MINUTES
BREVARD CITY COUNCIL
Special Meeting
August 25, 2025 – 5:30 PM

The Brevard City Council met for a specially called meeting on Monday, August 25, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall with Mayor Copelof presiding.

Present – Mayor Maureen Copelof, Mayor Pro Tem Gary Daniel and Council Members Aaron Baker, Mac Morrow, and Lauren Wise.

Absent – Council Member Pamela Holder

Staff Present – City Attorney Mack McKeller, City Manager Wilson Hooper, City Clerk Denise Hodsdon, Assistant Manager/Finance Director Dean Luebbe, Assistant City Manager David Todd, Planning Director Paul Ray, and Communications Coordinator Becky McCann

Press – David Bradley, Transylvania Times

A. Welcome and Call to Order – Mayor Copelof called the meeting to order and welcomed those present.

B. Certification of Quorum - City Clerk Denise Hodsdon certified a quorum present. Mr. Morrow moved, seconded by Mr. Baker to excuse Ms. Holder. The motion carried unanimously.

C. Approval of Agenda – Mr. Wise moved, seconded by Mr. Baker, to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

D. Public Comment

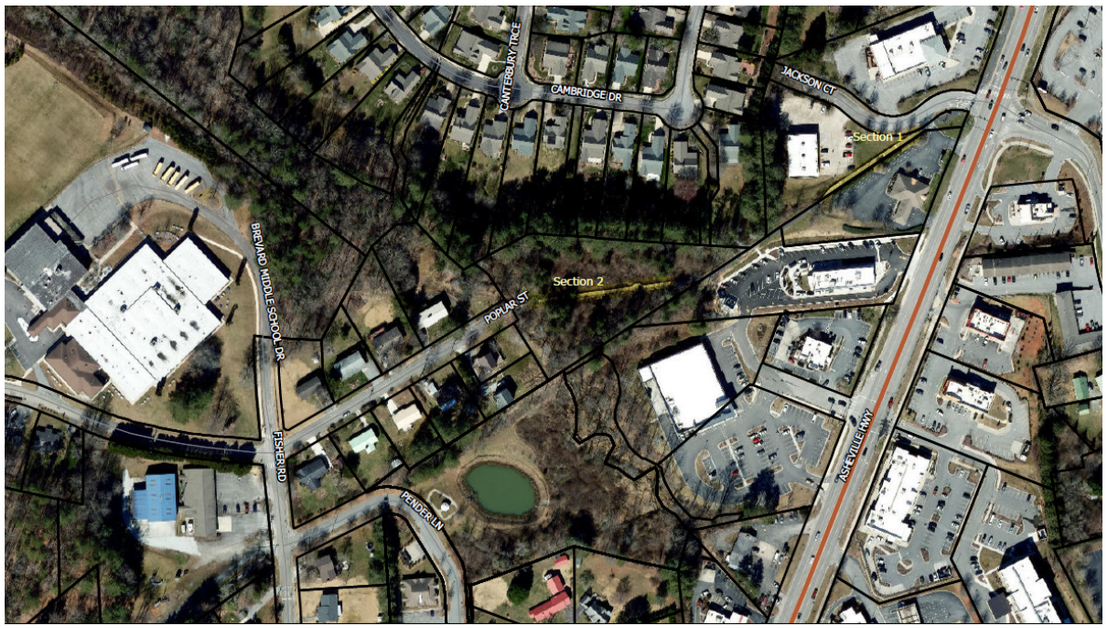
Hannah Ball said we are Stephen and Hannah Ball, the owners of 72 Poplar St. We want to begin by saying that we really do value the bike path and the Estatoe Trail. It's a wonderful asset to the community and we fully support having it in our town. In fact, it is one of the reasons we chose to buy our property. Our concern tonight is not with the path itself, but with the temporary reroute behind the Poplar St. homes being made into a permanent solution. Since the reroute was placed behind our property it has disrupted our daily lives. What used to be our private backyard, our place of rest and family time, is now directly exposed to constant foot and bike traffic. Both the front and back of our home now face public use and because our entire back of our house is an all-glass sunroom, there is now a clear view straight into our home from the trail. This was one of the reasons we bought our house as well, a room we cherish for its privacy and solitude, and now that is being taken away. Unfortunately, it hasn't stopped there. Foot traffic has now grown to include trespassers cutting directly through our yard from the trail to Poplar St. We've had garbage left behind, people coming through all hours of the night, and just this past weekend there was a motorcycle that drove through at 10:31 p.m. It's not just inconvenient; this feels unsafe for us. When the trail ran along Poplar St. all of the homes faced it. The neighbors had easy access and it felt safe. Now, it cuts through the woods behind our homes, hidden, unsupervised, and right against our backyards, which makes us feel exposed and uneasy. And, we are not the only ones—our neighbors who could not attend tonight, asked us to share their experience. They purchased their home eight years ago specifically for the privacy offered, as well as that location on the trail but having their own private area. Now with the trail running just feet from their house and their three young children, they feel so unsafe and intruded upon that they have made the decision to move after eight years in this home. This is how profoundly this change has affected them. This situation could have been avoided had the city properly maintained that original trail, and I can't help

