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**Keep Carter County Beautiful (KCCB) Board Meeting Minutes**

Chamber Conference Room, 615 W. Elk Avenue, Elizabethton & Zoom

March 26, 2025, at noon

***Board Members Present:*** Lisa Vezzosi, Ed Basconi, Ed Jordan, Caleb Krebs, Mike Simerly, and Dave Nanney (zoom)

***Board Members Absent:*** Ross Garland, Simon & Melinda Maddock, Don Hlavaty, Seth Hice

***Guests Present:*** Mary Ellen Hlavaty

***Call to Order:*** Lisa Vezzosi opened the meeting at 12:06 pm. A quorum was present.

An opening prayer was given by Caleb Krebs and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Lisa Vezzosi

***Approval of today’s agenda:*** A **motion to approve today’s meeting agenda** was made by Mike Simerly seconded by Lisa Vezzosi and **unanimously approved.**

***Approval of last month’s meeting minutes*:** A **motion to approve February 26, 2025, meeting minutes** was made by Ed Jordan, seconded by Lisa Vezzosi and **unanimously approved.**

***Public Comments:*** None

***Next Board Meeting:***The next KCCB board meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, at noon in the Chamber of Commerce Conference Room, 615 West Elk Avenue, Elizabethton, and available by Zoom.

***KCCB Board Membership – Lisa Vezzosi***

Ross Garland has resigned from the KCCB Board of Directors leaving a vacancy.

Lisa Vezzosi said Will Miller is interested in joining the KCCB Board of Directors but was unable to make today’s meeting. Will Miller is with the Carter County Planning and Zoning Department in Storm Management and has participated with and partnered with KCCB on previous cleanup events and projects. Will Miller was invited to attend our next meeting to discuss his interest in joining our organization. The nomination to elect Will Miller to the KCCB board will be discussed at that time.

***KCCB Treasurer Report – Lisa Vezzosi:***

* The February 2025 month-end balance was $27,212.08 with revenues of $1875.00 and $87.32 in expenditures.
* The 3rd quarter funding of $1,875.00 from the City of Elizabethton was received in February and the last quarter funding check is expected in May 2025. There were two expenditures of $71.32 for website maintenance and $16.00 for the Elizabethton High School Art Class project (painting pavers), totaling $87.32 in February.
* March finances will be discussed at the next meeting but so far there have been expenditures for Chamber of Commerce membership dues, KAB Conference reimbursement, KCCB website fees, the purchases of Jersey Mike gift cards and seeds and the KCCB donation to the Elizabethton Compassion Center. There is $20,085.30 remaining in the 2024-2025 budget as of today.
* The paperwork for funding requests was submitted to both Carter County and the City of Elizabethton for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. Lisa Vezzosi and Don Hlavaty presented our request to the Carter County Commissioner Finance Committee on March 10th, and we await their final decision. A presentation to the City of Elizabethton Finance Committee will be scheduled when their Finance Committee is ready to discuss the 2025-2026 budgets.

***Review of Previous Events – Lisa Vezzosi:***

* Tennessee Beautiful 2025 Great American Cleanup Kickoff event was held in Pigeon Forge, TN on March 6-7, and attended by Lisa Vezzosi and Mary Hlavaty. Reimbursement for the KTnB Conference is pending. We were able to connect with Steve Allen, the new TDOT administrator, and discussed updating roadway signage designating new litter fines of $500 minimum. He told us he would be visiting District 17 (northeastern TN) this spring to assess the Hurricane Helene damage, cleanup efforts and he would address sign updates/replacement. He was unaware that littering fine signs had not already been updated throughout the state but was very interested in making this a top priority.
* Caleb Krebs identified a dump site along Siam Road in Valley Forge and reported it to the City of Elizabethton to address.
* The Carter County Emergency Management/FEMA/Overmountain Chapter of Trout Unlimited cleanup of the Doe and South Holston Rivers was held March 8th and was a huge success with 138 volunteers and several large dumpsters filled with trash, tires and other debris. Melinda and Simon Maddock participated.
* The KCCB Milligan Highway Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup was held March 22nd. There were 12 volunteers and 16 bags of trash, a gas tank, cardboard, several yard signs and a windshield were collected and a big thank you to TDOT for disposal.
* The Emergency Management/FEMA Hazardous Waste Hurricane Helene Recovery Cleanup for residential properties in Carter County was held March 17th-20th and Brad Parker contacted KCCB to borrow 28 vests and 36 pairs of gloves which were returned on March 31st. KCCB volunteers were not needed by the contractors, but they appreciated the loan of our safety equipment.

