

GREENWAY COMMISSION MEETING

February 14, 2013

3:30-5:00 pm

First Floor Conference Room-City Hall



GREENWAY COMMISSION MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the City of Asheville's Greenway Commission is to advise City Council on implementation of a system of greenways within Asheville by integrating City and County Parks and Transportation plans while educating and engaging the public and advocating for funding.

Members Present: Jim Grode, Chairman, Marcia Bromberg, Vice-Chairman, Bryan Mitchell, Mary Weber, Sue Barlow, Ally Donlan Wilson

Staff Present: Mariate Echeverry, Transportation Planning Manager, Roderick Simmons, Director, Parks and Recreation Department, Martha McGlohon, Assistant City Attorney, Blake Esselstyn, Planning & Development, Janet GeorgeMurr, Transportation Department.

Community Present: Carolyn Bacchus, Ray Gurriere.

- Chairman Grode called the meeting to order at 3:30.
- Chairman Grode introduced and welcomed, Bryan Mitchell, as the new member to Greenway Commission. Bryan thanked GC for choosing him to be a part of this commission. He is excited about what is happening in Asheville and feels a great responsibility for helping to continue to carry the torch forward and to bring a lot of energy to the board. Bryan has lived in different areas with great greenway systems and multi-transportation pathways and he hopes to bring some of the insight to the commission. Bryan is a big proponent of non-motorized transportation and looks forward to getting started and learning from the Greenway Commissioners.

• **Review and approval of 2-14-13 agenda:** Mariate asked to move Cathy Ball's presentation earlier on the agenda. Jim moved to approve the agenda; Marcia and Sue seconded and carried unanimously.

• **Review and approval of 1-10-12 minutes:** Marcia moved to approve the minutes as written, Jim seconded and carried unanimously.

New Business:

- **Update on realignment of City departments to create a multi-modal cluster** - Cathy Ball stated:
 1. Reorganization of the City stemmed from the annual report from the GC to the Council and the need for multi-modal planning and implementation to provide for space in every mode of transportation. It is clear that the City needs to integrate the infrastructure master plans in a collaborative way to allow all modes of transportation to co-exist in the same network.
 2. Cathy has been asked to lead this group and will be working with P&R, Roderick, Ken, Mariate and Water Department.
 3. In structuring the alignment, the Boards and Commissions group spoke with Cathy on how to evaluate the Boards and Commission side to compliment City Council's Strategic Goals.
 4. Cathy showed GC a diagram of the concept of a creation of a Multi-Modal Transportation Commission (MMTC) which will have representation of the various modes of transportation, as follows: 3 members from Bike and Pedestrian Task Force; 3 members from Greenway Commission; 3 members from Transit Commission; 1 member from Planning and Zoning Commission; and 1 member from Neighborhood Advisory Commission. The MMTC will be reporting information sharing with their respective sub-committees and assisting in making recommendations to the MMTC.
 5. Boards and Commissions recommended meeting with the different commissions for feedback.

6. Cathy will return to Council on March 12 after speaking with all of the different groups and provide Council with feedback.

Questions from GC:

1. Marcia asked if the three members from the Greenway Commission, specifically, would still be active members of the Greenway sub-committee. Cathy answered: Yes.
2. Marcia asked if the MMTC would still be an advisory group to Council and the sub-committee would be advisory to the MMTC. Cathy stated that is how it is proposed.
3. Ally asked if the sub-committee would still have a Council liaison. Cathy stated there are still questions on the level of support. On the level of staff support, the Boards and Commission discussed a transitional period which would eventually be phased out.
4. Marcia stated that there will be a work session next month and would like to incorporate this subject into this session. This transition changes the focus of what the Greenway Sub-Committee is as opposed to what the MMTC group would do. Marcia stated that the concept sounds reasonable but is trying to envision the purpose of the Greenway Sub-Committee once the MMTC gets going.
5. Cathy stated that GC has had more discussions about multi-modal transportation and GC has brought this to the forefront. The need for a Greenway Sub-Committee is composed of a larger group to help in brainstorming and as a resource for MMTC.
6. Marcia stated that it would be hard for the sub-committees to function in not having continuous staff support. Cathy suggested for GC to provide in email form as to what level of staff support for the sub-committees there should be.
7. Cathy could make a recommendation to Council on 3/12 to delay GC's decision on the MMTC concept.
8. Jim's questions: How the new commission would be perpetuated? What levels are appointed by Council? How the MMTC is envisioned to work? Cathy stated that GC would make a recommendation on the three members for Council to consider. Ideally, it would be the people that are currently serving in these roles and it would not go through the Boards and Commissions application process to be on MMTC. To be appointed by Council, this is a requirement of the Boards and Commissions. Further, if one of the sub-committees decides to no longer exist, the process would be different in terms of how the members of MMTC would be populated.
9. Cathy stated the sub-committee would self-regulate on how to populate the sub-committee, similar to the Bike and Ped group. It would be open to anyone that would like to participate and a small group would do the work. The sub-committees would not be Council appointees.
10. Mary stated that she likes the idea of the centralized committee in terms of having more coordination and dialog in the other groups, but is concerned about the lack of staff support for the Greenway sub-committee.
11. Ally asked if the Greenway representatives of MMTC would be reporting to the Greenway Sub-Committee. Ally feels that it could be positive if the sub-committee was not appointed by Council in opening up to more voices and points of view.
12. Cathy stated that ultimately, the vision of integrating all of the modes is to have representatives of the different commissions at the same table having the same conversation.
13. Jim stated that GC meetings have been consistent with a multi-modal concept. GC does not know how this will work in the end and GC is trying to figure the way towards that and what is the best for GC, greenways and for other multi-modal transportation options.
14. Cathy stated that it would be helpful to wait until GC has the work session on 3/14.
17. Cathy is developing talking points and FAQs. Cathy will make available to GC to have more time to process this information.
18. Cathy will be speaking to Transit Commission on 3/5/13 and to the Bike and Ped on 2/28/13.
19. Implementation of MMTC is anticipated on 7/1/13. Cathy stated that it is more important that everyone feel that everyone is going in the right direction.

