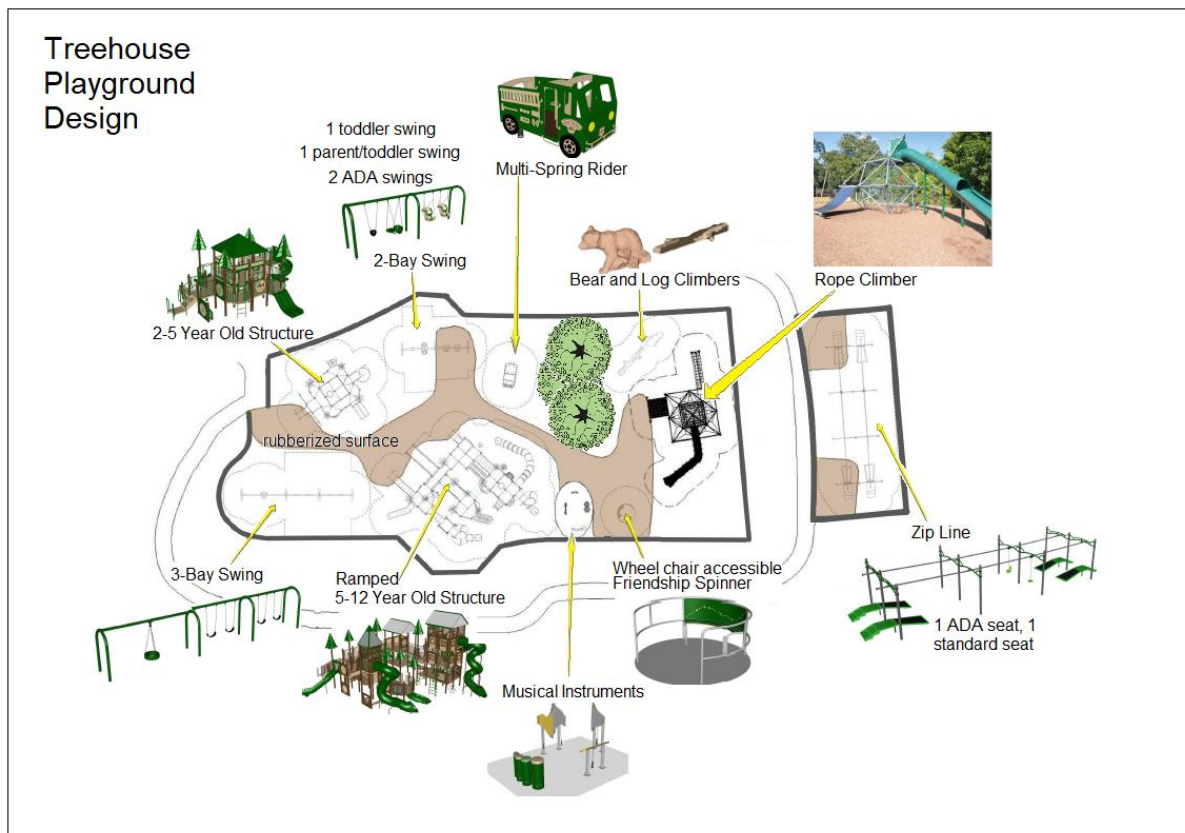




Playground Fever

The City of Fairview Pledges \$600,000 to the Treehouse Playground



Treehouse Playground Plan

It was Christmas and everyone's birthday all rolled into one when City Manager Scott Collins announced at the Board of Commissioners' (BOC) meeting on May 20 that he had found a way to finance most of the Treehouse Playground project from a bond issue. The Fairview community has been fundraising to build a large inclusive playground in Bowie Nature Park to replace a beloved community-built playground that had to be removed in July of 2019 because deterioration of the mostly wooden structure had rendered it unsafe. The first figure Collins mentioned was \$500,000. That number had grown by the June 3rd BOC meeting, when the commissioners unanimously passed a resolution pledging to contribute \$600,000 to the construction of the Treehouse Playground in Bowie Nature Park.

