MINUTES
ECUSTA TRAIL ADVISORY BOARD 2.0

Wednesday, March 26th, 2025 – 3:30 pm
City Hall Council Chambers

Members Present:	Aaron Baker, Chair, Council Member Mac Morrow, Vice Chair, Council Member Dee Dee Perkins, Transylvania Development Authority John Ditillo, Friends of Ecusta Trail Doug Miller, Heart of Brevard Madeline Hanley, At-Large Appointment (joined via Zoom) Chris Burns, Ex-Officio
Absent:	Larry Chapman, Transylvania County Commissioner Rebekah Robinson, Conserving Carolina Sheila Carland, Transylvania Economic Alliance Meredith Carli, At-Large Appointment
Staff Present:	Maureen Copelof, Mayor, Ex-Officio Paul Ray, Planning Director David Todd, City Engineer Madalin Baker, Board Secretary Aaron Bland, Assistant Planning Director Wilson Hooper, City Manager
Guests:	Lonnie Watkins, NCDOT Mark Tooley, Friends of the Ecusta Trail Vicki Eastland, Land of Sky RPO Nory LeBrun, HTF, HDR, TCTDA, HAC

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A. Welcome and 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 Board Secretary Madalin Baker.

C. Approval of Agenda

D. Perkins proposed moving Public Comment up on the agenda to precede New Business. Motion to approve the agenda with that edit by D. Perkins, seconded by A. Baker. The motion carried unanimously.

D. Approval of Minutes

1. Draft Minutes 2.25.2025

A motion to approve the February draft minutes was made by A. Baker, seconded by D. Perkins, carried unanimously.

E. Public Comment

A Brevard resident mentioned to the board that he was pleased to see the progress on repaving the parking lot and driveway at the Doctor's office. The gentleman did not provide further identifying details.

F. New Business

1. Funding Update

W. Hooper provided an update regarding the status of the funding sources supporting the trail. He also looked to other folks in the room for input. J. White, NCDOT, shared RAISE and NSFLTP grants are under review at the federal level, but shared she is not exactly sure what that means. Wilson expressed a desire to talk to the Board members regarding lobbying Brevard's representatives in DC about supporting ang keeping the grants. C. Burns stepped in at that point, sharing that he had spoken to the Congressman that morning and that the representative expressed an intense motivation to fight to keep the grants. C. Burns went on to recommend continuing the project as previously planned, which L. Watkins confirmed is aligned with NCDOT policy at the moment. W. Hooper reaffirmed that regardless of what happens, the Board is supportive of reaching 100% design, with the intentions that the project could be temporarily halted and resumed later with the same design plan. L. Watkins shared that the next project milestone from their end is construction, and that they anticipate going through the standard funding request procedure for that, in the next 6 to 7 months. C. Burns reminded the board that the RAISE grant in particular passes through the Appropriations Committee in Congress, and that our congressman sits on that committee. D. Miller expressed his hope that the funding and federal support continues.

E. Unfinished Business

1. Trail Rules Follow-Up

W. Hooper recapped the edits suggested at the last meeting. Motion to approve the rules with those edits by A. Baker, second D. Perkins. Discussion followed before a vote was heard. D. Miller suggested perhaps adding a "stop at all street crossings," clause, to which C. Burns shared there are signs along the trail that will state "follow all posted trail signage." Selena, RTAC Co-Chair, also reminded the Board that unless the rules decided upon for the trail are accompanied by City ordinances, that they can't be enforced by City officials.

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A. Baker amended his previous motion to adopt the rules by recommending adoption of the rules with the addition of "follow all posted signage" and the exclusion of the speed limit rule. D. Perkins seconded. D. Miller requested the addition of "vaping use" to the tobacco clause. With those changes, the vote passed unanimously. See Attachment A for the rules as updated at this meeting.

G. Remarks/Future Agenda Considerations

C. Burns shared with the Board some items regarding Henderson County's concerns and potential new rules regarding parking around the trail. Some private land owners near the trail are looking to put in paid parking lots close to trail access. He also shared that he had been in contact with folks from the Swamp Rabit trail regarding events hosted on the trail, discovering that their policy is to work with event coordinators directly and charge $5 per head for events hosted on the trail. They do distinguish and have separate rules for "nonprofit events" and "official events." The next regularly scheduled ETAB 2.0 meeting is scheduled for April 23, 2025 at 3:30 PM.

H. Public Comments

A guest asked if board members expect Hurricane Helene to have pushed back the opening of the Henderson County portion of the trail, and C. Burns responded no—that the Henderson County portion of the Ecusta Trail is set to open to the public on June 1st.

I. Closed Session(s) – None.

J. Adjourn

There being no further business, D. Perkins motioned to adjourn, M. Morrow seconded, passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 4:10 PM.

X _____
Aaron Baker, Chair

Minutes Approved-_____

X _____
Madalin Baker, Board Secretary

Attachments: ETAB Draft: Ecusta Trail Rules and Etiquette

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