

MINUTES

City Council Parks, Trails, & Recreation Committee

Wednesday, February 17, 2021, 3:30 PM
City Hall Council Chambers

Members Present: Mac Morrow, Chair, Council Member
Maureen Copelof, Vice-Chair, Council Member
Jim Fatland, City Manager (left at 4:27 pm)
Paul Ray, Planning Director
Nancy DePippo, Citizen Member
Erik Emaus, Citizen Member
Matt Christian, Citizen Member
Howie Granat, Citizen Member (via Zoom)
Ryan Olson, At-Large Member (via Zoom)

Absent: David Lutz, Public Works Director

Staff Present: Denise Hodsdon, Executive Assistant

Guests: Tanya Marie and Larry Pender, Pathways to Parks
Torry Nergart and Abby Williams, Conserving Carolina (via Zoom)

A. Welcome & Call to Order

Committee Chair Mac Morrow welcomed all in attendance and called the meeting to order at 3:40 pm.

B. Certification of Quorum

Quorum was certified by Executive Assistant Denise Hodsdon

C. Approval of Agenda

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

D. Approval of Minutes of January 20, 2021 Meeting

Motion by Ms. Copelof, seconded by Mr. Christian to approve the minutes of the January 20, 2021 meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

E. Pathways to Parks Presentation – Tanya Marie and Larry Pender

Larry and Tanya Marie Pender made a presentation to the committee about their

organization Pathways to Parks. They have recently been awarded a \$25,000 grant from Dogwood Health Foundation to help move forward with their mission of educating and encouraging all people of color to get outside and utilize our public parks. Ms. Pender explained that people of color often times are not aware of our local, state or national parks or they don't feel that the parks belong to them. Mr. and Mrs. Pender are visiting every county in Western North Carolina to try to garner help in getting information out and embracing their organization. They plan to use the grant money to develop a website and to purchase equipment such as computers and bicycles. Mr. Pender explained that before COVID they had several hiking events where a diverse group of people hike to a location, share lunch and conversation to get to know one another, and then they hike back out. They are hoping to be able to start back up in the summer and are hoping to get children involved. Several committee members suggested that they reach out and explore partnering with existing local organizations that offer children's programs. Mr. Fatland suggested that they also make a presentation to the Mary C. Jenkins Community Center Task Force.

F. Project Updates

1. Joel Branch/Horse Cove Connector

Mr. Morrow reported that everything is cleared to go ahead with the Joel Branch/Horse Cove Connector. Ms. DePippo added that they have opened it up to bids for trail builders.

2. Tannery Skate Park Landscaping Project

Ms. Copelof reported that community members who live around Tannery Skate Park have asked if she would work with them to do some landscaping at the Skate Park. She shared her landscaping plan and explained that the plan is to use the same model and native plants that were used at the Depot. She said we are trying to get as many donated plants as possible and the City will purchase the rest. The Public Works Department has already begun sprucing up and doing some prep work at the site, including installation of a water spigot and a split-rail fence to better delineate the parking area. The first work day will be Saturday, March 27th beginning at 9:00 am. The community members have volunteered to water the plants during the growing season.

3. Tannery Park Community Garden

Mr. Fatland reported that he contacted the owner who had offered to lease his property for a community garden and the property would only be available for one year. He feels that it does not make sense to make the investment to put in water for just one year. He said the City owns a parcel across the street from the Tannery Skate Park and it may be a good opportunity to move forward with a community garden in that location. He has had initial meetings with Transylvania County Extension Director Bart Renner and Mark Burrows of Blue Zones Project. Mark Burrows has offered to help with some

grants. Mr. Fatland has also hired an intern to research what it would take to establish a community garden and he will come back with a presentation to the committee.

4. Multi-Use Path

Mr. Fatland reported that Brown Consultants is designing the extension of the trail from the Depot to West Main Street and they are about 80% done. The goal is to get the design done and get a good estimate so we can include it in next year's budget. He said there is one hold up with a property owner on the leg from West Main Street to Mary C. Jenkins Community Center. The Council has decided to go ahead with eminent domain if necessary to get that one parcel. Once we get all the easements we will start construction on the trail down to MCJCC.

G. Public Art Board Discussion

Ms. Copelof said when she posted about the recent graffiti at our skate parks on Facebook, the immediate reaction from some of the community was that this is part of the skate board culture and that by painting over it we were inhibiting the artistic desire of the young people. Facebook discussion continued onto what we could do as a compromise and encourage this type of artistic expression without having gang symbols and other inappropriate things painted on our city assets. There was a suggestion that we create a public art board at one of our recreation areas and encourage people to paint and create public art within certain guidelines. She suggested that we could have a local artist start with something that sets the tone and then after several months we could paint over the whole thing and start over again. Mr. Emaus said he supports the idea, but feels that we need to put out a clear message to the community that this type of graffiti and destruction of public property is not okay. Mr. Olson said graffiti art is definitely a part of the skate board culture, but the recent graffiti was not art. He suggested that we engage skaters and an artist to make a public statement that it's okay to do your art, but just don't do it on our ramps. Mr. Morrow suggested that we reach out to the Arts Council to be a partner in this and see if they might have volunteers that would be willing to create something that would encourage others to join in.

Additional Comments:

Ms. Copelof thanked Torry Nergart and Conserving Carolina and the Americorps volunteers for planting the silky dogwood on the slope by the bridge at the Depot Railroad Avenue Park.

Mr. Emaus informed the committee that some members of the Pisgah Forest Rotary are preparing a grant request to help fund landscaping at the new Rosenwald park.

Mr. Granat asked if there was an update on the potential purchase of property adjacent to Bracken. Mr. Ray reported that he and Aaron Bland did meet with trail builder Todd Branham and found plenty of opportunities to build trails. He said City Council is excited about this opportunity and we continue to work with the owner of the property

to acquire it. Mr. Morrow noted that Todd Branham has volunteered to do the design and layout at no cost.

H. Set Date for Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Parks, Trails & Recreation Committee will be on Wednesday, March 17, 2021 at 3:30 PM in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

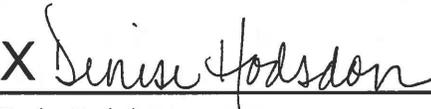
I. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:51 pm.

X 

Mac Morrow,
Chair, Council Member

Minutes Approved: March 17, 2021

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Denise Hodsdon
Executive Assistant