Prior to that BOC meeting, at a May 25th meeting with the Playground Committee and the Friends' Board of Directors, Collins explained that money from the bond is expected to be in the City's bank

account sometime early in 2022. He said, “We’ll set a (fundraising) deadline for the end of December. Whatever money is in the City’s playground fund at that time, plus \$600,000 from the bond, that will be the playground budget. We’ll break ground next spring, and have a grand opening on Saturday, July 2nd, 2022.”

City Finances Improve. How did this happen? The first answer has to do with improving the City’s finances. Four years ago, the City was in a financial crisis. The idea of issuing a bond for any project would have been almost unthinkable. A poor bond rating is a real handicap when it comes to financing city projects, even very necessary projects, let alone a project such as a playground, however much the City’s taxpayers want it. To improve the City’s bond rating, Collins knew he had to tighten the budget and build up a reserve fund.

Collins began a series of belt-tightening measures that has turned the City’s financial situation around. The measures have not always been easy, and Bowie Park and public works have seen quite a few cutbacks. Slowly the City’s reserve fund grew. In September of 2019, the City’s bond rating significantly improved. That was the time when the Playground Committee was first starting to meet, a few months after the demise of the original Treehouse Playground. At one such meeting, Collins suggested that if Fairview’s finances continued to improve, the City might be able to issue a bond to help pay for a new playground in Bowie Park. At that time such a funding possibility was still a long way off. The Playground Committee was looking at literally years of fundraising, and the Friends were looking at years of safeguarding the funds.

Fast-forward to May of 2021. The City’s bond rating had improved to the point where city leaders considered issuing a bond for some much-needed infrastructure projects: road widening and repairs, and a storm water management system. Collins made plans to apply for a bond in September. The prospect of the City being able to fund the new Treehouse Playground was still not feasible.

Covid Relief Funds. Then came the COVID stimulus money. The Federal government pledged to contribute \$2.4 million to the City of Fairview. Collins carefully scrutinized the regulations for this money, and no, the City can’t spend it on a playground. It is intended to go toward infrastructure projects to help rebuild the overall economy... projects such as road widening and repairs and a storm water management system.

Bond issue. With those very necessary projects financed by the stimulus funds, Collins considered an alternative use for the bond he intended to apply for in September, one that the Playground Committee was furiously fundraising for—the Treehouse Playground. With assurance that this expenditure would not put the City back into financial jeopardy, the BOC voted unanimously for the resolution. You can read the entire resolution here: <https://www.fairview-tn.org/2021/05/boc-agenda-06-03-2021/> From here you can download the BOC meeting packet, then scroll down to item 11C.

Goal is in Sight. That \$600,000 could build a playground by itself, but not the one requested by residents in the playground surveys, planned by the Playground Committee, and approved by the BOC. To get to that playground (see plan on page 1), we still have funds to raise. The most recent estimate from Great Southern Recreation, the playground vendor chosen by the Playground Committee, is about \$700,000. Unfortunately that doesn’t include fencing, sidewalk work, a donor wall, and any unforeseen site work that may be involved. It also doesn’t include inflation. Nathan Chance, the representative of Great Southern who is working on this project, said that price increases typically hit at the beginning of each year. Unfortunately the City can’t order the playground until the bond money is in the bank. So, to make sure the entire planned playground can be fully funded, the Playground Committee’s goal is to raise \$200,000 to go with the City’s \$600,000. Currently, there is

about \$110,000 between money in the Friends' Playground Fund, the City's Playground Fund, and all money pledged. And so, the fundraising continues.



The Big Payback: a Big Success



Playground supporters gather in front of Nando's on Cinco de Mayo, the start of The Big Payback.

May 5th at 6:00 pm to May 6th at 6:00 pm was the 24-hour window for The Big Payback. It was the first major community-wide fundraiser for The Treehouse Playground since November of 2019, when Debby Rainey and Derek Burks organized Pork in the Park. That was the first kickoff, and there were some funds raised after that, but then there was a huge disruption caused by the Covid pandemic, which made in-person events impossible.

