9 seasons, coaching girls' soccer. I have an 8 year old daughter, I live here with my wife here in Nashville, and we decided to start our daughter with the Nash County Soccer program because there are more teams, more competition, better opportunity, and so we've been going to Red Oak. Most of the time we play in Red Oak, but we do occasional play in Bailey Middlesex park as well. The reason that I have been advocating for this is to see the fact that Nashville does have a limited pool of players and Nash County has a better pool but still not ideal. Cause a lot of times even Nash County will be looking to figure out well ok what ages are we going to combine to be

get enough players to be able to have teams that can compete against each other. So if Nashville and Nash County could come together it would be a benefit to both parties because the pool of players would be larger you'd have more teams. We could have potentially I see as it you know games in Red Oak, games in Nashville, maybe a few in Bailey Middlesex like there have been; and it really sort of brings the whole County together. It brings opportunities for people all over the county. So I'm really excited about it and obviously the details are gonna have to be worked out by the elected parties of the County and the Town to make sure it's a fair proposal in terms of the financing, and maintenance and things like that. So you know I'll leave that to those folks to work those things out, but as far as being a citizen, being a coach, being the father of a daughter who's been active in the Nash County soccer program; in fact I've seen some players who have sort bounced back and forth between the two programs., it's typically; One of the draws for Nashville is it's a little bit cheaper but then you don't have as good of teams and competition, so people are back and forth and it really could bring us all together. And I'd just like to say I'm excited, I think it'd be a great thing if the details can be worked out. I just encourage you to make it work out if you can. I appreciate the opportunity." Chairman Winstead thanked Mr. McGhee for his comments.

Chairman Winstead called upon Leon Porter. Leon Porter of 101 Misa Drive, Nashville, NC approached the podium. Mr. Porter stated, "This is my, we have been coaching little league football together for the past four years for the Nashville Hornets. Our basic outlook for the whole thing, I'm on the fence. We have nothing to do with the monetary side of it; we're not trying to get into that part. Basically we talked to Thomas and Marguerite briefly each time about things that were going to happen and what was going to be happening as far as the athletic program goes. We, our main focus is the kids. We've had people say they think that things were not going to change and that our kids were going to basically going to; and to cut it short and not be a whole lot long time, we just want to make sure that the core kids that have been coming to our park and being playing for our team continue to get the same opportunities to do that because they cannot do anything else. It will not; some of our kids don't get driven to practice they walk to practice. They don't get driven to games we drive them to games, we pick them up. For the last three or four years, me and the coaches on the back row and two more, we pick these kids up every Saturday and drop them off every Saturday evening. We pick them up for practice and we drop them off. We feed them on Saturdays; the only thing we are worried about is them. The monetary part who's paying for what we pitched in and bought the JV uniforms for the JV team this year. We don't care about any of that, the only thing we are worried about is that our kids and the name that we have established, as far the Nashville Hornets, changing it to the Nash County Hornets is not a big deal. Our stuff to some people may be petty, but it's not to us. We would like not we want we would like the Nashville Hornets to stay the Nashville Hornets and for our kids to continue to play at Glover Park and have that opportunity. That is our basic gist for being here tonight to make sure that, that went through on that way; that somebody understood what we was saying, that was it." Chairman Winstead thanked Mr. Porter for his comments.

Chairman Winstead asked Mrs. Bishop to come forward to address some of the concerns that have come up in the forum. Mrs. Bishop stated that the fee for Nash County is higher, but detail within the proposal is to provide a scholarship for people with needs to be able to receive a reduced fee. We do understand that there are children that participate in the Town of Nashville who will need to participate for free. Mrs. Bishop address staffing; we have a full time maintenance staff member would be employed by the County, there will be opportunities for part time staff to be retrained to continue on in

program under the new direction of the program, and there is also discussion with the County to possibly utilize some part time staff there as well. She stated that it is important to know that we still will play at Glover Park; Glover Park is still an athletic complex and it will still be ran as an athletic complex. Glover Park's proximity to neighborhoods, is what makes Glover Park, Glover Park, and very special. It is important to continue to serve those neighbors. With this proposal we hope to provide more opportunities at Glover Park.

