MINUTES
City Council Parks, Trails, & Recreation Committee

Wednesday, September 18, 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 David Todd, Assistant City Manager Wesley Shook, Acting Public Works Director Paul Ray, Planning Director Becky McCann, Communications Coordinator Denise Hodsdon, City Clerk
Guests:	None

A. Welcome & Call to Order

Committee Chair Aaron Baker welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 3:31 pm.

B. Certification of Quorum

Quorum was certified by City Clerk Denise Hodsdon.

C. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Wise moved, seconded by Mr. Granat, to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

D. Approval of Minutes from August 21, 2024 Meeting

Mr. Granat moved, seconded by Ms. Osborne to approve the minutes of the August 21, 2024 meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

E. Bracken Preserve Update

Mr. Hooper reported that we received the results of the first maintenance evaluation conducted by SORBA last week. Mr. Granat added that the evaluation is a review of ongoing work that needs to be done on a regular basis, but some of the work will be done at their workday this weekend. Some of the highlights of the evaluation and work to be done include drain cleaning to control water flow and erosion and evaluation of bridges for wood decay. Mr. Granat said some of the items go beyond trail maintenance and would go into the trail building category and may require some machinery to do the work. The trail work will be a combination of trail maintenance that Pisgah SORBA would do, and trail construction. This weekend's workday will be all trail maintenance with Pisgah SORBA; the following week will be a combination of Pisgah SORBA and Long Cane Trails; and then they will go into next phases of trail construction. Pisgah SORBA will essentially be providing the labor and Long Cane Trails will be doing the physical construction with machinery and coordination of getting whatever materials are needed to do trail building.

Mr. Hooper added that Conserving Carolina is willing to work with the homeowner's association for the neighborhood to get two of the bank-owned properties donated to Conserving Carolina and then transferred over to them in exchange for a permanent easement so we can widen the trails at the pinch-point. Mr. Granat said he saw that both of those parcels have been listed for sale for $79,000, and pointed out that it is probably unlikely they will just donate them to us.

Mr. Hooper said he is still working with Keith Arbogast at Brevard Music Center on the easement, and they seem confident that it will happen. Mr. Hooper said he got the impression from Mr. Arbogast that whatever agreement we sign will have a condition that if they ever want to use the property we would agree to give it back.

Mr. Granat said the general plan for 2024 is, other than the two scheduled workdays, we will probably have another two or three trail days. Once we get approval from the Music Center, we will start the climbing trail. The other piece is the emergency access trail from Laurel Falls Road to Waterford Place. He asked Todd Branham to put together his plans and proposal and cost estimate for that piece as well. Essentially Phase 1 would be completed within this year. We should then have money left over to either consider putting into signage or hold the funds for use in Phase 2, which would be the new trail construction on the top portion of the land. He said the general estimates are $40,000 to $50,000 for each phase, which would use up what we have in escrow with Conserving Carolina.

Additional Updates

Estatoe Trail – Mr. Hooper and Mr. Ray updated the committee on the Estatoe Trail. Council took the Committee's recommendation and named Main St. to Mary C. Jenkins the top priority for Estatoe Trail moving forward. Council gave staff direction and feedback on our acquisition strategy for the properties in that area. We are going to

apply for a Great Trails State Program grant to pay for 100% design for that section and the section from the Rosman Highway to the High School.

Council also encouraged staff to work on the Rosman Highway crossing, which we have plans for, and we are trying to work out a deal with NCDOT.

The let date for Tannery North has been pushed back to fall of next year, with construction starting soon after. It most likely won't be done until early 2026. The reason for the delay is because it is funded with federal dollars, and those funds were just released to NCDOT, so they are starting the design and engineering for the project now. It can only be constructed in the wintertime because of the bat moratorium, so we will have to wait until next year's construction season. We are looking into whether Public Works can start doing some of the prep work this winter in order to shorten NCDOT's timeline next winter.

Mayor Copelof asked if there was any update on the shade cloths for the benches at the skate park. Mr. Hooper reported that Staff is working on getting information and cost estimates. Mr. Granat added that approximately 1/3 of the $9500 from Conserving Carolina, that had originally been for the skate park but now transferred to Bracken, is being set aside until we have a cost estimate for the shade cloths.

Mr. Granat asked about a timeline for opening the new Davidson River bridge. Mr. Hooper said staff will follow up and report back to the committee.

F. Public Comment – None.

G. Set Date for Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Parks, Trails & Recreation Committee was scheduled for Wednesday, October 16, 2024 at 3:30 PM.

H. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:21 PM.

Minutes Approved: 11/20/2024

X _____
Aaron Baker
Chair, Council Member

X _____
Denise Hodsdon
City Clerk