

Brevard/Transylvania County  
Ecusta Trail Advisory Board

Date: March 2, 2022

Location: City Hall Council Chambers

**Members:**

- ✓ Maureen Copelof, Mayor
- ✓ Mac Morrow, Council Member
- ✓ Larry Chapman, County Commissioner
- ✓ Addison Bradley, NC Cooperative Extension Dir
- ✓ Clark Lovelace, Tourism Development Authority
- ✓ Mark Tooley, Conserving Carolina
- ✓ John Ditillo, Friends of Ecusta Trail
- ✓ Mark Burrows, Blue Zones Project
- ✓ Meredith Carli, At-Large Member (via Zoom)
- ✓ Laren Wise, At-Large Member
- ✓ Chuck McGrady, Henderson County Advisory Board Chair, Ex Officio
- ✓ Steve Harrell, City Manager, Ex Officio
- ✓ Paul Ray, Planning Director, Ex Officio

**Staff:**

- ✓ Katherine Buzby, City Planner
- ✓ Aaron Bland, Assistant Planning Director

**Guests:**

- ✓ Kieran Roe, Conserving Carolina
- ✓ Lorraine Nash, Trail Talk Newsletter
- ✓ Steve Williams, NCDOT
- ✓ Debbie Tellman, Friends of Ecusta Trail
- ✓ Matt Matteson, Henderson County
- ✓ Vicki Eastland, Land of Sky
- ✓ Nancy Depippo, Local Business Owner
- ✓ Ryan Brumfield, NCDOT
- ✓ Dee Dee Perkins
- ✓ Latoya Caldwell, NCDOT

**A. Welcome & Call to Order**

Committee Co-Chair Maureen Copelof welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 2:02pm.

**B. Certification of Quorum**

Quorum was certified by Committee Co-Chair Maureen Copelof.

**C. Approval of Agenda**

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

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**D. Introductions**

Board members and guests introduced themselves.

**E. Purpose & Focus Board**

Oversee the financing, design, and construction of the Ecusta Trail. How to move the trail to completion through Transylvania County. Also, to make recommendations to City Council.

**F. Updates**

Conserving Carolina:

Aug 2021 Ecusta Rails to Trails LLC (subsidiary of Conserving Carolina) purchased the rail line. 19 miles total, 11 in Henderson County and 8 in Transylvania County. Henderson Co leases their section of trail from Rails to Trails for the next 150 years for \$1.00. Henderson Co has multiple sources of funding and a committee to raise the 6.5 million needed as the 20% match to other grants. Estimated construction cost is \$32 million for the entire 19 miles but costs may be more (estimated in 2020). Transylvania Co has applied for the RAISE grant. Alta Planning will redo the estimated cost figures and complete the application for the RAISE grant. There is no match for the RAISE grant if awarded. A letter of support from Transylvania Co will be needed for the RAISE grant application this year. Working on removing trussell crossing at Davidson River Rd and Davidson River. The road crossing may be a safety issue, especially since the recent flood. They are working on raising the funds to correct this problem.

Planning Dept:

The City and Conserving Carolina are partnering together to get the RAISE grant application in. Much more money is available this year as opposed to last year's grant. Another grant, the FLAP, has been applied for and the city is asking for 1 million to help with the design of the Ecusta trail system. Decision on the FLAP grant should be around the summertime. Planning has 2 letters of support, NCDOT and the Forest Service. Robert Mariner is on the RAISE grant application team, who is a consultant to the City to navigate Washington DC. Cost analysis for the trail is key.

Transylvania Co:

A presentation to the commissioners of the project is needed to discuss generating a letter of support for the RAISE grant.

Tourism Development Authority:

Endorses and provides funding for the trail and wants to be more involved but needs a more concrete plan for the trail. It is vital that the trail system brings people from the edges of the big forests into downtown Brevard.

Henderson Co:

Has NPO money (Federal Highway Administration) to help with trail. The advisory committee is working on issues like crossing the railroad and easements. Entire trail in both counties will be phased. MOUs will be needed between counties for things like signage to promote continuity. Looking to start their construction end of 2022 or beginning of 2023.

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**NCDOT:**

Has more grant opportunities (Federal) but many are on hold for appropriation of funds.

**City:**

Debates underway about who is going to maintain and police the trail. Will need to get with Transylvania Co to come to an agreement (MOUs).

**Friends of Ecusta Trail:**

Working on fundraising and volunteer opportunities.

**Blue Zones:**

Working with Blue Ridge Bike Club has contributed \$10,000 each for design work on trailheads. Engineering for trailhead (Ecusta/Estatoe) not completed yet.

**G. Next Steps**

Planning Dept: Grant application & cost estimate from Alta Planning

City: MOU with lawyers & Conserving Carolina; Investigate trussell safety issue

Transylvania Co: County Commissioners briefed

Letters of Support for the Trail

**H. Set Date for Next Meeting**


The next meeting of the Brevard/Transylvania County Ecusta Trail Advisory Board is scheduled for Wednesday, March 30, 2022 at 2:00pm

**I. Adjourn**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:27pm.

x   
Maureen Copelof, Chair, Council Member

Minutes Approved- 3/30/2022

x   
Katherine Buzby, City Planner