Chairman Winstead called Carrie Conrad. Carrie Conrad of 813 Birchwood Drive, Nashville, NC approached the podium. Ms. Conrad stated, "My daughter has been in the softball program since 1st grade she is now in 6th grade. This program has been so beneficial for her. If this program continues this will be her last time, last year being able to play for the Town of Nashville. This has sparked so much joy in her that she's actually now with pitching coach. Cause we understand that this program, we use a pitching machine but she wants to grow and develop those skills. I didn't realize it but my son's soccer coach is here it was his first year playing soccer, he is six and it was an amazing experience. I was telling coach that at the very last game, I said that do you wanna play again and he's like oh heck yeah. I am opposed to this, as the coaches will attest I speak to many parents, they can't afford the fees no matter how great a scholarship fund is set up, kids want to participate at last minute. Kids need this, it's so good for the community and Marguerite maybe at some point you can address this, although games would be played at Glover Park, they won't be played there all the time because they will be rotating throughout the County. My daughter did play for Nash County volleyball and yes it is a higher fee. Yes we could afford that but not everybody can and I just think it would be just a bad mark on Nashville if they got rid of the program. It is so good; I mean the passion that these coaches put out and how much joy it brings the children and hopefully it grows as the community continues to grow. My daughter's softball team faced many challenges, she was 12 with 7 year olds, it wasn't the easiest thing but there's still joy there. There's still teaching kids to get involved and try your best no matter your age. Thank you." Chairman Winstead thanked Ms. Conrad for her comments.

Chairman Winstead called Christine Ricci. Christine Ricci of 106 North Hilliard Street, Nashville, NC approached the podium. Ms. Ricci stated, "I sort of come at this in many aspects in the way that I've spent many Saturdays at the field. I've coached, I've reffed, just watching my adoptive family, playing games, and I'm a lifelong girl scout. So I maybe see this as an opportunity to use our resources more wisely. We are a small town and we have limited resources. As much as we would love to have millions of dollars to put everywhere, we have limited resources. The County has a great program, we have a great program, but there's only so many places our money can go. We have a great afterschool tutoring with Parks and Rec., we have the partner dance program, there's other things like karate, but there's only so many places that the Parks and Rec. Department can put their people, and if we can find a way to make this work, and work well for everybody, because it really is about the kids, its' about the town and about the adults who participate in partner dance. We have environmental programs that we could expand upon; I think this would be a really good opportunity for the Town to take part and to go that way. I've seen articles where they do say that sports are on the decline especially contact those sports, but there will always be a space for them. So I think we need to take advantage of that before something happens, before maybe we lose that part of our program as well. Thank you." Chairman Winstead thanked Ms. Ricci for her comments.

Chairman Winstead called Jason Glover. Jason Glover of 2335 Morning Mist Court, outside of Town Limits, approached the podium. Mr. Glover stated, "I do reside outside of Town limits, however I am a

business owner of Nashville and former employee of Parks and Rec., and J.W. Glover Park is named after my grandfather. So I'm here to represent not only a point of view from a grandson of the honor the late J.W. but I am also here as a former employee and a business owner in the child care business so I have a lot of participation with this. My first concern was just for it to remain Glover Park to honor the legacy of J.W. Glover why Parks and Rec. really took off with the Town of Nashville. I'd been an employee part time with Parks and Rec. up until recently, from 2001 when they actually moved the park from the McDonald's, L&L complex to there, a lot of history out there. I'm kinda opposed to this; one because Nash County just built a very nice facility in Coopers, which is only 10 miles down the road. I don't know how Nash County is going to promote Coopers 5 miles down the road, Red Oak 10 miles down the road, and the Town of Nashville. I don't see how that's going to happen. I understand that they are not going to own the facility, they're just going to manage it. So if they aren't going to own it are we gonna do a lease, is this going to be a temporary trial by fire, or this going to be more of a permanent we're going to sign a contract and it's over with. So some are my concerns again I oppose it; I think we have a great group of coaches, I've worked with a lot of them. I think we have the participation in Nashville, I think our fees are fair for our citizens. If we could come up with some kind of corporate agreement with Nash County and work something out to where if we want to scholarship ours, to make it fair, I'd love to play with Nash County. I'd like for the Town of Nashville to play with Coopers, I mean Red Oak, but I think it's going to be a great mistake to give up Parks and Rec. for the Town of Nashville just on a let's see how it's going to work. I think we need to try and keep it in house as long as we can; from what I understand our numbers are looking pretty good. We may not be able to offer all the stuff but like you said you know we're offering it at a great discount and great service to our citizens and I'd love to keep that, to keep that going. I think that's what my grandfather wanted, he would give parks and rec., he would let the kids play for free and I would like to see it stay that a way. I know it's very inexpensive for our citizens and that's a benefit of living in Nashville. You've got Rocky Mount that is growing by leaps and bounds, with corporations and industries coming and people don't always want to live in Rocky Mount, people don't always want to live in Raleigh; they want to commute to the good small town of Nashville, and if we can continue our Parks and Rec., I don't see it doing nothing but growing with the industries and business coming around us. So again I oppose it strongly, I'd like to see it stay within the Town, and I would like for it to benefit the citizens how it has in the past. Thank you." Chairman Winstead thanked Mr. Glover for his comments.