The Big Payback is an online event, open to nonprofits that are vetted by the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee. Some in-person events may be conducted in conjunction with it. This made it perfect for the time when the country was starting to emerge from Covid restrictions. The Friends have participated in The Big Payback for 5 years, and they voted to dedicate all proceeds from this year's Big Payback to the Playground Fund.

Playground Committee members Megan Grimaldi, Gail Cherry, and Sherry Wright (who is also on the board of Directors of the Friends) made it their single-minded goal to "Blow last year's numbers out of the water," as Wright put it. (The Friends took in about \$1,200 through The Big Payback in 2020.)

They studied the Big Payback prize structure, which are incentive funds provided by the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, and decided to focus on encouraging playground supporters to donate at certain times when prizes could maximize their donations. Grimaldi and Wright created several Facebook Live events during the Big Payback, updating playground supporters on the running total and on upcoming prize opportunities.

With the event starting on Cinco de Mayo, Nando's Mexican Restaurant offered to hold a live fundraising event in conjunction with the online event. Armando Cano, the owner of Nando's, offered to donate 10% of all proceeds for the day to the Playground Fund. That money went through the Friends' Big Payback account, so it could also help toward earning prize money. The next morning, Fairview Nutrition hosted a fundraising event, donating 10% of its proceeds to the Playground Fund. In the end, the Big Payback earned \$30,875 in donations, including \$7,062 in prize money. The Big Payback will release the funds some time before the end of June.

State Farm Initiatives: Community Involvement Needed



The State Farm team led by agent Joel Moenkhoff

State Farm Insurance agent Joel Moenkhoff attended the Playground Committee meeting on May 3rd to let the Committee know about two philanthropic initiatives by State Farm that could help the Treehouse Playground project. Both involve community participation.

Neighborhood Assist. The first is called the Neighborhood Assist program. State Farm contributes \$25,000 to each of 40 different causes per year, from across all states where the company operates. The application process has three phases. Phase one began on June 2nd at 12:00 noon Central Time (Fairview's time zone). The Neighborhood Assist grant portal opened at that precise minute, and stayed open until the first 2,000 applications had been accepted.

It was a race. Applicants were encouraged to prepare for the big day by typing answers to questions ahead of time and preparing to copy and paste into the website, and also to upload pictures to present the cause to the public. The Friends' cause was the Treehouse Playground. As soon as the grant portal opened, requests began pouring in. The Friends got their request in by 12:16, and the portal said there were 440 slots left at that time. The Treehouse Playground had passed phase 1! By 12:45 the 2,000th request was in, and the portal shut down.

The next phase is up to State Farm. They take those 2,000 requests and score them to choose the top 200 finalists. That process happens between June 2nd and the week of August 9th, when the 200 finalists will be notified. The finalists' causes will be uploaded to www.neighborhoodassist.com where the next phase will take place.

The third and final phase is the voting. Those 200 applicants have 10 days, from August 18 to August 27, to encourage their supporters to vote for their cause. Anyone over age 18 who is a resident of the United States may participate by going to www.neighborhoodassist.com and voting for their favorite cause. The great thing about this voting is that it's perfectly legal to vote multiple times. In fact, each person may vote as many as 10 times per day, every day for those 10 days. The 40 causes with the most votes each receive \$25,000 from State Farm toward their cause.

Last year, one of the winners was the Smyrna Rotary Club, which was raising money for an inclusive playground. This indicates our inclusive playground project is an appropriate cause for this program, so Treehouse Playground has as good a chance as any to qualify for phase 2.

Stay tuned, we may be asking for your votes soon!!

Quotes for Good. The other State Farm initiative is called "Quotes for Good." If anyone requests auto, fire, life or health insurance quotes from State Farm agent Joel Moenkhoff between now and August 31, and mentions Quotes for Good and Friends of Bowie Nature Park Playground Fund, then State Farm will donate \$10 to the playground. No purchase is necessary, just a request for a quote. The person making the request can be a new customer or a current State Farm customer.

