MINUTES
City Council Parks, Trails, & Recreation Committee

Wednesday, July 31, 2024 - 3:30 PM
City Council Chambers

Members Present:	Aaron Baker, Chair, Council Member Lauren Wise, Vice Chair, Council Member Howie Granat, Citizen Member Wyn Birkenthal, Citizen Member JD Powers, Citizen Member Reba Osborne, Citizen Member Mayor Maureen Copelof, Ex-Officio
Absent:	Nancy DePippo, Citizen Member
Staff Present:	Wilson Hooper, City Manager Wesley Shook, Acting Public Works Director Aaron Bland, Assistant Planning Director Becky McCann, Communications Coordinator Denise Hodsdon, City Clerk
Guests:	Gary Lowden, Pisgah Area SORBA; Charles Taylor and Owen Taylor, Monte Vista, Inc.; Nicole Bentley, Heart of Brevard; and Jack Duncan

A. Welcome & Call to Order

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

B. Certification of Quorum

Quorum was certified by City Clerk Denise Hodsdon.

C. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Hooper requested to add an item regarding an update regarding the Davidson River Pedestrian Bridge. Motion by Mr. Power, seconded by Ms. Osborne, to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

D. Approval of Minutes from May 15, 2024 Meeting

Mr. Wise noted an error in Ms. DePippo's name in Item D. Motion by Mr. Wise, seconded by Ms. Osborne to approve the minutes of the May 15, 2024 meeting as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

E. Davidson River Pedestrian Bridge Update

Mr. Hooper announced that the new Davidson River Pedestrian Bridge has been set on its buttresses. It is not yet open to the public as they still need to secure it and build the ramps, but that project is nearing completion. Mr. Baker suggested following up with NCDOT to inquire whether the planned crosswalk on Route 276 would be painted prior to completion of the roundabout. He noted that once the pedestrian bridge is open, that crosswalk will be important and hoped it would be painted soon.

F. Bracken Preserve Maintenance and Trail Building Update

Mr. Hooper reported that he has met with Keith Arbogast of Brevard Music Center (BMC) about the easement we need on their property. Mr. Arbogast requested a written proposal recording our request to take to his board of directors for approval. Mr. Hooper also reported that he and staff have been working with Pisgah SORBA on the maintenance agreement. He asked Gary Lowden of Pisgah Area SORBA to share their plan for next steps. Mr. Lowden said that SORBA will inventory the Bracken trails over the next two weeks to identify any issues/concerns and then generate an action plan and timeline for the projects that need to be done. SORBA is planning two volunteer days for this year.

Mr. Granat presented the Bracken Preserve expansion project produced by Todd Branham of Long Cane Trails. He noted that the project has been broken out into three phases so it can be built in sections as funding becomes available. The first piece of trail work, cleaning up the first 150-200 foot section has been completed. They are currently working in the second piece of Phase I, which involves repairing the first half mile of the trail system and adding the new climbing trail. The new climbing trail will have a grade of approximately 10-12% and allow us to cut out the existing steepest section, which has a grade of 15-20%. With the funds of approximately $13,500 currently remaining with Conserving Carolina, we have enough to do the climbing trail. The $20,000 we received from TCTDA would be used for the emergency access trail and to start the construction of Phase 2.

Mr. Granat reviewed the trail easement proposal to be presented to BMC. The plan for the new climbing trail stays mostly within our own land, but also includes a 0.1-mile access across the Music Center's property. He noted that with an easement from BMC, we would save approximately $16,700 in trail building costs. Additionally, a number of BMC students and faculty frequent the Bracken Preserve trails and we would offer BMC a promotional recognition on our signage. If BMC gives us the easement, we have the funding, the builder is ready to go, and the hope is that it can be completed by the end of this year.

G. Bracken Preserve Emergency Access Agreement

Mr. Hooper reviewed a draft agreement with Monte Vista, Inc. to provide an emergency access from Laurel Falls Road. The access route would expedite emergency response efforts to existing trails while also creating an established point of entry for first

responders to the new trails. In exchange, the City would provide two access points available for use by residents of Laurel Falls Road. The agreement will go to City Council in August.

H. Committee/Public Comment

Mr. Baker mentioned that there will be a couple of items on the upcoming Council agenda related to the Ecusta Trail – the reconstituted membership of the Ecusta Trail Advisory Board and the potential for the Ecusta Trail to go all the way to Main Street. He also mentioned that the Mountain Industrial Drive extension is now open and includes a spur of greenway that crosses the new road, and the long-term intention of that was to connect to the Ecusta Trail.

Mr. Granat commented that Conserving Carolina will have a table at Oskar Blues in September to fundraise for Bracken Preserve.

Mr. Hooper mentioned that we have recovered the old digester from the Ecusta Mill property and temporarily "parked" it at the Sports Complex until we can fund and construct the landscaping and betterments on the roundabout.

There was no public comment.

I. Set Date for Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Parks, Trails & Recreation Committee was scheduled for Wednesday, August 21, 2024 at 3:30 PM.

J. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:29 PM.

X Aaron Baker

Aaron Baker
Chair, Council Member

Minutes Approved: August 21, 2024

X Denise Hodsdon

Denise Hodsdon
City Clerk