***Discussion of 2025 Proposed Events – Lisa Vezzosi:***

* The Elizabethton Earth Day event was canceled this year due to ongoing FEMA Hurricane Recovery work along the Doe River in the Cat Island/Covered Bridge Park/Downtown Elizabethton areas. Heavy machinery and restoration of the Doe Riverbanks will take another month or more for contractors to finish and we will be notified when KCCB and local volunteers can help with beautification projects.
* Tenneessee Environmental Council Annual Tree Day is March 29th. Native tree saplings in a dozen varieties could be purchased online for a small donation and picked up at local distribution centers for planting on their own property. Lisa Vezzosi and Don & Mary Hlavaty volunteered in KCCBs name to help at the Wild Birds Unlimited location in Johnson City. We picked up tree orders at Evergreen of Johnson City 3/23, sorted the trees into individual orders 3/24 and helped distribute them at the store location on 3/25-26. Over 800 hundred trees were distributed to 110 customers and about 60 additional trees were donated to KCCB for planting in future beautification projects next month.
* Lisa Vezzosi discussed the need to purchase give-a-ways for KCCB events. KTnB sent us 306 coloring books and 600 pencils for the summer events table. We need more KCCB labeled pens and stickers (small blue & small KCCB). A **motion to approve the purchase of pens and stickers within budget** was made by Mike Simerly seconded by Ed Jordan and **unanimously approved.**
* Lisa Vezzosi also discussed the need to purchase more grabbers since 24 grabbers were given away/loaned this month leaving a stock of 56. Mike Simerly noted that Garbo Grabbers are also sold at Rural King in Bristol, VA for a reasonable price – he will investigate and report back on pricing. Lisa Vezzosi said the grabbers we order from Garbo direct are customized with “Keep Carter County Beautiful” label. Another option from Garbo is a Trash Bagger Handle to hold trash bags open easier. It can also be used with a reuseable net for litter collected in waterways, recyclables or to dump trash into another larger trash bag. A **motion to approve the purchase of more grabbers and trash bagger handles (10 plain and 5 with nets) within budget** was made by Ed Jordan, seconded by Mike Simerly and **unanimously approved.**
* The KCCB annual Indexing Survey will be done in May for early June reporting. Everyone has their assignments for the indexing and must turn their results in to Lisa Vezzosi before the 2nd week of June to be logged into the KAB/KTnB sites.
* The Great American Cleanup is scheduled for May10th at 10am along the Tweetsie Trail from Lions Field to Downtown Elizabethton behind the Coffee Company. We will meet at Lions Field and work the trail from both ends. Lisa Vezzosi will arrange for Elizabethton City Sanitation to dispose of trash collected. We will create a flyer and post on the KCCB and Facebook websites.
* The 2nd KCCB Milligan Highway Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup is scheduled for June 14th at 10am. We will meet in the Happy Valley Elementary School parking lot. Lisa will contact TDOT for pickup of the trash collected the following Monday.
* Caleb Krebs has arranged a Stormwater Drain Labeling event for April 12th at 10am. We will meet in downtown Elizabethton in the parking lot across from J’s Corner. Caleb will distribute the metal labels/supplies/safety vests/road signage and conduct a short training session on proper installation of the labels and safety for working along the roadways/curbs. He proposes 4 teams working together for efficiency. We will also create a flyer and post on the KCCB and Facebook websites.
* Ed Basconi was contacted by Lisa Malone from Elizabethton High School proposing another paver painting project at 2 other schools (Harold McCormick & West Side Elementary). She is again requesting funding of $32 ($16 each site) for the project. A **motion to approve the $32 funding still within budget** was made by Ed Basconi, seconded by Mike Simerly and **unanimously approved.**
