

# MAYOR MATHIS ANNOUNCES HIAWASSEE MAYOR'S PARK PUBLIC HEARING ON NOVEMBER 17, 2015 AT 5:30 P.M.

Barbara Mathis, Mayor of Hiwassee, has announced a Public Hearing for November 17, 2015 at 5:30 PM to update the Public on plans for the new Mayor's Park. At the meeting, the City Manager will review Park Concept Plans, Grant Requests, and Initial Facilities Costs. The City will seek public input on park priorities. The Hearing will take place at the Hiwassee City Hall, 50 River Street.

As previously announced, the City of Hiwassee has obtained a long term lease from the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) for approximately Six (6) acres on beautiful Lake Chatuge. This area adjoins the City and is dedicated for a new Mayor's Park. TVA will also be donating \$15,000.00 to the City for Park facilities.

The City will sublease approximately one and one-half (1&1/2) acres to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for state construction of a Public Boat Ramp, Boat Dock and Parking. The Ramp, Dock and Parking are being built at state expense. This will leave the City with approximately four (4) acres of greenspace and woodlands for the city facilities. The City plans to maximize the property's greenspace and utilize the existing woodlands as a natural buffer for Lake Chatuge.

Mayor Mathis stated, "Hiwassee has no parks or playgrounds despite the demand for recreational facilities. A City Park was identified as a priority in the City's 2010 Comprehensive Plan and funding for a park was overwhelmingly approved in a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) Referendum."

"The City is actively seeking partners and sponsors to construct the pavilion and bathrooms, walking trails, and children's playgrounds," added the City Manager, Rick Stancil. The City Council has initially budgeted One Hundred and Twenty Five Thousand (\$125,000.00) in SPLOST proceeds for the Mayor's Park. TVA has committed \$15,000.00 and the City is seeking over \$150,000.00 in other state, federal and private grants to fund the Park.

The City believes that the new park with lake access, boating facilities and mixed use activities will serve as an economic anchor and attract visitors. Currently, boaters leave the city to put boats on the Lake and city businesses lose equipment, gasoline and food sales. The City has hosted and supported several lake activities including college bass tournaments and fishing events. However, these events have taken place outside the town due to Hiwassee's lack of boating access.

The Park will target recreational opportunities for at least three under-served populations in Hiwassee. The City recognizes that youth obesity is a national problem. The City is seeking to promote healthy youth lifestyles by promoting a safe place for children to play. Many of our older citizens have requested an area wherein they can exercise or walk in a safe and secure location. Our seniors want an area where they can simply sit, relax and enjoy the beauty of the lake. Handicapped residents have sought lake access for fishing. Handicapped piers and wheel chair access throughout the park are critical part of the concept plan. This park will be multi-functional and is intended to unite all three groups identified - youth, elderly and handicapped - and provide recreational opportunities for ages two to eighty.

The announced public hearing will give city officials and staff the chance to brief the public on the park status and develop a priority list for park elements. This Hearing will involve local business supporting the project, the Towns County Chamber of Commerce, advocacy organizations, local school representatives and students. Local agencies for health and recreations have also been invited.

For further information, please contact Rick Stancil, City Manager, at 706-896-2203, ext. 3 or email at [citymanger@hiwasseeega.gov](mailto:citymanger@hiwasseeega.gov).

