Clemson gets host of recreation ideas

BY GREG OLIVER
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CLEMSON — The number of citizens attending Tuesday night's public meeting regarding future plans for Clemson's 10 parks and other recreation facilities was relatively small. However, those who attended had plenty of ideas to share.

Those ideas ranged from additional bicycle paths to an enlarged dog park to expanding the disc golf course at Mountain View Park from 9 to 18 holes. Representatives from Seamon Whiteside and Associates were on hand to listen to suggestions.

Chris Watson of Seamon and Whiteside said current city trends include water and splash parks, greenways and bikeways, bike facilities, activities for seniors, outdoor performance venues and opportunities for healthy lifestyle and healthy living.

Leo Vanveen, who recently moved to Seneca from Myrtle Beach, said dog parks are also very popular where he came from and feels Clemson should expand its offering at Nettles Park.

"There is one long bench to sit on and one fountain in the middle of a mud pool," Vanveen said. "I would like a facility that offers a little more and I believe there's a lot of people in this area who like dog parks."

Jeremy Figgs, a parks, recreation and tourism management student at Clemson University, suggested additional bike paths since students living in apartments won't ride their bicycles

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FILE PHOTO

Teacher Connie Martin leads a group of toddlers on a stroll through Abernathy Park in Clemson last spring. Abernathy Park is one of 10 city parks being reviewed for possible improvements.

RECREATION: Ideas taken

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into the city due to the heavy volume of vehicular traffic.

"It's not appealing to people if they can't get around this area without a bus or a car," Figgs said.

Heatherwood resident Heidi Williams suggested a "pocket park" in place of the sewer lagoon that currently exists between Heatherwood and East Briar. She suggested walking and biking trails, a community garden and a dog park as possibilities.

"We're hoping that area can be turned into something other than a big, stinky sewer lagoon," Williams said.

Fellow Heatherwood resident Rob Seel agrees that some type of a park would be nice. However, he said it is important that anything done in that area has safety and security in mind first and foremost.'

City Administrator Rick Cotton said any improvements in Heatherwood will be on hold until a legal matter involving the closure of the lagoon is settled.

Another concern expressed by resident Sophia Cheek involved the closure of the Central-Clemson Indoor Rec Center pool between 3:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. each weekday afternoon. Cotton explained that while the pool was designed for "typical community loading," the Clemson Aquatic Swim team and users from Fike Recreation Center pool, which is currently closed for renovation, has led to the pool doing "three times the volume over what it was designed for."

"We have to shut the pool down to do maintenance or DHEC will shut us down," Cotton said. "Fike is supposed to be back on line by November or December so that should help us."

For those unable to attend Tuesday night's meeting, they will have another opportunity from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., Oct. 11.

Seamon and Whiteside officials will gather all data and make recommendations to Clemson City Council by the end of the year.

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