but wonder if the boardwalk has been allowed to fall into disrepair, how can residents feel confident that the rest of the trail will not, including this reroute. A temporary fix is now at risk of becoming permanent, but at the expense of the families who have lived alongside and cared for this land for decades. So, tonight I respectfully implore the Council, please find another solution. We are not opposed to the trail, or even this reroute as a temporary fix. We understand the need for this. But, we are opposed to a temporary solution turning permanent that will sacrifice our peace, privacy, and safety in order to solve what should be a temporary problem. We are hopeful that you can support the trail while also protecting the citizens and families who live alongside of it. Please choose a route that works long-term for both the community and for the people who call it home.

E. New Business

E-1. Estatoe Trail Realignment Recommendation and Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) Grant Application

Mr. Hooper explained that city staff and Council have been discussing the need to replace the two above-grade boardwalks between Jackson Ct. and Fisher Rd. for about a year now, but it took on an additional sense of urgency earlier this summer when the woodlands section of the boardwalk failed. At its meeting on August 20, 2025 the Parks, Trails & Recreation Committee recommended that we study and include in our grant application removing the first section of boardwalk (between the Credit Union and Autozone) and replacing it with an at-grade asphalt solution. This will be easier to maintain in the long-term and it can be built to accommodate whatever alignment we eventually choose for the section further north. But, the bigger question for Council to consider tonight is what should be done about the section section of boardwalk through the woods that has failed.



Mr. Hooper said we have estimates for three different "replacement" options for the boardwalk, each with a distinct set of tradeoffs. None of those three options is perfect, and so at the encouraging of the Parks, Trails & Recreation Committee, we started looking at what it would take to lose the boardwalk and realign the trail onto the extant railbed nearby. He and David Todd reviewed the estimated costs, as well as the pros and cons of each option. Mr. Hooper reported that at their last meeting the Parks, Trails & Recreation Committee reviewed the options and recommended that we pursue the new alignment along the old railbed and submit a grant application for that project. Paul Ray added that there is a funding opportunity that would help us repair the broken boardwalk section of the trail behind McDonald's and the Credit Union, no matter what alignment Council chooses. The Federal Land Access Program (FLAP) is a federal program that funds projects improving access to places like Pisgah National Forest. The City was awarded $1M in FLAP funding in 2022 for the engineering of the

Ecusta Trail. The Ecusta Trail is a perfect fit because it connects Downtown Brevard to Pisgah National Forest, and right now that connection is broken. FLAP funds can cover rehabilitation of multi-use trails and bridges, and in our region the program will pay 100% of the project cost with no local match. If awarded, this would allow us to improve safety and reestablish the connection from downtown to Pisgah National Forest. Staff believes we have a competitive grant application and is requesting Council approve a resolution identifying which alignment/repair option they wish to pursue, and authorizing staff to submit the FLAP grant application.

