

Brevard/Transylvania County  
Ecusta Trail Advisory Board

Date: May 31, 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
- ✓ Lauren Wise, At-Large Member
- ✓ Chuck McGrady, Henderson County Advisory Board Chair, Ex Officio  
Wilson Cooper, City Manager, Ex Officio (absent)
- ✓ Paul Ray, Planning Director, Ex Officio (arrived 3:32pm)
- ✓ Meredith Carli, At-Large Member (via Zoom)  
Clark Lovelace, Tourism Development Authority (absent)

**Staff:**

- ✓ Katherine Buzby, City Planner

**Guests:**

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

**A. Welcome & Call to Order**

Committee Chair Maureen Copelof welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 3:30pm.

**B. Certification of Quorum**

Quorum was certified by Committee Chair Maureen Copelof.

**C. Approval of Agenda**

Motion by Mr. Morrow, seconded by Mr. Tooley 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- Still fundraising for the Trail.
2. Planning Department-Working with Pisgah Labs, they would like to erect a chain link fence (at their expense) across the front of the property (within the 100-foot rail corridor) up to 8' high. They were told that the City will bring it to this Board, and if positively recommended and approved by the City Manager, will need to sign an Encroachment Agreement that may be rescinded at any time by the City. The fence would be within the City's right-of-way but aesthetically it looks like Pisgah Lab's front yard. The City is drafting a blanket Encroachment Agreement/Permission right now that is being reviewed by the City Manager (based on a template provided by Henderson County that is being tailored to the City of Brevard). A Site Plan will be provided by Pisgah Labs and will be sent to our engineering firm (TP&D) to review to make sure it will not be in the way of trail construction. Mac Morrow made a recommendation to favorably consider the new fence and the board voted unanimously in favor. The planning dept. will coordinate with them going forward with the process.
3. Transylvania County-N/A
4. Tourism Development Authority- N/A
5. Henderson County- The County Manager stated that they have gotten all the DOT division approvals needed and the applications are at Raleigh. NCDOT has agreed this can be handled at a division level. They believe they are still on track for getting the construction out to bid by the end of summer. The trail is on the Board of Transportation's agenda next week for approval as part of the State Transportation Improvement Plan. They are still working on moving forward with the trail. The County has put out a MOU in draft form to the City and the Town of Laurel Park and try to formalize their relationship in the MOU. There is discussion about keeping the trail moving forward and cutting costs by addressing the large number of bridges along some sections of the proposed trail being done ahead of time. The Board of Transportation will approve the State STIP this coming week and by the July meeting they will get approval to pull down Federal Funds. Once this happens, they will be setting up to put the construction out to bid. The timeline is completion in 2023 of this first section. House member Edwards went to Federal DOT headquarters and met with them to see how to move the grant process along (in person). He has been an incredible supporter of the trail.
6. NCDOT- (via Lonnie) They received the draft scope from TP&D and have sent some comments back to be revisited by the engineering firm. They are meeting with TP&D tomorrow and hope to get a revised scope of work this week or next. Then it has to go through the process of being approved by the Board of Transportation.
7. City of Brevard- Still waiting to hear on the status of the NSFLTP grant. A meeting is set for tomorrow to discuss the lobbying for the RAISE grant.
8. Friends of Ecusta Trail- 39 new "No Trespassing" signs were installed along the railroad corridor. They also had a volunteer appreciation day at Packa's Place and about 75 people showed up. They are manning a booth at Rhythm and Brews all summer in Hendersonville

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to get donations. They will be supporting the Flyer Sunday with volunteers and a booth. They are continuing the bike raffle and a cognitive jersey will be for sale for the Ecusta Trail, which will only be available for a 2-week period. They are supporting the Tour de Transylvania that starts on July 1 and runs through the end of July, with support around the 3<sup>rd</sup> at Oskar Blues. On July 14<sup>th</sup> they will be at Cedar Mountain Outpost for fundraising and will be raffling off their bike. The wrap up will be back at Oskar Blues on July 23<sup>rd</sup>. They are using Tour de Transylvania and Year of the Trail to nudge Monster to contribute and have asked Oskar Blues to see if Monster reps can be at one of these events.

9. Public or Citizen Input- A law firm that is representing the landowners along the railroad corridor is holding an event at 5:30pm tomorrow at the Chelsea's Event Center at the Etowah Valley Golf Club and Lodge that is open to the public.

**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 June 28, 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 4:17 pm.

Minutes Approved- 6/29/23

x Maureen Copelof

Maureen Copelof, Chair, Mayor

x Katherine Buzby

Katherine Buzby, City Planner