Chairman Winstead called Doretha Johnson. Doretha Johnson of 110 East Washington Street approached the podium. Ms. Johnson stated, "I am just concerned about, I don't have any kids in the area, our kids are grown. But we have been here for the last 10 years, we pay a lot of taxes in Nashville, I mean coming out of California it seems like a little, but we pay two taxes. But it seems like every time you look around something is being given away. It's like can we get, can we keep anything for Nashville, that's why we came to Nashville, cause small town, but everything is being offered to larger areas. I think we have to look internally to see if we have a lot of situations that is not related to this but even with the Town with just trying to get a garbage can, just trying to get things fixed, the sidewalk, the streets, the trees falling and you don't have a number to call no connection, it is all disjointed. And now, where looking about when kids are here that live in Nashville, that I see walking on the sidewalk, that we want to give away what they just have. I think we need to relook at this and also when you give things away and you have a budget, if you have the budget you keep it internally, and if we don't look at this we are going to end up getting increased taxes. Maybe not this year, maybe two years later we will get a \$0.07 increase in taxes, and we have to look at what we are doing here, or we are going to end up losing the

residents we have in Nashville. I don't want to live in Rocky Mount but I don't want to continue to pay high Nashville taxes, if I am not even seeing, some of what I'm paying for. It just need to have a lot more thought process and not just giving it away to send it off so we can do something else. It's not right; it's not fair, it's not right to the residents here. Thank you." Chairman Winstead thanked Ms. Johnson for her comments.

Mrs. Bishop addressed Ms. Conrad's question from earlier, she stated she would not be able to answer the questions, if Nash County were to take over our athletics they would determine how they would run the program, however Thomas Gillespie, the Recreation Director for Nash County is present and maybe able to answer her question. Mr. Gillespie stated that current format participants are allowed to sign up for the area within the County that they would like to practice in, as far as games still rotate at different locations within the County. If there are enough teams to sign up within an area, they try to keep those teams in their area. Mr. Gillespie asked if that answered her question; Ms. Conrad stated it was more about transportation, and needing help with transportation. Mr. Gillespie stated that the sign up form also allows the opportunity to state that they need assistance with transportation to be partnered with a neighbor; all request are not honored but 99% of the time those request are honored.

A member of the audience asked what the fee is for the County; Mr. Gillespie stated it is \$35.00, except football, football is \$40.00 because the equipment is a little more. The same person asked what the Town's fees are; Mrs. Bishop stated that it is free for residents and \$10.00 for those who live out of Town. Mr. Jason Glover came back to the podium. He stated, "The legacy that I'm living now my grandfather would have love for it to be free, we worked hard to get it to that point and now we are going to give it away. We're going to ask our citizens to pay \$35.00 so we can play with Nash County, where now we're free. Ok I'm just trying to make a point."

Council Member Burns asked Mr. Gillespie to explain the scholarship program. Mr. Gillespie explained that the County does have a scholarship program in place and they are currently reviewing it to update it; currently there are no stipulations on the scholarship program for applicants. Ms. Conrad stated that it was her understanding that the town has plenty of potential sponsors for both softball and t-ball she was unsure about sponsors for other athletics, but if this is financially based we could look into those sponsors. Mrs. Bishop stated that we do have sponsorship, that this proposal is not based solely on a financial need; she explained that we do have the money to run these programs and we have staff to run the programs. However, there has been a push to offer more, and the department does not have the money or staff to offer more; that is what we are trying to address. How can we offer more without increasing taxes, and without increasing the overall budget of the departments. If the County, is planning on staying in Athletics, and they are good at, instead of having a duplication of service, to address the constituents who wanted more than what is currently being offered. Ms. Conrad stated it does make sense but she is still opposed. Council Member Burns stated that there was a public hearing and at the hearing those things were addressed there.

Mr. Parker asked if with the scholarship program, that was something the parents would have to pay back; Mr. Gillespie replied that it is free assistance. Rashaud Hudson of 205 Simbelyn Drive, Nashville, NC approached the podium. Mr. Hudson stated, "I coach, football, baseball, and basketball. But umm, what really make my experience so good with Glover Park, when you're a father and you get off work and you are part of the coaching staff you gotta come and help coach the kids, a lot of kids getting out more athletics than others. And we then get out here and they play, you should see they