* Ed Basconi also contacted Jessica Hayes from the Elizabethton High School Environmental AP class regarding making wildflower seed packets and labeling pre-printed seed packets. We have 300 remaining envelopes from last year to create new packets with purchased seeds and students will place a KCCB label on the 1000 pre-printed flower packets. Lisa Vezzosi and Ed Basconi will coordinate the purchase of labels, creating the KCCB logo template and printing. A **motion to approve the purchase of labels still within budget** was made by Ed Basconi, seconded by Lisa Vezzosi and **unanimously approved.**
* The group discussed the planting of Pollinator Gardens in Carter County for spring. We have some new locations (Carter County Landfill, Sycamore Shoals State Park, Elizabethton Parks & Recreation Tetrick Center) as well as previous garden locations (Cook Park, Mill Race, Downtown Elizabethton, Dixon Park). Downtown Elizabethton group has asked KKCB not to plant in 2 previous Main Street locations as they have other city approved plans for the area. Additional sites may be added as Hurricane Helene recovery & cleanup is completed and discussed at the next meeting. Lisa Vezzosi is working with Dave Nanney to coordinate garden plowing/tilling of the existing sites and finalizing plans for proposed new sites. Planting is now tentatively scheduled for May 6th-7th and specific meeting locations/times to be confirmed before the next meeting. We will create a flyer and post on the KCCB and Facebook websites.
* Lisa discussed proposed Elizabethton Parks & Recreation Tetrick Center landscaping and other park restoration projects. Bids are in progress and finalized proposals will be discussed at the next meeting. Dave Nanney has also offered the Tetrick Center as a future site for KCCB Board meetings/events. Lisa Vezzosi will evaluate the Zoom accessibility/meeting rooms in case availability at the Chamber of Commerce becomes unavailable under new management.
* We have contacted Shannon Burchett, superintendent of the Carter County Highway Department, about the installation of the remaining wayfinding signs. He said they are currently too busy with recovery projects to install signs now, but he will coordinate a review plan, including repair/replacement needs for some signs damaged in Hampton. Some generic signage (walking/bike/horse trails, fishing, camping, etc.) could be used within the parks and installed by KCCB. Lisa Vezzosi will follow up and discuss it at the next meeting.
* We are still working on locating a person to maintain the KCCB Facebook pages to relieve Melinda Maddock. Contact Lisa Vezzosi with any prospects.
* The 2025 Covered Bridge Jams have been scheduled from June 7th to August 30th and KCCB will again have a booth opportunity. Lisa Vezzosi asked Dave Nanney to identify which events he would like KCCB to provide coverage and Dave responded at the major events - Bluegrass Festival June 14th, July 4th, Rocking on the Doe August 16th, Covered Bridge Days September 14th-16th.

***New Business***

* Caleb Krebs reported that the Doe and Watauga Rivers are back to normal levels and no longer a hazardous waste risk so groups can safely clean in the rivers and along the banks. He shared a handout on the recovery status and cleanup efforts from Hurricane Helene from FEMA and TDEC entitled “A Tennessee Landowner’s Guide to Streambank Protection and Stabilization”. We will post a link to the information on the KCCB website.Thus far, 40 million cubic yards of trash and debris from been removed from Carter County. Contractors Phillips & Jordan joint project continue to clear debris and restore local areas. He reported he will attend a state agencies joint meeting at the University of Tennessee to plan the second phase on the Doe and Watauga Rivers Recovery Project including riverbank restoration and stabilization with new plantings of trees/bushes/grass. He will report on the plans at our next Board meeting.

***Adjournment:***

* A **motion was made to adjourn the meeting** by Mike Simerly, seconded by Ed Basconi and **unanimously approved.** The meeting was adjourned at 1:28pm.

Submitted by: Mary Ellen Hlavaty, Secretary