To participate, contact Joel Moenkhoff's office to ask for a quote. You can call his office at 615-266-2755 during business hours, 9 am to 5 pm Monday-Friday. See his Facebook page at www.facebook.com/insurewithjoel for more ways to contact his office.

The Fairview Community Contributes to the Playground

The Playground Committee is selling merchandise: T-shirts, hats, stress balls and bracelets, and promoting the yard sign campaign, which was an initiative started and financed by Commissioner Brandon Butler. Several Playground Committee and Friends members manned booths on June 5th for Super Sign Saturday at the Fairview Ball Park, Walmart, Tractor Supply, and Meseck Chiropractic. The Dynamic Duo of Sherry Wright and Gail Cherry, enthusiastic Playground Committee members, are encouraging Fairview businesses to contribute as well.

Fairview's business and civic groups: At the same meeting Fairview's Board of Commissioners voted to contribute \$600,000 to the playground, they also voted to adopt a recognition schedule for different levels of donations of \$500 or more. The names of significant donors will be put on a plaque on the playground. The levels approved by the Commissioners are as follows: Support Donors, \$500-\$2,499; Friend of the Playground, \$2,500-4,999; Bronze Sponsors, \$5,000-\$9,999; Silver

Sponsors, \$10,000-\$24,999; Gold Sponsors, \$25,000 or more. Please go to <https://www.facebook.com/Bowie-Playground-Build-100357648050403> to see some more of our donors. Please thank them when you see them or when you do business with them.

Our largest single donation so far is \$10,000 from Walmart. We have also received a donation of \$5,000 from Dr. Wendel, and \$2,600 from David Gross. We have pledges from First Bank for \$5,000, from Regent homes for \$5,000, and the American Legion Post 248 for \$2,500. A more complete list will be in a future issue of The Loblolly Times. Thank you, Fairview! This town is meeting the challenge!



Walmart Corporation donated \$10,000 to the Playground Fund, in addition to \$500 from our local Walmart store.



The American Legion hands over a giant check



First Bank playground fundraiser: Customers vote with donation money for their favorite flowerpot decorated by a bank employee.



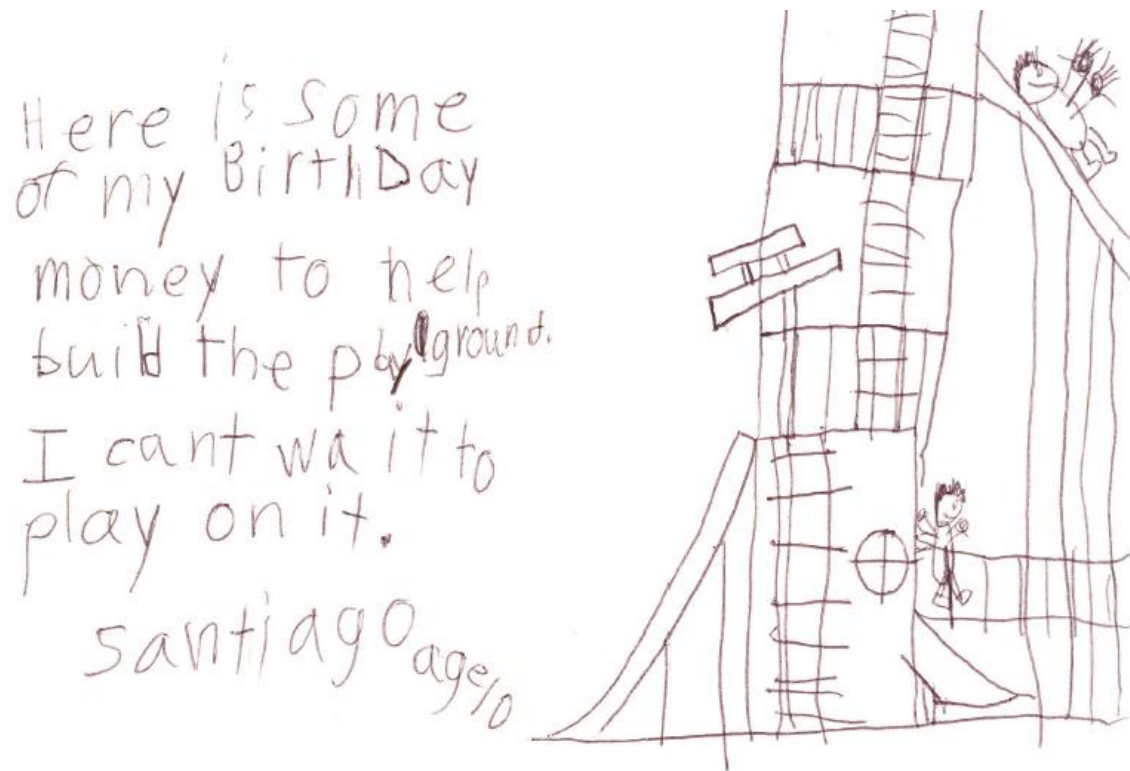
The Dynamic Duo: Gail Cherry and Sherry Wright model Treehouse Playground T-shirts. They have been enthusiastic and unstoppable in their effort to get this playground funded!

