

GREENWAY COMMISSION MEETING

January 10, 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, Glen Locascio, Stephen Jones, Mary Weber, Sue Barlow, Ally Donlan Wilson and Chris Pelly, Council Liaison.

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: Ben Judsen, John Pierce, Duncan McPherson, David Patterson, Phyllis Stiles.

●Chairman Grode called the meeting to order at 3:30.

●**Review and approval of 1-10-13 agenda:** Marcia moved to approve the agenda, Sue seconded and carried unanimously.

●**Review and approval of 12/13/12 minutes:** Marcia moved to approve the minutes as written, Stephen seconded and carried unanimously.

Two Presentations:

1. **Duncan McPherson, Chairman of Sustainability Advisory Committee** on Energy and the Environment (SACEE): On behalf of the GC, Marcia Bromberg spoke at one of the SACCEE meetings and Duncan was invited to speak at a GC meeting in reaching out to citizen advisory groups. The Sustainability group had a lot of overlap potential with greenways, P&Z, Transit and others. It is important to open the lines of communication to other groups and to see where there is collaboration to avoid duplicate effort. Duncan gave a brief overview of SACEE and his background.

- SACEE started in 2007. An initiative from Council to address global warming and how the City could have a local effort in dealing with this issue. The City established SACEE as an advisory committee; established the Office of Sustainability and initiated the process of creating a sustainability management plan which is included in the GC handouts. Two of the goals that City set initially was to

1. Reduce the carbon foot print of City operations by 80%.
2. Improving the efficiency of existing facilities and new municipal buildings by 2050 which translates to a 2% reduction every year since 2009. In 3 years the City has reduced 8% so far. LEED certification stands for Leadership and Energy Environmental Design which is a national green building program administered by the US Green Building Council. Also, SACEE is looking at existing City buildings in ways to improve the energy efficiency. In the 6 years has grown beyond carbon footprint and buildings. Dealing with food policy; solid waste; recycling programs; stormwater management; transportation, etc.

3. Cecil Bothwell is the City's liaison on SACEE; Maggie Ullman, Director of Office of Sustainability is the staff support; 9 other members including architect, landscape architects, land planners, civil engineer, graphics and marketing, economic development from Advantage West;

construction industry; member from Green Opportunities. A much diversified group that helps to maintain a diverse perspective on issues that SACEE is dealing with.

4. At the SACEE meetings there are educational components which are related to City staff; local non-profits; private institutions; i.e. MANNA Food Bank, Progress Energy, etc. Expanding the network of who we are dealing with in our community and understanding what is happening in the sphere of local policy. Also, field visits such as the landfill, waste water treatment plants, which helps to connect with other communities and expand the network.

5. Council provides direction and SACEE works with staff on drafting whatever various issues at that time, such as food policy being the most recent for the past 6 months by reviewing with various community groups.

6. The goal is to find opportunities for collaboration.

7. SACEE helped the City on drafting the expanded recycling program that is now at 80% volume by weight.

8. The City has two development incentives in place to encourage more development within the city limits and reduce the amount of outward growth; larger impact on our infrastructure and sprawl.

a. One incentive is the density bonus that allows the developer to increase the density of units if green building techniques and/or affordable housing. This is a tier approach for greener and more affordable, more density you get.

b. Second development incentive is the tax based. Same principle of green building and affordable housing incorporated in these developments, certain developers could receive a tiered approach to tax rebates on the property taxes from the City.

Two powerful tools that can help shape the way Asheville grows and help encourage development within the City that matches the values and principles of our community.

9. Worked on LED street lights that are being replaced. This was guidance from SACEE to understand the priorities for the City and how to use energy block grant funding that existed.

10. How do we make the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) more sustainable, more energy efficient which is a large task, such the light pollution, dark sky initiatives and looking at rejuvenate and refine the Light Ordinance?

11. Updating the plant list in the UDO in which Mary Weber was huge help.

12. How do we improve the UDO on local ordinances, local policies up to the level of new technology and energy efficiency?

13. Overlapping with Greenways on how to improve the UDO which is the document that describes the policy and how we work in the City.

14. The Sustainability Management Plan which was initiated in 2007. Duncan provided GC with a simplified 1/2 page version of 170 pages of 2009 document of goals and focused areas that the sustainability management plan is looking to achieve, which is the guiding document that dictates and directs the goals and policies for the City moving forward.

15. SACEE's goal is for sustainability to be an overarching principle in every department and every aspect of the City's operations. A good part of 2013 will be reviewing the Sustainability Management Plan since it has been four years since it was originally drafted. An outside consultant created the document which can be viewed on the City's website. If there is any collaboration and/or input from the GC would be appreciated.

