

MINUTES

City Council Parks, Trails, & Recreation Committee

Wednesday, April 19, 2023 at 3:30 PM
City Hall Council Chambers

Members Present: Mac Morrow, Chair, Council Member
Aaron Baker, Vice-Chair, Council Member
Nancy DePippo, Citizen Member
Howie Granat, Citizen Member
Ryan Olson, At-Large Member

Absent: Matt Christian, Citizen Member
Tim Robinson, Citizen Member

Staff Present: Paul Ray, Planning Director
Katherine Buzby, Planner
Wesley Shook, Acting Public Works Director
Becky McCann, Communications Coordinator
Katherine Buzby, Planner
Denise Hodsdon, City Clerk

Guests: Jack Henderson, Mountain True
Nora Jane Montgomery, Resident

A. Welcome & Call to Order

Committee Chair Mac Morrow welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 3:34 pm.

B. Certification of Quorum

Quorum was certified by City Clerk 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

1. January 18, 2023

Motion by Mr. Granat, seconded by Mr. Olson to approve the minutes of the January

18, 2023 meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

2. March 15, 2023

Motion by Mr. Granat, seconded by Ms. DePippo to approve the minutes of the March 15, 2023 meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

E. Pisgah Forest River Access Improvements – Jack Henderson, Mountain True

Jack Henderson with the non-profit Mountain True presented prospective plans to improve the Pisgah Forest River Access area on Wilson Road. He explained that his particular program within Mountain True is the French Broad Paddle Trail and they help maintain and manage a number of river access points in Transylvania, Henderson, Buncombe and Madison Counties. They work with municipalities and other groups across the region to build, maintain, construct and improve upon public access areas for paddlers and anglers.

A couple of years ago Explore Brevard was interested in looking at ways to improve recreational experiences here in Transylvania County and they commissioned a report, the Blueway Master Plan, to look at how river recreation experiences can be improved upon across the county. Throughout that process the Wilson Road Pisgah Forest River Access was deemed one of the high priority areas for improvement. It is an older site and the boat ramp is eroding and the concrete no longer meets the water, but could easily be improved with partners working on it.

The Blueway Master Plan identified a variety of levels of the project: short-term, near-term, site-specific, and medium to long-term endeavors. One of the medium to long-term endeavors was monitoring the NCDOT project to realign Wilson Road with Ecusta Road. If NCDOT removes the currently existing bridge adjacent to this river access point and replaces it further down-stream to align directly with Ecusta Road, there may be some right of way available to increase the size of this access point. However, for the time being Mountain True would like to undertake the following projects in the existing Wilson Road access area, which were identified as top priorities:

- Replacing and/or fixing the currently existing boat ramp
- Improving/expanding the parking area – paving and marking parking spaces
- Updated signage and kiosk information
- Install overhead lighting, bike rack, picnic tables and trash receptacles
- Stabilization of streambank with native riparian vegetation

Mr. Henderson said the goal is to improve the experience for paddlers, but to also have an additional park space for people to enjoy the river whether or not they are actually planning to paddle. As time progresses and the NCDOT plans proceed, there might be additional space for further improvements.

Mountain True is in a position to find and secure funding for these type of projects. The French Broad River Paddle Trail is a North Carolina state trail and received funding through the state's Year of the Trail initiative, and the Transylvania County TDA is also interested in putting funding toward priorities that have been identified through the Blueway planning process.

Mr. Henderson said he was looking for clarity in partnering with the City. What degree or level of permission and/or official partnership do we need in my programming as a unifier/broker and potentially project manager, to work on space owned by the City? What I have to bring is this plan that has been well vetted and we have funding to bring. We would be very happy to cover the design fees to bring this to a construction-ready project and then depending on the total estimated cost for construction of the final plan, we would have funding to bring to hopefully match other sources such as the TDA, grants, or potentially city funding, if there is interest.

During discussion, Mr. Granat suggested that gravel be used for the site rather than paving it. Mr. Hooper added that this site is a utility space for the City, which does restrict the type of permanent facility you could put there. Gravel is one way to prevent that, but putting any type of permanent bathroom facility would require coordination with the City's engineers to make sure it wouldn't conflict with any of the pipes that will run under that site. Mr. Wilson recommended that staff meet with Mr. Henderson to learn more about the plan and to share information on our underground utilities, and then come back to the committee with a recommendation on how to memorialize the partnership.

F. Committee Member Applications – Review and Recommendation

City Clerk Denise Hodsdon recalled that at the previous meeting the Committee voted to recommend reappointment of Nancy DePippo and Howie Granat and there will be three other vacant seats that need to be filled. Three applications have been received, but there was consensus to keep the application period open until the end of April to allow time for Committee members to recruit additional applicants. Mr. Olson said that although he will no longer be on this committee, he is happy to continue to stay involved with the Bracken expansion project.

Additional Comments

Mr. Olson and Mr. Granat requested that an update on the Bracken Preserve Expansion Project be added as an agenda item for the May meeting. Mr. Granat shared the initial trail map generated by Todd Branham of Long Cane Trails and will share more details and information at the next meeting.

Ms. DePippo commented that a friend had passed some throttle e-bikes today on the Estatoe Trail and she suggested putting signage along the trail regarding the prohibition of throttle bikes on the trail.

Katherine Buzby gave an update on the Adopt-a-Green Space adoptions. The Brevard Rotary, Mayor Copelof, and Ms. Buzby, in coordination with Public Works worked at the Depot yesterday pulling weeds and spreading mulch. They plan to complete the project next week and will then head to Clemson Plaza.

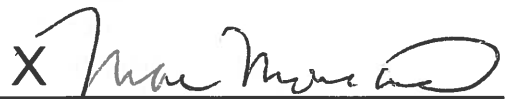
Mr. Hooper informed the committee that we are waiting for a no-rise certification for the Rathie property, also known as Tannery South, and once that is received Public Works will grade and pave the segment of the trail that goes through that property. It will be done with City resources except for the actual laying of asphalt. He noted that this will leave a missing section through the Tannery property, but we have the resources to get this section done now. He also updated on the next segment from Rosman Highway to the High School. We are trying to decide between: 1) finding an engineer to do the full set of engineering so it will be shovel-ready and we can pursue grants, but it will likely be expensive and dwindle our trail funding; or 2) we do partial engineering of 30-40% for much cheaper and still give us, not quite a shovel-ready project, but documentation we could submit with a grant request and give us an idea of the scope of the project and what it will take later on, but still leave funds in our account to match grants or take advantage of other opportunities that may come up. He said at the moment he is leaning toward doing the 30-40% engineering to keep the ball rolling. Mr. Ray added that this would allow us to get started with obtaining rights-of-way we need to get to the School Board property.

G. Set Date for Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Parks, Trails & Recreation Committee was scheduled for Wednesday, May 17, 2023 at 3:30 PM.

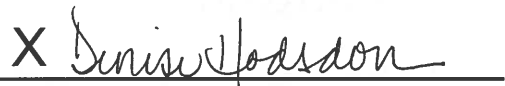
H. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:41 pm.

X 

Mac Morrow
Chair, Council Member

Minutes Approved: May 17, 2023

X 

Denise Hodsdon
City Clerk