MINUTES
City Council Parks, Trails, & Recreation Committee

Wednesday, August 21, 2024 - 3:30 PM
City Council Chambers

Members Present:	Aaron Baker, Chair, Council Member Lauren Wise, Vice Chair, Council Member Howie Granat, Citizen Member Nancy DePippo, Citizen Member JD Powers, Citizen Member Reba Osborne, Citizen Member Mayor Maureen Copelof, Ex-Officio
Absent:	Wyn Birkenthal, Citizen Member
Staff Present:	Wilson Hooper, City Manager Wesley Shook, Acting Public Works Director Paul Ray, Planning Director Becky McCann, Communications Coordinator Denise Hodsdon, City Clerk
Guests:	Joy and Bryce Baron, Residents

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. Baker requested to add an item regarding an update on Bracken Preserve. Mr. Granat moved, seconded by Ms. DePippo, to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

D. Approval of Minutes from July 31, 2024 Meeting

Mr. Wise moved, seconded by Ms. Osborne to approve the minutes of the July 31, 2024 meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

E. Estatoe Trail 30% Design

Mr. Hooper informed the Committee that Council authorized him to sign a contract with Summit Engineering for 30% design for the Estatoe Trail between Main Street and the high school. Between 6 and 8 months from now we'll have an actual scientific design that tells us where it is going to go, what kind of environmental challenges we might face, and how much it is anticipated to cost. He distributed a table that included a breakdown of the remaining sections of the trail (copy attached) and noted that the list includes repairing/replacing the boardwalks behind McDonalds. He noted that Staff is still tweaking this table and will bring it to Council in the coming weeks for discussion. He asked committee members to identify which one of these sections they consider most important and would help tie the trail together and make it more usable.

Following discussion, there was consensus that the Main Street to Mary C. Jenkins Community Center section would be the first choice, followed very closely by the Rosman Hwy to Brevard High School section.

Mr. Ray said he is anxious to get the Rosman Hwy crossing built before DOT changes their mind on the mid-block crossing. Right now they have said if the city builds a sidewalk from where the bike path currently stops at Rosman Hwy to the Marathon gas station and across the street by Subway, they will install and pay for a traffic signal for crossing right there. Mayor Copelof noted that we already have people crossing there trying to get to those stores, so even if we don't have the money for the rest of the trail, getting that crossing in would be an incredible benefit for the people that are using it.

Mr. Baker noted that in the area where the boardwalk is, the raised railbed goes straight behind McDonald's but the boardwalk veers off to the right and he was curious why the railbed route wasn't chosen when the trail was built. Given the cost of replacing that boardwalk, he said he would like us to investigate the option of changing the route slightly and actually using the railbed.

F. Dog Park Paved Paths

Mr. Hooper explained that the gravel paths at the Dog Park are there to provide handicap accessible access to the shelters in the middle of the park. The gravel is a special type that can accommodate a wheelchair and ADA requirements and is very expensive. Weeds are coming up through the gravel pathway and staff is debating the idea of replacing the gravel with concrete, but there is question whether concrete is appropriate in a dog park. He asked the committee for their thoughts from a user's standpoint on paving the pathways. He mentioned that the Community Focus Foundation has $3800 that was raised for the Dog Park that we could use toward the cost. Following discussion there was consensus to recommend using concrete on the pathways.

G. Bracken Preserve Update

Mr. Granat reported that the Community Focus Foundation has $9500 from an anonymous donor that was originally intended to go to the skatepark, but because there are no current plans for Phase 2 of the skatepark, that donor has asked if that money could be transferred to Conserving Carolina for the Bracken Preserve project.

Mayor Copelof mentioned that if that money was originally intended for the skatepark, there are other needs at the skatepark such as shade over the benches and other smaller needs. Mr. Granat thought the money had already been transferred to Conserving Carolina, but suggested that if there are things needed for the skatepark, we could ask whether the donor would be okay using some of that money for that purpose before we consume that total amount for Bracken. Mr. Granat said we already have the funding for Phase 1 of Bracken, so the money would essentially be going toward Phase 2, new trail construction, and we're not ready to start that.

