

MINUTES

City Council Parks, Trails, & Recreation Committee

Wednesday, February 20, 2019, 3:30 PM
Administrative Conference Room at City Hall

Members Present: Gary Daniel, Chair, Council Member
Maureen Copelof, Vice-Chair, Council Member
Jim Fatland, City Manager
Daniel Cobb, Planning Director
David Lutz, Public Works Director

Absent: Keenan Smith, Citizen Member
Colin Izzard, Citizen Member
Ryan Olson, Citizen Member
Cody Owen, Citizen Member
Gregory Copeland, At-Large Member
Jared Mull, County Representative, Ex Officio

Staff Present: Aaron Bland, Planning Department
Tom Whitlock, Deputy Finance Director
Bobby Cooper, Fire Chief
Phil Harris, Police Chief
Denise Hodsdon, Executive Assistant

Guests: Keith Arbogast, Brevard Music Center
Torry Nergart, Conserving Carolina

Media: Matt McGregor, Transylvania Times

A. Welcome & Call to Order

Committee Chairman Gary Daniel welcomed all in attendance and called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM.

B. Certification of Quorum

Quorum was certified by Executive Assistant Denise Hodsdon.

C. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Ms. Copelof, seconded by Mr. Fatland to approve the agenda as presented.
Motion carried unanimously.

D. Approval of Minutes from January 16, 2019 Meeting

Motion by Ms. Copelof, seconded by Mr. Fatland to approve the minutes of the January 16, 2019 meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

E. Brevard Music Center Trail/Sidewalk Update

Mr. Fatland reported that since City Council adopted the resolution back in August to complete the trail within three years, the Planning Staff has met with the Board of Education regarding an easement coming out of the High School. We have also met with Brevard College for a public easement through their campus. Subsequent to those two meetings, the Brevard Music Center has met with Planning Staff for the same concept of providing a public easement through their campus for the trail system.

Mr. Cobb explained that the Music Center's masterplan was adopted in 2009 and part of the plan was the construction of a sidewalk system within the entire property. Between 2009 and 2016 they accomplished a lot of things that were in the list of conditions associated with the original approval. One item they wanted to talk about in amending their permit was the modification of the requirements for a paved trail system within their property. At the time, when the ordinance was initially approved, the intention was to have all of the sidewalks paved. Given that it is a private campus and everything is on private property, it didn't make a whole lot of sense to build those to City standards and then dedicate it to the City because it is not connecting anything public. The Music Center's request was to make those sidewalks out of something other than concrete and the Music Center would maintain them themselves. The one exception to that was to have a sidewalk connecting Andante Lane to Probart Street that would connect to the City's sidewalk into the Music Center. The deadline for that was set at summer of 2019 as originally adopted in 2009. When they amended their application in 2017 that deadline remained the same. That was when the modification to amend the surface materials was changed. With the construction of the newest facility at the Music Center, we have spoken with them about the possibility of building the sidewalk now as part of that, given that the deadline is coming up. In that discussion, we sat down with Music Center representatives and their designer to brainstorm ways to make this connection happen to be in compliance with this list of conditions, but also something that makes sense for the City and the for the Music Center. The idea was floated that since we are trying to build the bike path up to Bracken Preserve within the next 3 years, and one of the legs actually runs next to the Music Center, why not try to accomplish two goals at the same time and get the bike path built to connect downtown to the Bracken Preserve, and also satisfy the Music Center's requirement to connect the campus to Probart Street. They have requested an extension to December 31, 2021 on their requirement to build the sidewalk so they would have time to explore this possibility.

Mr. Cobb explained that is what was presented to City Council to pass Monday night. He said it is nothing more than a timeline extension. City Council deferred it to this Committee to talk about the potential alignment and how that would work and if it

makes sense to do that. At some point this will need to go back to City Council so that the deadline can either be extended or not.

Mr. Daniel expressed concern that the proposal as he reads it is that we would simply complete the bike path to Bracken Mountain. He asked to see the site plan from their application, showing what was originally proposed. Mr. Cobb explained that what was originally proposed was a sidewalk going up to the dam, along the dam into the woods and then up to the main part of the campus to the new facility and Building 81. Mr. Daniel said the City put in the sidewalk at our expense from the City limits to the Music Center with the understanding that, not only could the students walk safely into town, but that the people who live in town could walk to a show at the Music Center. Now when you get to the campus for a show, you are walking in the street and there is constant traffic. He added that there is an expectation that there be a path, it doesn't have to be a paved sidewalk, but that there is a path to the auditorium and that would not be negotiable if we change the ordinance to allow this.

Mr. Cobb said that right now the ordinance has the sidewalk going up Andante Lane but the concern that we heard was the feasibility of getting the sidewalk at that specific location. So the thought was that maybe it does make sense to not have it right next to the road; maybe it makes sense to have it come in somewhere else and then wind its way up through the campus. Mr. Cobb turned it over to Keith Arbogast to get his perspective on the Music Center's position.

Mr. Arbogast said that it was his understanding with the original ordinance in 2009 that we would simply connect to our existing trail system that we have on our campus. He noted that it is a summer camp so a lot of it is gravel and mulch. The center piece of our campus is the WPA used for the performances, which we invite the public to participate in. That piece of it is on Lake Milner and most of the pathways around it are paved and have access to the parking lots, which is usually how most people come to the performances. Some people do choose to walk and when you come onto our campus on Andante Lane, you are basically using the trail system that is for our staff and students. It doesn't really have a public component to it. Where we lack right now is to the dam. That section getting from the road to the dam is not complete and you have to walk on the road, which is what our students do right now. When you get to the dam, we do have a path there that runs along the lake and that pulls you into our pathway system.