Children have been contributing to the Treehouse Playground fund as well. During The Big Payback, several children distributed postcards at Nando's to encourage donations from the crowd. During Super Sign Saturday on June 5, children put dollars into the donation jars and expressed excitement about the playground design.



7-year-old artist Zoey Kerwell donated money from an art sale to the Playground Fund.

One boy mailed his birthday money along with this picture:



Thank you, Santiago! See you on the playground!

Upcoming Playground Events



Nando's is doing it again! Take your dad to Nando's for Father's Day and support the playground! Nando's will contribute 10% of all proceeds on Sunday, June 20 to the Friends of Bowie Nature Park Playground Fund. Thank you Nando's!

Independence Day celebration. Fourth of July comes on the third in Fairview! The City is having its Independence Day celebration from 3:00 pm-9:30 pm on July 3rd. It is free and open to the public.

Food trucks and some children's activities will be in the area near City Hall. Nashville School of Rock will play, and Jack FM will broadcast live during the event. The band Rubiks Groove will take the stage at 6:00 pm. Fireworks begin at 9 pm and should be visible all over town. The Playground Committee will set up at near Nando's and Goin' Postal to sell T-shirts, hats and other branded items, and to promote the Treehouse Playground yard sign campaign.

Groves Property Update

The Groves development, just north of Bowie Nature Park, got zoning approval from the Board of Commissioners (BOC) on Thursday, May 6. The plan that passed is considerably different from the initial plan for the Groves property that was first proposed in November of 2020. The initial plan had 13 backyards nearly adjacent to the park boundary with only a 25' buffer between the park and the back fence. It may seem counter-intuitive, but a road is a better neighbor to a park than a string of backyards. A road delineates park from non-park properties and keeps people from treating the park as their back yard. The plan that was approved has a 75' buffer and a road separating the park from the rest of the development.

Community concerns. A big concern expressed by members of the community about this property is that most of it is uphill from Bowie Park, and from the Cox Run subdivision and other properties located to the north and east of the Groves parcel. Rainwater runs off developed land far more readily than off of fields and forests, unless something is done to mitigate the runoff. Excessive runoff could damage trails and wildlife habitat in the park, and cause flooding and erosion in nearby neighborhoods. Roadways, with their adjacent ditches, can help direct runoff to containment ponds or other mitigation methods, so there is somewhat less concern about runoff into the park with this latest plan than with the original. The project still needs to obtain storm water permits, which require developers to make sure there is no increased storm water running off the developed land than off the site before it was developed.

Like the original plan, the final plan has a trail connecting it to Bowie Park. There are still concerns on the park side about the density of the development, maintenance and of patrolling the new park entrance, light and noise pollution.