● **3-14-13 Greenway Commission Work Session:** Jim stated that in light of the announcement of MMTC that the agenda for the work session will change.

1. Roderick stated that the greenway system is a spawn of a multi-modal in identifying the corridors and how the sidewalks, bike lanes and street are incorporated in the plan. Once the identifying and prioritizing

of the corridors are complete; then to find a project within those corridors to begin working on a feasible study. Roderick suggested adding the MMTC discussion to the work session agenda for 30 minutes.

2. Jim stated that GC will have some opportunity to think about the MMTC and talk informally. Mary stated that since it is a month away that Cathy might be sending more information.
3. Jim stated that the main focus of the work session remains of working on a criteria and begin to apply the criteria for identifying priorities for greenway development in the City and moving forward.
4. Marcia stated that she does not see on the 3/14 work session agenda the information from the other segments. If GC prioritized the greenways but not having the information we need about bike planning, pedestrian planning and other planning. Roderick stated that the first part of the meeting will be looking at the geographical areas of the City of N, S, E or W, then the layers of where the bike, pedestrian sidewalk, streets, etc. would be identified. What are the criteria for determining which area to move forward in looking at destinations, economic impact, and community infield development? Then bring the individual projects with bike, pedestrian, streets, and sidewalks.
5. Marcia suggested rescheduling the work session to April in order for GC to digest all of the information and to talk about the MMTC. After a group discussion, it was decided that since the representatives of the each department for a multi-modal will be present at the March 14th meeting, that the broader planning elements would be discussed.
6. Roderick will change the March14 agenda to accommodate the time on the agenda to better use and compressed some of the agenda items.

- **Greenway Commission Vision Statement:** Jim stated that he and Marcia have talked about and realized after speaking with the work session facilitator, Kata Bates, that GC did not have a vision statement. Jim will send to Greenway Commission, Mariate, Roderick and Cathy B. in a Word document for edits and that the vision meets the new structure of the Multi-Modal Transportation Commission (MMTC.)

- **Commission Coordination:** Jim suggested skipping this agenda item.

- **Bicycle and Ped Count:** Carolyn Bacchus is a UNC-A student. Carolyn was working with NC Center for Health and Wellness in doing community collaboration and linked up with Barb Mee to help with volunteer coordination. In 2009, 2010, 2012 participated in a national event called the Bicycle and Pedestrian documentation project to collect data to generate demand models for various land use in urban, suburban and rural areas to make communities aware of who is using the street. The volunteers identified busy intersections for pedestrians and cyclists around the City and entrances to greenways but mostly on the street for 2 hours from 5 to 7pm on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday as identified in the national model as consistent days and also weekend counts; near school zones and early mornings. In 2012, the top 3 intersections for pedestrians is Haywood and College at Prichard Park; and Lexington and College; Vermont and Haywood; and the top 5 for cyclists was Montford and Courtland; WT Weaver Blvd and University Heights; Lexington and College; Haywood Road and Vermont and Haywood Street and College Street. Carolyn is asking for volunteers for next year's Bike and Pedestrian count; to contact lstradle@unca.edu or bmee@ashevillenc.gov. Mary suggested asking for volunteers from Asheville High School students who are on the honor society that gives service credits for volunteering.

- **Status Update on Multi-Modal Plan Review Proposal:** Mariate stated that she has not heard from senior management. With the reorganization development, this subject may be placed on the "shelf" until the new structure is in place.

- **Strategic Plan Development:** GC reviewed the list of the Strategic Plan Development. Jim stated that this arose from the last retreat and came up with a goal of developing a strategic plan for GC. Jim presented to Council that GC would be spending time on that goal at each of the GC meetings. At this meeting, for the first step to take what we identified as the true charge of the GC from the May, 2012 meeting; and to identify which of these fit into goals, vision, mission and tasks to determine the gaps. Figuring out how to identify and understand what it is that GC is best suited to do where there have leverage and to have the ability to make change in focusing GC's energies.

Ally suggested waiting until after 3/14 work session as we prioritize things more to reassess the list of the strategic plan development.