Ms. Copelof expressed concern that it would not be a paved sidewalk. She pointed out that when people go to the Music Center it is for a performance. People are dressed up to come to a classical music performance and these folks are not necessarily hikers. Walking on a sidewalk versus walking on a mulched or gravel path that goes through the woods is very different. She added that it is dark and I think a sidewalk going up Andante Lane is the safest way for those people to be walking back to downtown. I'd be concerned about what the plan is and I'd have to really see a reason as to why we would stop a plan that has been on the books for 10 years.

Mr. Arbogast said what we're trying to do with this extension is to work with the City. If the City wants access to WPA for a performance, then let's talk about the best way to do that. Right now as we are building the 400-seat concert hall on Lake Milner and this will change how things work and operate in the future, so it might be nice to wait a year, see how that impacts pedestrian traffic or road traffic and see what we can do with that in place. We are just asking for an extension of time to assess these things. He added that we're not asking to change any other element of the ordinance except the date. He said if the City already has a plan to have walking traffic come up Music Camp Road and that actually ends up being a better fit for our campus and for the City to come into the WPA entrance, I think we should look at that. If for some reason, that's not feasible and it doesn't meet the City's needs, then we basically go back to where we are currently, which is a sidewalk up Andante.

Mr. Daniel said he has no problem with extending the deadline but would want the extension to have language clarifying the expectations. During discussion, Mr. Fatland suggested that perhaps the extension for the overall plan could be given with the condition that the portion from Probart Street to the dam be built by June of next year. Following further discussion, Ms. Copelof moved and Mr. Fatland seconded to forward to City Council for recommended approval that the modification to the Music Center's request be approved with the stipulation that the portion from Probart Street up Andante Lane to the dam be made a sidewalk and completed by June of 2020 and that the completion date for the rest of the construction of the pedestrian access be extended until December 31, 2021 as requested. Vote on the motion was unanimous.

F. Bracken Mountain Trails Update

Mr. Cobb reported that the RFP was put out to local trail builders to build the Ridge Trail which is about 1.2 to 1.3 miles of new trail. He said we have a few loose ends to tie up with the conservation easement but we expect that to be resolved in the next week or so. Bids are due Friday and we hope to have a recommendation to Mr. Fatland within the next 10 days or so. That work will be in concert with Conserving Carolina and the trail builder we select. Volunteers will help finish the trail like we did in 2012 with the first trail on Bracken. Torry Nergart of Conserving Carolina informed the Committee that there will be a media push in the next edition of *Transylvania Times* to recruit volunteers to that program.

Mr. Lutz and Chief Cooper reported that they have been discussing a numerical trail marking system and how best to manage that. There will be waypoint markers and they will use existing blazes and markers and put numbers on them. It was the consensus of the Committee members to go ahead and proceed with that.

G. Skate Park Update

Mr. Cobb reported that the designs were approved last week to begin construction on the ramps. When Mr. Dinkins went to get the building permit, they asked him about

ADA compliance so we're making some changes to show ADA parking spaces and the hard surface from the parking spaces back to the skate ramps themselves. We should have those designs by the end of the week and Mr. Dinkins can go back sometime next week for a building permit so he can begin construction when appropriate. The only other question is a fence along the property line. The property owner has asked if the City would be willing to put up a fence to separate the house from the bike path and skate park. Mr. Daniel said he is not sure why there is a need for a fence for their property and he would be interested to know how much that would cost. Mr. Cobb will get more information and prices.

H. Continued Discussion of Relocation of Bike Path along Asheville Highway

Mr. Daniel reminded everyone that this discussion came out of concerns raised by citizens who feel that the stretch along Asheville Highway in front of several businesses is dangerous. Mr. Cobb reported that the Committee's recommendation to move that portion of the bike path off the highway and go behind the businesses in order to avoid a lot of driveway cuts will require obtaining easements from approximately six property owners. Mr. Cobb said one thing to consider is that there are plans to redevelop the Sagebrush property and they have agreed to build a City street with a sidewalk back there so we could very easily ask them to build a bike path instead. The next step is to work on an estimated cost and prepare a budget to take to City Council. Chief Harris distributed a handout and discussed ways to apply key features of the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) philosophy to this new section to take away potential for danger.

Motion by Ms. Copelof, seconded by Mr. Fatland to direct staff to contact the owners to obtain easements and figure out a budget for this alternate bike path off of N. Broad Street in order to get a proposal with timeline and cost estimate that can be presented to City Council. Vote on the motion was unanimous.

I. Bike Rack Map

Mr. Bland presented a map depicting existing bike racks and possible locations for additional racks. Some suggested additional sites were Lumberyard, Oskar Blues, Blue Ridge Bakery, Boys & Girls Club, another one at Ingles, Squatch Bikes, DD Bullwinkle's and other locations along East Main Street, Pescado's shopping center, Food Lion shopping center, Rec Department, French Broad Community Center, Silvermont, the future Mary C. Jenkins Community Center and the Skate Park location in Tannery Park. He said we do have a small budget for these bike friendly items. Mr. Fatland suggested that the additional downtown bike racks could be paid for from the Downtown Master Plan Fund. It was decided that the first approach would be for staff to touch base with the local businesses identified and report back to the Committee.

J. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.


Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled City Council Parks, Trails, and Recreation Committee meeting will be on Wednesday, March 20, 2019 at 3:30 PM.

X 

Gary Daniel,
Chair, Council Member

Minutes Approved: March 13, 2019

X 

Denise Hodsdon
Executive Assistant