

Leisure Services Director Talking Points

Section Three of the 2014 Parks and Recreation Master Plan recommended the addition of two positions, a program manager and a park manager. It also elevated the position of the Parks Director to the position I would now call the Leisure Services Director. Since that plan, structures have changed as well as responsibilities of different positions. For example, the Depot and Palace no longer come under the Parks Director, but report directly to the City Manager. What hasn't changed is the need to address programs and have the whole leisure services function under a single position that can coordinate activities between the individual entities. Therefore, I have proposed a new position of Leisure Services Director which reintegrates the functions that have been split off and adds some of the tasks envisioned in the Master Plan for a Program Manager. This position will also take away some functions currently handled by the Marketing position.

A second component of this discussion is the operation of the Depot and possibly the Amphitheater. While the Depot is performing better than it has, there are still complaints about the hours and businesses that have expressed an interest in taking over operations. During the first six months of this fiscal year the Depot has operated at a loss of \$12,879. I would propose we ask for RFP's for operation of the Depot with stipulations that the two current employees should be retained if they want to continue to work there and some kind of tourist information is maintained. We will need some level of compensation to cover utilities, maintenance and insurance. But, even if it is just a break even proposition, we will be ahead on the deal.

Finally we come down to an issue on how we fund the position? It can be funded by a budget increase that could be partially offset by eliminating the losses at the Depot or we can absorb some of the functions of Marketing into the new position and leave others, such as Healthy Tennessee, to the private sector who seem to be doing a pretty good job. That would mean eliminating the Marketing position and doing more activities in cooperation with the private sector. That is a call I have to leave to the Council.

Three issues needed to be decided:

1. Do we want to move ahead with the Leisure Services Director?
2. If so, how do we want to fund it, by a budget increase or eliminating the Marketing position?
3. Do we want to solicit RFPs for taking over the Depot?