Mr. Granat noted that Phase 1 is currently with the Music Center. Mr. Hooper added that he is meeting with Keith Arbogast to discuss their board's feedback on our proposal. Mr. Granat said the hope is that we will be continuing to work on the climbing trail and the next piece will be the emergency access trail from Laurel Falls Road. Pisgah SORBA has been working on the trail inventory to come up with a master plan for maintenance.

Mr. Hooper also reported that he and Aaron Bland met with the Waterford Place HOA President and talked about a plan to try to get the two properties there at the pinchpoint without the encumbrances that the bank is asking us to pay before they donate it directly to the City. His board has already approved that and authorized him to come talk with us and it is a pretty reasonable plan. One condition they have is that the trails in Phase 2 not be within view of a couple of the houses there.

H. Committee/Public Comment

Joy Baron and her son Bryce commented about the Skate Park. They said shade cloths over the benches would be a good idea because those metal benches get really hot to sit on. They also asked about the status of Phase 2 and what they could do to get the ball rolling. Ms. Baron asked if the community raised half, would the City meet that? Mr. Hooper suggested that when City Council starts setting its priorities in the spring for the upcoming budget, that's when they should get their friends to come make their case for Phase 2. Mr. Granat suggested that it would be helpful if they spend a day doing a user count and bring that type of data with them. Mr. Baker also suggested that nothing should stop them from raising funds toward Phase 2. Mr. Hooper said staff would look into the cost of shade cloths.

I. Set Date for Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Parks, Trails & Recreation Committee was scheduled

for Wednesday, September 18, 2024 at 3:30 PM.

J. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:53 PM.

X _____

Aaron Baker
Chair, Council Member

Minutes Approved: September 18, 2024

X _____

Denise Hodsdon
City Clerk

ESTATOE TRAIL – OUTSTANDING PROJECTS (as of August 2024)			
SECTION	**Next steps**	**COST**	**NOTES**
Main Street to Mary C. Jenkins Center	30% Design	$65,000	30% design for Main St. to High School underway [FUNDED]
	ROW Acquisition	$500,000 est.	Acquisition areas and cost dependent on path determined by 30% design work. [PARTIALLY FUNDED]
	100% Design	UNK	
	Construction	UNK	
Tannery North	Construction	$112,000	Anticipated start date late 2024. Cost is city's match for Carbon Reduction Grant [FUNDED]
Rosman Hwy to Country Club Road	30% Design	$65,000	30% design for Main St. to High School underway [FUNDED]
	ROW Acquisition	UNK	Acquisition cost dependent on path determined by 30% design work
	100% Design	UNK	
	Construction	UNK	
Probart Street to Bracken Parking Lot	Preliminary Design	Unknown	No work has started on this section
Gallimore Road to Hap Simpson	Preliminary Design	Unknown	No work has started on this section
R-5800 Bike/Ped Betterments	Engineering Study	$75,000 est.	Needed to ensure safety of increased usage from Ecusta Trail [FUNDED]
Boardwalk Repair/Replacement	Condition assessment	UNK	Staff seeking third-party firm to conduct condition assessment
	Design/engineering	UNK	
	Construction	$250k-$750k est.	Cost largely dependent on results of condition assessment

ESTATOE TRAIL – POTENTIAL GRANTS						
GRANT NAME & AGENCY	**NEXT DEADLINE**	**RANGE**	**MATCH**	**ELIGIBLE**	**NOTES**	**RECOMMENDED PROJECT**
Complete the Trails Program [NC Parks]	TBD	$25,000 - $100,000	1:1	Planning & Construction	Must connect to French Broad River Natural surface trail only	None at this time Hap Simpson connection in the future
Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP) [FHWA]	TBD	≥ $100,000	80/20	Planning & Construction	Planning min project cost: $100,000 Construction min project cost: $15M	None at this time
Great Trails State [NC Parks]	November 2024	$100,000 - $500,000	2:1	Everything	One-time grant Min ask for construction is $300k	Boardwalk Repair/Replacement
IMD Feasibility Studies Program [NCDOT]	TBD	$60,000 - $80,000	None	Feasibility Study	Funding status unknown	MCJCC to Bracken (covers 2 rows above)
Carbon Reduction Program [FHWA via NCDOT]	TBD	≥ $100,000	80/20	Construction	Previously awarded for Tannery North	Rosman Highway Crossing if NCDOT does not fund
RTP Grant [NC Parks]	TBD	$10,000 - $100,000	75/25	Everything		None at this time