

Brevard/Transylvania County
Ecusta Trail Advisory Board

Date: April 26, 2023

Location: City Hall Council Chambers

Members:

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

Staff:

- ✓ Katherine Buzby, City Planner

Guests:

- ✓ Jonathan Rich, Transylvania Times
- ✓ Matt Revis, Ecusta Trail Talk Newsletter
- ✓ Tad Fogel, Friends of Ecusta Trail (via Zoom)
- ✓ Kristen Cozza, Conserving Carolina
- ✓ Rebekah Robinson, Conserving Carolina
- ✓ Lonnie Watkins, Volkert Inc. (arrived at 3:38pm)

A. Welcome & Call to Order

Committee Chair Maureen Copelof welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 3:29 pm.

B. Certification of Quorum

Quorum was certified by Committee Chair Maureen Copelof.

C. Approval of Agenda

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

D. Approval of Minutes from March 29, 2023 Meeting

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

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E. Updates

1. Conserving Carolina- They continue to fundraise and have found a new grant called "Safe Streets and Roads for All" that they will forward the information on to the Planning Dept.
2. Planning Department-Working on one complaint of trespassers along the trail corridor, and ordered "No Trespassing" signs to be installed by Friends of Ecusta Trail. Once they are up, we can enforce the trespassing violations. The FLAP grant money has been released for the engineering but we still are working on getting a few DOT approvals.
3. Transylvania County-N/A
4. Tourism Development Authority- Has pledged the \$1 million in support of the trail. They are diligent to state that they follow all county and state legislation as it relates to the million dollars. There is a state requirement that 2/3rd of tourism dollars must be spent directly on marketing and promotion. The remaining amount can be spent on other tourism related expenditures (projects, capital, etc.). The TDA will probably take 3-4 years to pay out a million dollars to still meet that requirement. The local resolution requires a review of any expenditure or contract >\$50,000 and they have gotten with the County and the County Attorney to see what the review process entails. Per the attorney, it is the discretion of the TDA to determine what is considered to be a tourism related expenditure as dictated by the state legislation. Local review can occur from County Commissioners which would be focused on: does it follow the legal requirements by the state, does the organization possess the funds, and are they following the 2/3rd 1/3rd requirements. The board can only expend their current years funds so it essentially would be for a period of time and follow the 2/3rd and 1/3rd rules.
5. Henderson County- They are waiting on getting the final approvals and have been contacted by DOT about 2 weeks ago to help move the approval process forward. They cannot move forward with the bidding on the trail until all the approvals are completed. Division 14 has approved everything but Raleigh has not. Henderson Co had not submitted to Raleigh yet so they will do that shortly. The estimated timeline is bidding by end of July and construction completed by Christmas for that section of the trail.
6. NCDOT- (via Lonnie) TP&D will submit a scope of work (which was completed) and that scope goes through an extensive review process to make sure they are only doing what DOT needs them to do. Once approved, then man hours are assigned for all the tasks and a fee is calculated. These fees are then reviewed by DOT for approval. There have been some questions related to the environmental aspect of the trail (what needed to be included and what did not) and then they will resubmit the official scope hopefully next week. They also are working on what will be required from TP&D related to public involvement as DOT may not require anything but the City would like. When they receive the next scope, the official review will include what the City wants and what DOT requires. The mapping is still in process from the telemetry unit and should be complete in about 2-3 weeks. Once the scope is approved and a Notice to Proceed is issued, the project is estimated to take about a year and the approved scope will include a schedule of time for the project. The scope should have design for the entire trail plus specific sections that can be let to a contractor.

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7. City of Brevard- Still waiting on the grant awards. The plan is: A-NSFLTP Grant, B-RAISE Grant, and C-Use all funding and promised matches to get one small section of the trail completed starting at Cherry Street and figure out how far we can go with the \$5 million we already have allocated to the trail.
8. Friends of Ecusta Trail- They called a meeting to start talking about operational issues and about how the Friend's role will continue once the trail opens in Henderson Co. They will be working on the branding of the trail and rolling it into the design of the signage for both counties. They have a proposal sent to Destination by Design (a branding company). They also are working on the MOUs that will need to be designate who is doing what with 5 governments involved plus Friends and Conserving Carolina.
9. Public or Citizen Input- N/A

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 May 31, 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 4:07 pm.

Minutes Approved- 5/31/23

x Maureen Copelof

Maureen Copelof, Chair, Mayor

x Katherine Buzby

Katherine Buzby, City Planner