Changes in response to community concerns. The changes to this plan so far were made in response to concerns voiced by members of the community, including Friends of Bowie Park. A group of citizens from the Cox Run subdivision, which borders the north side of the Groves property, gathered an impressive amount of information that they used to request these and other changes to the development plan. The changes that were made mostly benefit the park.

The main concession on the Cox Run side was increased lot size bordering their neighborhood. The residents are still concerned about runoff, noise, and traffic. The developers and the commissioners who voted for the development have assured the Cox Run residents that their concerns about additional runoff would be addressed as the development goes through the permitting process. Residents continue to be concerned and point to other developments that have resulted in downstream water damage in spite of being fully permitted. Also, the developers did not make changes that would address the group's traffic

concerns. For the first 4 phases of the Groves property development, the main way in and out of the new neighborhood will be on Cox Run Drive, which is likely to be especially problematic during construction.



Town Center Proposed Adjacent to Bowie

A new development is being proposed for the property to the east of the Groves’ parcel, also adjacent to Bowie Nature Park: A Fairview Town Center. The proposal was presented at a joint work session of the Planning Commission and the Board of Commissioners (BOC) on June 8th. Most of the meeting participants seemed excited about the project. According to Commissioner Brandon Butler, “The Town Center of Fairview has been the number one priority since they performed the first Comprehensive Plan in the late 90’s. An overwhelming response both then and a couple of years ago for the 2040 plan, spoke to the desire to have a true community town center area...That makes this one of the most impactful developments to ever be proposed to our community.”

The property is a 52 acre parcel with some frontage on Highway 100. Residents have probably seen the large for sale sign on Highway 100. The current owner is the Abernathy family, and it is under contract with Regent Homes, who would be the developer and builder. They are also the builder for the Groves property development, and they have built homes in Berry Farms and Westhaven in Franklin. Locally, they are building the Otter Creek and Audubon Cove subdivisions.

The main presentation was given by Greg Tidwell, of Smith Gee Studio, an architectural and urban planning firm that has contracted with Regent Homes to design the development. Smith Gee Studio's other master plan projects include the Berry Farms town center in Franklin, Lenox Village in Davidson County south of Nashville, and The Gulch in Nashville. After the presentation, Regent Homes' owner David McGowan spoke to the group. Planning Commission members and City Commissioners then asked questions of both men. To see the entire presentation, click here. <https://youtu.be/Bvqka4xEWhM>

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN



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What's included. The proposal includes amenities such as a town square, a paved greenway that connects to Bowie Park's Perimeter Trail along the TVA power line, plus several other public spaces. This plan shows three direct access trails to Bowie Park from the development, including the greenway.

The plan is a mixed use area. In its current iteration, it includes 534 housing units, ranging from multifamily dwellings to townhouses to $\frac{1}{4}$ acre lots with single family homes where the property borders the Groves parcel. It includes 15,180 square feet of retail space, 17,160 square feet of restaurant space, and 50,160 square feet of office space. It also includes 28,710 square feet of community facilities. Maintenance of all outdoor areas other than road right-of-ways would be through an association. As McGowan said, "No one maintains their own grass...everything will be maintained by the association."

Unlike the first version of the Groves plan, this one does not have back yards adjacent to the park, avoiding all the problems that situation brings. There is a buffer that includes a dirt path

parallel to the park boundary, and a road parallel to that, between the park and the rest of the development. A citizen who attended the presentation asked how wide the buffer would be along the park boundary, and was told 40 feet. This is considerably less than the 75 foot buffer in the plan for the Groves property. Also unlike the Groves development, most of this property is downhill from the park, so runoff into the park will be minimal. Storm water drainage will be managed with a combination of underground retention and above ground detention.

During the presentation, the developers emphasized the preliminary nature of the plan. At this point it is a concept drawing, with details to come later. It is also apparent that it will be developed over time, and in time the needs of the community are likely to change, and the plan can change with it.

