

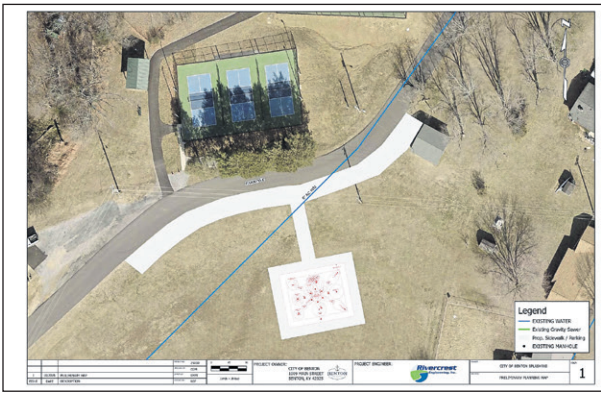
Benton council discusses splash pad

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Several community members attended a Sept. 21 public hearing regarding the potential of a splash pad at Benton's H. H. Lovett Park.

A citizen named Lauren, who brought her daughter, spoke about the splash pad at Mike Miller Park and the enjoyment it brings her daughter. She also spoke about the loss of that space as it closed on Labor Day despite high temperatures remaining.

She shared that she had friends that also enjoy the splash pad and would like one in Benton, but that they were unable to attend the meeting. She also spoke about an interac-



City of Benton

This rendering showing the intended location of the splash pad was shown during the public hearing.

tive splash pad in another city, and how she would like to see something similar.

No other citizens provided comments, but several individuals running for city council and both mayoral candidates were in attendance and contributed to the discussion. City Council candidate Chris Kerrick

asked what the council's current plan was regarding the inclusion of interactive water features.

Mayor Rita Dotson shared that an engineering firm had included several features in the design, but noted that it would have a considerable impact on the price. Dotson's suggestion

was to have the splash pad built in a way that features could be added in the future, as funding allows.

"To try to cut down on some of the cost, we might could go backward and just keep adding to it, like stub up where you can add a feature, you know, maybe a couple of features every year, or one feature every year, or whatever, and just keep expanding it," said Dotson. "But yeah, I'm like her, we need something where children, instead of just running through there and getting wet, maybe having something to do."

The city has begun the process of applying for a Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant for the project. As the grant application has not been finalized, there remains

some discussion about the amount the city should apply for.

The total project, as designed by the engineer, would cost approximately \$785,000. This includes a variety of features on a 46 foot by 56 foot concrete pad.

However, the LWCF Grant requires a 50% match, meaning the city would have to provide approximately \$392,500 for the project.

While the council is generally in agreement on doing the project, there remains discussion about how much funding to commit to it initially. Dotson believes that the required matching funds could be attained through the state's Government Resources Accelerating Needed Transformation or GRANT grant pro-

gram.

While the application window is currently closed, Dotson said she believes that it will reopen in the spring as the state legislature returns to session.

The current plan involves having the splash pad built near the pickleball courts at the 14th Street entrance to the park; however, there was discussion toying with the idea of placing it near the playground at the lower level of the park.

Attendees were asked to fill out a form expressing favor or opposition to the project, which will be added to the grant application.

No formal action was taken during the hearing, but the grant application remains in progress.



October is Alpha Delta Kappa month

During the Sept. Alpha Delta Kappa meeting, Chairperson for the Marshall County Board of Education, Darla Doss, signed a proclamation declaring October Alpha Delta Kappa month.

Contributed

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