MINUTES
City Council Parks, Trails, & Recreation Committee

Wednesday, April 16, 2025 - 3:30 PM
City Council Chambers

Members Present:	Lauren Wise, Vice Chair, Council Member Howie Granat, Citizen Member Reba Osborne, Citizen Member Nancy DePippo, Citizen Member Wyn Birkenthal, Citizen Member Mayor Maureen Copelof, Ex-Officio
Absent:	Aaron Baker, Chair, Council Member JD Powers, Citizen Member
Staff Present:	David Todd, Assistant City Manager Paul Ray, Planning Director Aaron Bland, Assistant Planning Director Wesley Shook, Public Works Director Becky McCann, Communications Coordinator Selena Coffey, Assistant to the City Manager
Guests:	Peter Barry (Pisgah Conservancy), Gary Lowden (Pisgah SORBA)

A. Welcome & Call to Order

Committee Vice Chair Lauren Wise welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 3:31pm.

B. Certification of Quorum

A quorum was certified by Assistant to the City Manager Selena Coffey.

C. Approval of Agenda

Ms. Osborne made a motion to approve the agenda, and the motion was seconded by Ms. DePippo. All voted in favor.

D. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Osborne made a motion to approve the February 19, 2025 meeting minutes and the March 19, 2025 meeting notes. The motion was seconded by Ms. DePippo. All voted in favor.

E. Pisgah Conservancy Proposed Loop Route through Bracken

Pisgah Conservancy's Peter Barry was in attendance to present a proposal designating a loop route through Bracken Preserve. He explained the proposal and Mr. Bland distributed maps and signage proposed for the loop designation. The 3 proposed signs are 8 feet tall and 4.5 feet wide and show the name of the loop, the map, a "you are here" designation and a statement of thanks to the benefactors. Mr. Barry shared that the signs are estimated to cost approximately $20,000 but the Conservancy is not seeking any city funding. Committee members asked questions about the signage, to which Mr. Barry and Mr. Bland responded. Committee members provided their input and feedback regarding the plans for the loop and the signage. Mr. Todd noted that there needs to be an MOU that clearly defines who is responsible for the maintenance of the signs.

Mr. Bland asked if the committee could endorse the plan for the concept for the project and placement of the signs. Mr. Granat made a motion to endorse the project concept and signage, ensuring that the new signs are aligned with other signage, and the motion was seconded by Ms. DePippo. All voted in favor.

F. Rotary Club Peace Poles Follow-up

With City Manager Hooper unable to attend the committee meeting, this item was tabled for the next meeting.

G. Update on Estatoe Trail Crossing

Mr. Ray shared that NCDOT will address the Estatoe Trail crossing with a traffic signal if the city builds the sidewalk on Rosman Highway to the gas station. He noted that the city has funds for the project and Public Works is expected to construct the sidewalk in early summer. No action by the committee was necessary.

H. Report on Condition of Playground Equipment at Franklin Park and Hillview Street

Mr. Todd presented photos of the playground equipment at Franklin Park and at Hillview Street/Silversteen Park. He noted that the metal playground on Hillview Street is in relatively good condition at this time even with the age of the equipment. Mr. Shook shared that this equipment was installed 15-20 years ago and although it is showing rust, it is in relatively good condition.

Mr. Todd then shared photos of the playground equipment at Franklin Park. He shared that it is difficult to see children when they are playing in some of the tunnels within the equipment. He noted that the biggest issue with this playground equipment is that it is largely a wooden structure and while it has been maintained well, its age tends to lend to kids getting splinters from the wood.

Mr. Todd then shared photos of playground equipment from the Town of Mooresville and the committee discussed new options for playground equipment.

Mr. Todd concluded by sharing that there are no imminent immediate safety hazards with the current playground equipment even with the age of the equipment and commended the Public Works team for doing a good job in maintaining both sets of playground equipment. Ms. Copelof noted that parents often contact her asking when the playground equipment may be replaced. She shared the city should develop a plan for replacing the equipment and for asking for public input for what amenities the community might like to include with new equipment. Committee members furthered this discussion and asked that the City Manager provide input on a timeline and plan for holding community input sessions on the replacement of playground equipment in approximately 5 years.

I. Updates:

1. Bracken Trail/Climbing Trail Loop

Mr. Granat updated the committee and noted that the markers on the emergency access trail have gone up. He stated that Pisgah SORBA is ready to begin to develop the new trail system in the new land. Gary Lowden, Pisgah SORBA, also updated the committee on the development of a scope of work and stated that they are ready to go to bid. He stated that the project had been put out to bid with 3 contractors and they look forward to receiving bids.

Mr. Granat shared that there plans to put together an event called "Bracken Fest" in collaboration with the Brevard Rotary Club. Mr. Lowden shared that there will be 2 more workdays for Bracken soon.

2. Sports Complex Restrooms and Parking

Mr. Ray updated the committee, stating that the Sports Complex restrooms and parking project did not receive consensus for funding within City Council's recent budget workshop and suggested that the Tourism Development Authority (TDA) may be the next option for funding. He noted that McAdams had presented a cost estimate of $50,000 for the site planning. Ms. DePippo asked if the county was planning on attending a future meeting of the committee. Ms. Coffey shared that she had invited the county's recreation director and had also spoken briefly with the county manager about the invitation.

3. Estatoe Boardwalk Assessment

Mr. Todd shared that he had received the draft assessment report. He summarized that the firm assessing the boardwalk felt that it does not make economic sense to try to repair the boardwalk but instead recommends complete replacement of the

boardwalk. He noted that the amount necessary to replace the boardwalk may be influenced by the amount of time for funding it. He concluded that building the boardwalk back as a wooden boardwalk is estimated at $450,000 and adding the handrail would add $80,000-$100,000. He stated that the best improvement included the recommendation to replace the wooden boards with composite material. This would add another $120,000 to the project. Another option would be to add a concrete boardwalk system with handrails, which is estimated to cost $1.3 million in total. Mr. Todd shared that the boardwalk is generally not in good condition with many boards and joists in disrepair. It was noted that this project has not been budgeted but has been discussed by city council as the top priority for the use of remaining funds within the trail budget.

4. **30% Design for the Remaining Sections of the Estatoe Trail**

   Mr. Ray stated that there are no new updates on the 30% design, but Summit Engineering expects to have this complete by next month. There was brief discussion of the Tannery project and timeline.

J. Committee Member Term Expirations

Ms. Coffey shared that this agenda item and the previously distributed applications from those interested in serving on the committee had been placed on the agenda for information and that action wasn't required by the committee. She noted that 8 people had applied for the committee and that 1 person on the committee, Ms. DePippo, will have served her term limit as of the end of May. Others noted that they were reapplying for the committee.

K. Public Comment

No public comment.

L. Set Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for May 21, 2025 at 3:30pm.

M. Adjourn

Ms. DePippo made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Ms. Osborne. All voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at 5:04pm.

Approved: May 21, 2025

Aaron Baker, Chair or
Lauren Wise, Vice Chair

Selena D. Coffey
Assistant to the City Manager