The plan shows that the road along the south of the Town Center will connect to the road system in the Groves development, which will give residents of the Groves development an additional access point to their neighborhood. Whether that would increase or decrease traffic through the Cox Run subdivision would be a matter of speculation at this point. Other roads and the paved greenway are poised to connect to future developments to the north of the property.

Part of this development, the part closer to Highway 100, are to be connected to the Dickson sewer system, and the part closest to the Groves development will be connected to the step sewer system in the Groves parcel. This area of Fairview is currently zoned for Westwood Elementary School and Fairview Middle and High Schools. With the density of this development plus all the other developments in both the building and the planning stages in Fairview, Williamson County will have to address the need for expanded school capacity soon.

This proposal has numerous steps to go before it is approved. The current zoning for the property is R40, or one acre residential lots. The developer is seeking Town Center Overlay District zoning. It is one of the City's highest density zoning categories, and is designed for a Town Center development such as this.

Park impact. This development so close to Bowie Park presents both concerns and potential benefits for the park. The concerns are the same as with any development, particularly one with such high density: Noise and light pollution, and the disruptive effects of so many people living, shopping, and working so close to wildlife populations. The benefit comes in recognizing and highlighting Bowie Park as the focal point and identity for Fairview, which helps to ensure future maintenance of the park by the City. It also brings in more residents to help support the park with tax dollars, and potentially with donations and volunteer hours.

The three additional entrances to the park can likewise be a benefit or a curse, depending on how well the entrance areas are maintained and how well the trails are patrolled. The Town Center side of the entrance areas may be maintained by an owner association, but on the park side, the City would be responsible. Current staffing levels, with one part-time ranger, a park director and a maintenance worker would not be able to keep up with the additional park use.

The classic conservationists' dilemma is at work here. On the one hand, the natural values of forest and wildlife habitat are easily disrupted by human activities. On the other hand, if we want a natural area to be preserved into the future, humans have to love it enough to want to

preserve it...and the only way people will love it is for them to have access to it. The solution is to give humans access in a wise and well-managed way, so that Bowie Park can be loved, celebrated and highlighted enough to be preserved without being loved to death. That is a delicate balance that needs to be calibrated and re-calibrated over time.

Calendar Announcements

Nando's Restaurant Playground Support Day: Celebrate Father's Day, **Sunday, June 20, at Nando's**. 10% of all proceeds go to the Treehouse Playground. Hours are **11:00 am to 10:00 pm**.

Fairview Board of Commissioners Meeting: The Fairview Board of Commissioners is ultimately in charge of Bowie Nature Park. They meet at Fairview City Hall on the first and third Thursdays of each month at **7:00 pm**. The next meeting is **July 1**. Meeting agendas can be accessed at <https://www.fairview-tn.org/category/meeting-agenda-posts/> . Masks are no longer required.

City of Fairview Independence Day Celebration: **Saturday, July 3rd at Fairview City Hall**. Includes fireworks, food trucks, children's activities and live music. **3:00 pm-9:30 pm**. Fireworks begin at 9.

Fairview Parks and Landscaping Meeting: This is the citizen's advisory board that deals with all of Fairview's parks including Bowie, as well as the tree ordinance and Fairview's Tree City status. They meet on the **first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm in City Hall**. The next meeting is **July 6th**. The public is welcome. Masks are no longer required.

Friends of Bowie Park Member Meeting: Our next meeting will be on **Saturday, July 10 at 9:00 am**. We will meet in-person at the **Bowie Park Nature Center** for the first time since Covid.

Fairview Planning Commission: The Fairview City Planning Commission meets on the second Tuesday of each month. Its next meeting will be on **Tuesday, July 13, from 7-9 p.m. at Fairview City Hall**. Masks are no longer required.

The mission of the Friends of Bowie Nature Park is to preserve, protect, promote and enhance Bowie Nature Park for use by the general public as a nature reserve and park. To become a member of the Friends or to make a donation, please visit our website at <http://www.friendsofbowienaturepark.org/> .

To unsubscribe, please email eileen.brogan@comcast.net with your request.