Staff presented two resolutions with different alignment options for Council's consideration:

Option A: Repair the Lambo Creek boardwalk and convert the second section of boardwalk along Jackson Court to an on-grade paved trail

Option B: Remove the Lambo Creek boardwalk, as well as the second section of boardwalk along Jackson Court, and convert the entirety of these sections to an on-grade paved trail, roughly in alignment with the old rail bed

Mr. Baker moved, seconded by Mr. Wise to adopt the resolution with Option B.

During discussion Mr. Baker asked what the temporary trail will consist of. Mr. Hooper explained that it will consist of laying down a gravel path along the old railbed that will vary in width but will be wide enough in all places for two folks to pass safely. On the north side from approximately where you emerge from the tree line behind Aldi to the corner of the Ball's property, the length of approximately 300 feet there will be an 8-foot privacy fence to provide privacy to the Ball family and their neighbors in the house close to the trail right-of-way. The remaining section going southward will have a split-rail fence.

Mr. Daniel said he would like to see us continue to pursue the necessary rights-of-way to reroute the trail (Section 1) behind CVS and Arby's.

Following discussion, vote on the motion to approve the resolution with Option B was unanimously in favor. The motion carried.

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-51
A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING STAFF TO APPLY FOR A FEDERAL LANDS ACCESS PROGRAM GRANT FROM THE EASTERN LANDS HIGHWAY DIVISION OF THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

WHEREAS, The City of Brevard has long valued quality multi-modal transportation infrastructure to meet the needs of our citizens, a value expressed through numerous public input efforts and planning processes over many years of various studies; and

WHEREAS, Brevard understands that a safe, reliable, affordable, and accessible transportation system for all users is essential to the quality of life of our residents and for the health of our economy; and

WHEREAS, the City of Brevard's Estatoe Trail greenway provides a vital connection between downtown Brevard and Pisgah National Forest and many destinations in between; and

WHEREAS, the future Ecusta Trail will connect with the Estatoe Trail, creating a regional trail connection into Brevard and Pisgah National Forest; and

WHEREAS, a vital connection of this greenway system, the boardwalk over Lambo Creek, has fallen into disrepair and was necessarily closed; and

WHEREAS, the City of Brevard, in working to restore and reopen this vital connection, intends to enhance the trail further by removing the Lambo Creek boardwalk, as well as the second section of boardwalk along Jackson Court, and convert the entirety of these sections to an on-grade paved trail, roughly in alignment with the old rail bed; and

WHEREAS, the Eastern Federal Lands Access Program has issued a call for projects and will be accepting Federal Lands Access Program applications in order to develop a multi-year program of projects for Federal Fiscal Years 2027 through 2029; and

WHEREAS, the Estatoe Trail is eligible for this funding by virtue of providing access to the federal lands of Pisgah National Forest.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BREVARD, NORTH CAROLINA THAT:

SECTION 1. The City Manager is hereby authorized to submit a grant application for the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) for the funding of the work needed to reopen the City's greenway, as described above.

SECTION 2. The City Manager is hereby authorized to accept funding should the City's application be awarded, for the purposes described in the application.

SECTION 3. This Resolution shall become effective upon its adoption and approval.

Adopted and approved this the 25th day of August 2025.

Attest: s/ Denise Hodsdon, CMC, NCCMC, City Clerk s/ Maureen Copelof, Mayor

F. Adjourn – There being no further business, Mr. Morrow moved, seconded by Mr. Daniel, to adjourn the meeting at 6:18 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

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Maureen Copelof
Mayor

Denise Hodsdon, CMC
City Clerk

Minutes Approved: September 15, 2025