

MINUTES

City Council Parks, Trails, & Recreation Committee

Wednesday, February 16, 2022, 3:30 PM
City Hall Council Chambers

Members Present: Mac Morrow, Chair, Council Member
Aaron Baker, Vice-Chair, Council Member
Steve Harrell, Interim City Manager
David Lutz, Public Works Director
Paul Ray, Planning Director
Nancy DePippo, Citizen Member
Matt Christian, Citizen Member
Howie Granat, Citizen Member
Tim Robinson, Citizen Member (via Zoom)
Ryan Olson, At-Large Member

Staff Present: Emily Brewer, Planner
Denise Hodsdon, Executive Assistant

Guests: Mayor Maureen Copelof
Torry Nergart, Conserving Carolina (via Zoom)
Matthew Busche, Resident
Linda Gallo, Resident

Media: Jonathan Rich, Transylvania Times

A. Welcome & Call to Order

Committee Chair Mac Morrow welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 3:32 pm.

B. Certification of Quorum

Quorum was certified by Executive Assistant Denise Hodsdon

C. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Mr. Granat, seconded by Ms. DePippo to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

D. Approval of Minutes of January 12, 2022 Meeting

Motion by Mr. Harrell, seconded by Mr. Ray to approve the minutes of the January 12, 2022 meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

E. Community Garden Discussion

Mayor Copelof updated the committee on the proposed community garden project. She summarized the efforts that began in January, 2021. A task force of approximately 20 members was formed and they analyzed the city-owned parcel on Silversteen Drive as a potential garden site. Due to the proximity of that location to Tannery Brownfield, soil testing was done and the results showed no contamination of heavy metals as a result of industrial purposes. The results did reveal naturally occurring arsenic levels so the results were sent to NC Cooperative Extension Soil Science experts at North Carolina State University who confirmed that non-nutrient metal levels would not be a concern for gardening on this site. The site on Silversteen Drive was determined to be a good location for the garden and is close enough to a water line to easily install spigots. Additionally, the Estatoe Trail will eventually run beside the proposed garden site.

The Task Force designed a layout for the garden that includes a variety of plot sizes, as well as a few raised beds for easy access for members with disabilities, and an area for a Children's Garden. The plan also included a tool shed and a small greenhouse that was offered by one of the Task Force volunteers. However, because we were unable to get grant funding last summer, the project was put on hold in August.

In December, 2021 Blue Zones Project offered \$7,500 to the City for creation of a community garden and City Council approved a resolution to accept the funds and establish a community garden in the spring 2022. Gaia Herbs has also donated \$1,000 and they will provide free starter plants for members. Ms. Copelof presented a proposed budget in the amount of \$7619 for materials including gravel for the parking area, compost to amend the soil, and water tap and meter. She noted that the budget does not include tools because they will be donated. Mr. Granat said that the Moving to Conservers organization wants to work with the community garden to help work on self-composting and building a compost pile.

Mayor Copelof said the goal is to try to do this without adding to the burden of City Staff by bringing in volunteers to do some of the work. In addition to the Task Force, we have received offers to help from other partners. Blue Zones has also offered to work on the processes and a draft community garden agreement. She said we are looking at a very nominal fee for the plots of approximately \$10 to \$20. In addition to the starter plants, Gaia Herbs has also offered volunteers to help with the project, and the Cooperative Extension Service has offered to provide garden training and publicity.

Mayor Copelof explained that in order to get the garden going, she is looking for a recommendation from the committee for City Council to approve constructing a community garden on the city-owned property on Silversteen Drive utilizing the funds that we have, and to execute the resolution that City Council approved to establish a garden this spring. Motion by Mr. Granat, seconded by Mr. Olson to recommend approval of the proposal for a community garden on Silversteen Drive. The motion carried unanimously.

F. Update re Davidson River Pedestrian Bridge

Mr. Ray reported that the design is 90% complete and the plans are currently under review. The City will be able to make minor tweaks to the plans prior to finalizing. Mr. Ray said we have asked for some upgrades to include materials that are more durable and that would require minimal maintenance: 1) the walking surface will be concrete; and 2) the bridge approach will be a composite rot-resistant material instead of wood. The next step is NCDOT will request right-of-way funding for the project to be used for utility relocation and temporary construction easements. Right-of-way funding is not scheduled until August 2023, but since the project has been delayed so drastically, Barry Mosteller of NCDOT is trying to get the project moved up on the timeline to hopefully go out to bid this fall or early winter.

G. Update re Estatoe Trail Construction – Depot Railroad Avenue Park to West Main Street

Mr. Ray reported that City Council has decided to push pause on the section from W. Main Street to the Mary C. Jenkins Community Center due to issues with topography, stormwater and right-of-way acquisition that is taking some time to work out. The concentration now is on connecting the community center to Rosman Highway. Our engineer is currently designing plans for the trail through Tannery Park. Mr. Ray will be meeting with NCDOT next week to discuss options for crossing Rosman Highway in order to get to the School Board property.

Mr. Lutz reported that the contractor working on the section between the Depot and W. Main Street has run into some petroleum or volatiles in the Henderson Oil area and will need to do some soil sampling on that portion. They are working on how they will remove the soil and where it will go. In the meantime, they are continuing to work on both sides of that portion.

Additional Comments:

Ryan Olson commented that he has a potential donor in mind for the property adjacent to Bracken Mountain. Mr. Ray said we still need \$210,000 to purchase the property. The committee asked for information prior to the next meeting about the property, what it would mean for us, how much we already have and how much we still need. Mr. Baker suggested that Tourism might be willing to give some money as well.

H. Set Date for Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Parks, Trails & Recreation Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, March 16, 2022 at 3:30 PM.

I. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:50 pm.

X Mac Morrow

Mac Morrow,
Chair, Council Member

Minutes Approved: March 16, 2022

X Denise Hodsdon

Denise Hodsdon
Executive Assistant