face. Their like coach hey coach I did it. And by merging I don't think that's going to work cause; my first year I coached rookie head coach, a lot of other programs they all about winning, and Nashville Hornets, we not about that. We want you to get out there and learn the right technique so you don't get hurt. We play Tarboro, Enfield they all play the same players but not the Hornets. You gonna be, you play running back you play running back, we not about winning. You're out there learning the proper technique so you don't get hurt. Everybody going to play on the Hornets, it don't matter. If it ain't nothing but one minute, two minutes, you should see their faces when they come off the field. It's the main part is the kids, it's what they want and I'm just so proud of Glover Park like they really about the kids. I mean we may have kids go against 35 45 kids, so what they get in, they happy. My main thing is you come in walking we want you to leave walking; that's what I love so much about the Hornets staff. We really care. Of course everyone that start for the town ain't gonna be no athletic player. As long as they get out there and they have fun that's what counts. I mean I've seen a child come and can barely throw a football, but when they leave they're chunking it. We teach plays and formation, and when we tell them what formation they line up. My first rookie season, I thought at first what in the world have I gotten myself into but by the end of the season I would call a formation and they would line up and run the play. That's what makes the Hornets and Glover Park so special. We here to teach the kids and they learn; they got somewhere they can go and where they can have fun. And ya'll doing we about doing what the teacher say do, doing your homework, and be good in school. You gotta do what the teacher say do first if not you find out you ain't gonna play; it's just how we work. Those are the life lesson that we have to show our kids about respect and authority. That's what we all about at Glover Park and the Nashville Hornets and to learn to respect others that's what we all about. Everybody mommy and daddy ain't gonna make \$75,000 a lot of kids are underprivileged and that's ok just give them the help. The proposal, I'm kind of against it cause it just don't seem right, it just seems like it is getting away from the kids. So whatever decision ya'll make, cause ya'll have the final say at the end of the day, just think about the kids. Thank you for your time." Chairman Winstead thanked Mr. Hudson for his comments.

Mr. Gillespie gave a brief overview of staff and numbers. They currently have 6 full time employees who solely focus on athletic programming, 2 full maintenance staff members, and if the merger occurs then they would staff the current maintenance position within the parks and rec. department. The current budget is over \$600,000. The Town of Nashville had 528 participants this year, the County had over 3500 participants. He feels the merger would benefit the citizens of the Town by having teams aligned by gender (there is a co-ed division at the 13-15 age group) for soccer, and the Town has two teams during baseball season the County would be able to give them access to more teams.

Council Member Burns stated that something that was discussed in the past that she felt everyone would benefit from hearing, that if this does not happen and the Town keeps the program, do we still the ages above 7 continuing, or are those programs ones that would have to stop due to lack of participation. Mrs. Bishop replied that we would need to review it and do a cost benefit analysis, but based on the research that has been done so far, some of the services would be stopped for older age groups, outside of football. She also reiterated that the County has a 13 to 15 age group and the Town stops at age 12.

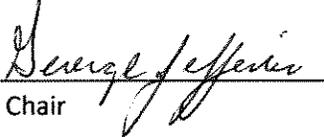
Council Member Hinton asked if Mr. Gillespie could clarify what was included in the \$600,000 budget. Mr. Gillespie explained that the budget included line items for personnel, equipment, jerseys, helmets, training for staff, and for contract referees. Council Member Hinton asked if we turned over the program to the County, would there be any savings to the Town. Mrs. Bishop stated this year's

budget also included capital outlay for the playground, and that is not a reoccurring item. There would be some savings on utility bills, but that the department would propose to reallocate those funds into a different direction. Council Member Hinton asked if the newly purchased playground would go to the County. Mrs. Bishop stated that it would remain at Glover Park, and that the current proposal has the County providing park maintenance. Council Member Hinton asked if we turn over our equipment such as our lawn mowers and our gators would be turned over to the County. Mrs. Bishop stated it is currently listed that way in the proposal; however we are still negotiating with the County on the final details. Council Member Hinton expressed concern that there are a lot of capital investments that would be overturned to the County that Nashville citizens have paid taxes for. Council Member Burns that she understood it to be on loan and not a transfer. Mrs. Bishop stated that they would also be utilizing for athletic programming.

Council Member Hinton asked if we would revert to the 18-19 budget of the \$306,000. Mrs. Bishop stated this would be a more accurate estimation because those figures did not include the playground. Council Member Hinton stated that in this year's budget \$194,000 was in salaries and benefits, with three employees in parks and recreation would that be reduced. Mrs. Bishop explained that she has proposed to Mr. Lansing to rehire a full time recreation supervisor, using the remainder of the salaries and benefits to pay for part time staff; with the new direction we would need to be able to contract with instructors; things that actually take some sort of training. Council Member Hinton asked for clarification on having the director's salary and another full time person, and Mrs. Bishop stated that was correct. Council Member Hinton stated that it looks like there would be no savings to the Town; Mrs. Bishop stated there would not be. Council Member Hinton stated that was something we need to consider. Chairman Winstead thanked Council Member Hinton for her comments.

6. Adjourn

Chairman Winstead asked if anyone else would like to speak. He thanked everyone for coming out and being involved in the decision process and hearing what they have to say, the board truly appreciates it. The forum was adjourned at 7:55 pm.


Chair

Attest:


Tesa Silver, Deputy Town Clerk