# MINUTES
## City Council Parks, Trails, & Recreation Committee

**Wednesday, October 18, 2023 at 3:30 PM**
City Hall Council Chambers

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| Members Present: | Mac Morrow, Chair, Council Member<br>Aaron Baker, Vice-Chair, Council Member<br>Nancy DePippo, Citizen Member<br>Reba Osborne, Citizen Member<br>Mayor Maureen Copelof, Ex-Officio Member |
| Staff Present: | Dean Luebbe, Finance Director<br>Wesley Shook, Acting Public Works Director<br>Alex Shepherd, Assistant to the City Manager<br>Becky McCann, Communications Coordinator<br>Katherine Buzby, Planner |
| Guests: | James Veal, Tricia Davis, Maurice Jones |
| Media: | Jon Rich, Transylvania Times |

### 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 Assistant to the City Manager Alex Shepherd.

### C. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Mr. Baker, seconded by Ms. Osborne, to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

### D. Approval of Minutes from September 20, 2023 Meeting

Motion by Ms. DePippo, seconded by Ms. Osborne to approve the minutes of the September 20, 2023 meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

## E. Bracken Preserve Update

Mr. Hooper shared with the committee that he met with representatives from Pisgah SORBA, and it turns out that Gulo Composites is going to recruit Pisgah SORBA to perform maintenance, with Gulo serving as the sponsor.

Mr. Shepherd provided information from Mr. Granat's email regarding Brackenfest 2.0. The event was successful, with over 30 participants, 14 volunteers, and around $5,000 generated in funding. They still have 25 jerseys available for $75 each. Mr. Shepherd mentioned the need for a walk-through and quote validation for Phase 1 of the trail repair and new climbing trail. He also discussed closing larger donation pledges from late last year and the ongoing discussions with Pisgah SORBA regarding trail maintenance at Bracken Preserve.

Mr. Hooper stated that he and Mr. Ray are working on gathering documents related to the clean water master plan and other property deeds and restrictions. The closing process is in the hands of attorneys.

Mr. Jones asked the question when it comes to trail maintenance after storms who performs the maintenance on the trail.

Mr. Hooper said the city would perform maintenance of issues related to storms or downed trees. However, this agreement would cover maintenance concerning the enhancement, erosion, and safety of the trail.

Ms. Osborne asked if there were any funding gaps in the trail maintenance.

Mr. Hooper said Gulo Composites will help sponsor the enhanced work. The level of maintenance that the city provides is adequate to help take care of tree removal and similar items.

Ms. Davis, a former member of Pisgah SORBA's board of directors, advised caution before signing a memorandum of understanding with Pisgah SORBA. She expressed concerns about the capacity of Pisgah SORBA to lead trail workdays and suggested that relying on volunteers for maintenance could be challenging. She had hoped Bracken Preserve would not be a Pisgah SORBA-maintained trail, considering their existing responsibilities for a large area of trails.

Ms. Osborne inquired about the possibility of including a probation period in the contract to ensure that the work is completed as required.

Mr. Hooper confirmed that such language could be added to the contract.

Ms. Osborne then asked how they would form "Friends of Bracken" as a 501(c)(3) organization.

Mr. Morrow noted that the community land trust was originally established for this purpose, but it hasn't been effectively used, and its current status is uncertain.

Mr. Baker expressed his belief that "Friends of Bracken" might have been the appropriate direction to take early on. Given Mr. Granat's involvement, he suggested consulting with him. He also mentioned that in the future, a parks and recreation position overseeing maintenance might be necessary, but it's unclear if they are at that point yet.

Mr. Hooper shared his vision for the future, stating that he would like to see the community foundation receive donations from individuals, which would then be given to the City to endow a special maintenance employee for new recreation properties. This approach would provide access to city benefits and equipment for that employee. However, he emphasized the importance of consulting with Mr. Granat to assess the sustainability of this solution.

## F. Pisgah Health Property

Mr. Hooper informed the committee that they are still waiting for a letter from the other party to officially offer the property to them. The next steps would involve engaging a wetlands specialist to advise on safely crossing the stream with a bridge, and the quote from the specialist would be brought back to the board for consideration. The Pisgah Health Board also has their own exciting plans, and it presents a promising opportunity.

Mayor Copelof mentioned that their attorney is currently working on the offer, and once it's finalized, it will need approval from their board. The offer letter will then be submitted to City Council for approval.

Mr. Baker inquired if there have been any discussions with the nearby apartment complex regarding this location.

Mr. Hooper clarified that they are waiting to receive the offer letter first.

## G. Green Space Adoptions

Ms. Buzby informed the committee that the Transylvania Garden Club (TGC) has been caring for the Depot gardens for several years.

Mayor Copelof explained that TGC had approached the council over three years ago with a proposal to create and maintain the garden. The council had approved the proposal, but it has since expired and needs renewal. She further mentioned that they recently secured a $1,000 grant for irrigation and installed a $1,400 birdbath. They would like to include TGC in the green space adoption on a year-to-year continuous basis.

At 4:02 pm, a motion was made by Ms. Osborne, seconded by Mr. Baker, to approve the green space adoption as presented, and the motion carried unanimously.

**Additional Comments:**

Mr. Baker inquired about the bids for the paving on Tannery South.

Mr. Shook responded that they have received quotes and that they are planning to visit the site later this week before commencing the work.

Ms. DePippo shared information she acquired during a Conserving Carolina meeting, stating that they have purchased sixteen acres of land on Everett Rd near the future Ecusta Trail, which could serve as a trailhead.

Mr. Hooper mentioned that the groundbreaking for the Ecusta Trail in Henderson County is scheduled for October 28th.

## H. Set Date for Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Parks, Trails & Recreation Committee was scheduled for Wednesday, November 15, 2023 at 3:30 PM.

## I. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:12 pm.

X _____
Aaron Baker
Chair, Council Member

Minutes Approved: January 17, 2024

X _____
Alex Shepherd
Assistant to the City Manager