Greenway Updates:

- **Community Outreach Committee Report:** Sue reported:
 1. Commends Montford newsletter regarding the UNC-A Foundation update on the greenway progress.
 2. An event: "Bike Love" at the Isis on 2/23/13 from 6-9pm and requested GC representation. Sue, Jim and Ally volunteered to attend.
 3. An event: "Designing Health Communities" at UNC-A on 2/18 6:30-9pm at the Wilma Sherrill Center that Sue will attend; and again on 3/25 that Mary Weber will attend.

Public Comment:

Ray Gurriere - is a member of a Board of people who live on Beaucatcher Greenway. Last month at GC meeting, Ray invited GC to see the alternative route that is less obtrusive and more scenic than what is proposed. Since no one accepted the invitation, Ray is assuming that the City is planning to take over the Sky Club driveway and use as the right-a-way. Marcia stated that what Ray heard was the consultant who is looking into the alternate route and reporting back to GC. Roderick stated that the consultants are gathering the information to begin work. Once the design portion is completed there will be a public outreach

Martha McGlohon suggested to Mr. Gurriere to contact Albert Sneed with Van Winkle Law Firm, who is representing the Sky Club residents, of any updates on the progress. Martha also suggested to Mr. Gurriere to discuss with Mr. Sneed the process of facilitating the alternative proposal with the City Attorney's Office.

- **Asheville Parks and Greenway Foundation Report:** No report since Stephen Jones is out of town.

- **Bike/Pad Task Force Update:** Jim reported:

1. Al Kopf on behalf of Parks and Rec presented the River to Ridge Initiative to the Bike/Ped Task Force; they supported the effort.
2. Jim stated that he will solicit input from the Bike/Ped Task Force meeting on 2/28 to bring to the GC work session on 3/14/13.
3. Jim announced that Bryan Mitchell is the new liaison to this task force.

STAFF UPDATES:

- **PRCA Update:** GC reviewed the Greenway Updates attached to GC packet for today's meeting.
 1. Roderick stated 3 grants totally \$1.7 millions to help fund the development of Beaucatcher Reservoir Park and Greenway; Town Branch Connection; Depot Street Connector and Clingman Forest Greenway which will help to move other greenway projects forward.
 2. Jim's asked about a land swap that went to Council. Roderick stated that it was land swap with Wind in the Oaks. The Beaucatcher property was purchased by COA from Helen's Bridge to McCormick Field. The spur up to White Fawn where the tower site is located is in private property. In order to connect that part to the trail an easement is needed and Wind in the Oaks Homeowners Association owns that property. Roderick asked Wind in the Oaks Homeowners Association if they would allow connecting this trail for a future park by doing a land swap with COA. In that way, there is a buffer between Wind in the Oaks property; and a connection which will be an overlook vista park in the future. In the past, that portion was called the Sister City Park and to be developed as a world attraction park area which went to Council on 2/12/13.
 3. Marcia asked if the grant funding for the west side of French Broad the Haywood Road to French Broad River Park is proceeding and where it stands in the funding portion. Roderick stated that it depends on other grant funding that is received and is trying to develop a funding source for the construction documents. If any of the grants come through, \$1.7 Million will be freed up funding to proceed with the design and other purposes. Roderick stated that the goal is to acquire land and doing the design work years before actual construction.

5. Burris Property - Roderick stated that the negotiating are going well and hopes to have further information by next week.

6. Between Amboy Rd and Carrier Park there is piece of land that is not paved which the City is trying to acquire.

- **Transportation Update:** Mariate reported two updates:

1. The City has a TIGER grant for east of the riverway and there are several projects aligned under this grant, one of which is the Town Branch and Clingman Greenway. There is a transportation network project that is also part of the grant. The project was bided on and now is in the process of selecting the consultants. In the next two months will have a consultant and a contract signed to move forward. This project's intent is to create a transportation network that enhances the transportation options in the area considering all multi-modal approaches, creating roads that are pedestrian friendly and promote walking, biking, etc. Mariate will continue to update GC on the plan.

2. Preparing to install 10 more shelters in the transit areas. A consultant has produced all of the drawings and getting ready to bid that project and hope to be completed in June.

- **Planning:** Blake reported:

1. Town Branch and Clingman Forest that Roderick had mentioned in his updates and that Council approved the design contract. There will be staff involvement on part of the Tiger II arrangement in that the City is providing some of the contribution through in-kind staff time. Blake will be working with Scott Barnwell in IT for the GIS working with the consultants.

2. Lake Craig Project Phase I of the major subdivision had the final approval by Planning and Zoning last week.

3. Al Kopf and Nikki Reed met with the potential donor of the Lollis Tract, which is moving forward and had a productive conversation and discussing the steps that need to happen. This would be preserving the flat platform near Sand Hill Road but the rest of the stretch along the river will be donated to the City.

Final Comments:

Marcia stated that the former members of the Buncombe County Greenway Commission will be meeting next week to discuss forming a group that would become "Friends of the Greenway." Marcia will report updates from that meeting.

Jim Adjourned at 4:55 pm