

Brevard/Transylvania County
Ecusta Trail Advisory Board

Date: January 25, 2023

Location: City Hall Council Chambers

Members:

- Maureen Copelof, Mayor (absent)
- ✓ Mac Morrow, Council Member
- ✓ Larry Chapman, County Commissioner
- ✓ Addison Bradley, NC Cooperative Extension Dir (via Zoom)
- ✓ Mark Tooley, Conserving Carolina
- ✓ John Ditillo, Friends of Ecusta Trail
- Billy Parrish, Blue Zones Project (absent)
- ✓ Lauren Wise, At-Large Member (via Zoom)
- Chuck McGrady, Henderson County Advisory Board Chair, Ex Officio (absent)
- ✓ Wilson Cooper, City Manager, Ex Officio
- ✓ Paul Ray, Planning Director, Ex Officio
- ✓ Meredith Carli, At-Large Member (via Zoom)
- ✓ Clark Lovelace, Tourism Development Authority (arrived at 3:34pm)

Staff:

- ✓ Katherine Buzby, City Planner

Guests:

- ✓ Steve Williams, NCDOT (via Zoom)
- ✓ Jonathan Rich, Transylvania Times
- ✓ Matt Revis, Ecusta Trail Talk Newsletter
- ✓ Tad Fogel, Friends of Ecusta Trail
- ✓ Nory LeBrun
- ✓ Mike Zollo
- ✓ Rebekah Robinson, Conserving Carolina
- ✓ Kristin Cozza, Conserving Carolina

A. Welcome & Call to Order

Committee Co-Chair Mack Morrow welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 3:29 pm.

B. Certification of Quorum

Quorum was certified by Committee Co-Chair Mack Morrow.

C. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Mr. Chapman, seconded by Mr. Tooley to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

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D. Approval of Minutes from December 28, 2022 Meeting

Motion by Mr. Tooley, seconded by Mr. Lovelace to approve the meeting minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

F. Updates

1. Conserving Carolina- Henderson Co approved the 90% design plan for the 6 miles of the trail. They are starting the bidding & permitting process. Construction is scheduled to break ground in June 2023 and hopefully complete that 6-mile section by the end of the year. The price cost estimates are not completed yet. The work at removing the trestles will start next week on February 1st. The contractor will be recycling the rails and will donate the usable cross-ties to the Cradle of Forestry for the Logging Train they have. Kristin Cozza is the new Trails & Greenway Coordinator w/CC.
2. Planning Department- Needs a copy of the Scope of Work from Conserving Carolina for the RR trestle removals as floodplain development permits are required for this scope. Traffic Planning & Design (TPD) has met with the planning dept already and walked a small section of the trail and they have been advised and will research about the bird watching station, the Brownfield Agreements, and will walk the entire length of the coordinator on January 31st. Public Works has gone with UTVs and cleared the entire path, there was 5 sections that were obstructed. We are working through the structures on how our partnerships will look like now that DOT is not being our applicant for the RAISE grant. TPD is looking into if the FLAP grant can be used for the design of signs right now.
3. Transylvania County- They have not received any new complaints. The mayor will be at their next meeting to ask for support in getting a resolution passed for a Letter of Support. The County Commissioners have reviewed this board's meeting minutes so are up to speed on the process.
4. Tourism Development Authority- They are drafting a Letter of Support for the City (application deadline is mid-February). In addition to the \$1M local funding pledge, the TDA board is open to any specific requests for shovel-ready elements connected to development of the Ecusta Trail. Reach out to Clark if interested. When asked about state-mandated spending requirements, Clark indicated that the state requires that 100% of occupancy tax revenue be spent on tourism with a minimum of 2/3 spent directly on marketing and promotion and the rest on other tourism-related projects. There has been some chatter among various groups recently about pushing for a change in legislation to allow counties to move to a 50% requirement..
5. Henderson County- They have many developments starting that is focused on the trail like housing and food stands and will share with the board as information becomes available. There is a need to get everyone together to discuss branding, wayfinding, signs, and lettering to make sure both sides of the trail are consistent.
6. NCDOT- The TPD cannot be paid for work until the funding is released and it has been requested but still pending. The estimated date is February 2023.

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7. City of Brevard- Plugging away at the RAISE Grant.
8. Friends of Ecusta Trail- N/A
9. Blue Zones Project- N/A
10. Public or Citizen Input- There is a question about the status of the landowner lawsuits which will be researched by Conserving Carolina and answered at the next meeting.

F. Next Steps

Continue working on ongoing progress as discussed.

G. Set Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Brevard/Transylvania County Ecusta Trail Advisory Board is scheduled for February 22, 2023 at 3:30 pm. (last Wednesday of the month at 3:30 pm)

H. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:55 pm.

Minutes Approved-

2/22/23

x Maureen Copelof

Maureen Copelof, Chair, Mayor

x Katherine Buzby

Katherine Buzby, City Planner