● **Comments/Questions from Commissioners:**

- ❑ Marcia stated that with multi-modal transportation that GC would like to be included on the work session with SACEE to combine knowledge and interest.
- ❑ Jim asked about the quality of water segment SACEE did not mention. Duncan stated that stormwater is part of the sustainability management plan, which is in the City jurisdiction for now.

2. John Pierce from UNC-A, Vice Chancellor of Finance and Treasurer of the UNCA-Foundation for the past four years. John also chairs the organizing committee for the Environmental Sustainability Committee at UNC-A and shared the news that UNC-A has the lowest BTU per square foot of any of the 16 UNC schools; and installing solar panels on one of the dorms and one of the first tax credit finance deals.

John stated, chronically, how the property at 525 Broadway came about:

1. In December 2011. John spoke with David Patterson, President of the Montford Neighborhood Association (MNA) about the possibility of UNC-A Foundation buying the former Health Adventure property. On 1/17/12 met with the MNA which received a lot of input about the Foundation's purchase of the property. The closing took place on 2/12/12 and after that UNC-A had to stabilize the property. John showed a map of the envisioned greenway.

2. . Karen Cragolin of Riverlink approached the Foundation offering support of the project along with the Montford Neighborhood Association to raise \$60,000.

3. The Foundation representatives walked the path of the greenway with City representatives and the City worked on P&R design coming up with the optimal path for the greenway and meetings with Roderick Simmons, Al Kopf and other City staff to discuss the specifics of the greenway in the summer and early fall of 2012.

4. The alternative 2 plan made the most sense; the Foundation would grant an easement to the City for use of the land as public greenway. In exchange, the Foundation would acquire the thin strip of land along Broadway that the City previously designated for the greenway path.

5. John met with Ken Putnam, Traffic Engineer to work through the issues. The Foundation and City realized that this project was moving quickly and a number of other projects had a higher priority for development and resources.

6. In early October, 2012 the Foundation found out about a grant opportunity from NC Division of P&R which is the recreational trails program and there is 3.75 million dollars available for greenways across the State. The pre-application for the grant is for \$200,000 was submitted 11/1/13 for \$200,000 with a \$50,000 match. A final grant application is due on 1/31/13.

7. The other funding for this greenway is proposed to come equally from the City and UNC-A Foundation. There is \$60,000 combined from Montford and Riverlink; \$200,000 from the grant and the remainder from the City and Foundation.

8. Also, UNC-A students are passionate about this project and the students voted to tax themselves in a transportation fee that will generate \$34,000 towards the Foundation's portion of this. The student government president, Ben Judge was introduced and come to the podium. Ben stated that when John first told him of this project, he immediately jumped on the opportunity due to the students' access to the Montford area rather than Merrimon Avenue because of traffic concerns.

9. John stated that this week was a public meeting with the Montford, Jackson Park and 5 Points Neighborhood Associations to go through the greenway project and the feedback was positive. On Tuesday, John met with the City Finance Committee and Councilman Pelly which went well.

10. Foundation Executive Committee to meet on 1/18/13 and City Council meeting on 1/22/13 all leading up to the submission of the grant on 1/31/13.

11. The Foundation is in the process of working with a landscape architect and hoping that the design is completed in the March/April timeframe. The City and Foundation are splitting the cost 50/50. It is now going through the City specs and if all goes well we'll know the grant funding by late summer, 2013.

12. One of the criteria of the plan is that the project be "shovel ready." The Foundation is doing everything possible to make sure that the funding is awarded and that the greenway would be ready to complete.

13. Once the greenway is completed, the Foundation and the City would do the land swap.

● **Comments/questions from the Commissioners:**

- Marcia asked what will happen to rest of the property. John stated that this is subject to long term master planning process. Worked with TD Bank which owned the property and worked out a very attractive deal that there was part contribution and a collaborative effort to make it work.
- Mary Weber commented that she likes the alignment of the greenway. Mary asked if there are any major constraints that are going to increase costs. John stated that the City went through a fairly detailed review of the area and where retaining walls would be located and an estimate of costs as well as soil testing. The Foundation did a lot of Phase 1 and environmental studies for the purchase of the property and there were no red flags.

- Jim is curious about the northern end where it meets Broadway and Weaver Boulevard. John stated that ultimately the concept is that the greenway continuing down to the Odyssey property. Karen Cragnolin has talked about ultimately connecting to the river.
- Stephen is curious about the crosswalk at Broadway and Weaver Blvd. and the control of it because there is a problem with the crosswalk on Merrimon. With the extension of the greenway and how will this operate with pedestrians and bikers that could cross. John stated that that level is not at this point, but John appreciates any kind of input because they are in the design process at this time. Stephen suggested contacting NCDOT due to the problems that exists.
- Roderick stated that the existing greenway will fit right into the new segment below the intersection.
- **Comments from the Public:**
 - Phyllis Stiles stated a final point to this discussion after being on the Greenway Commission for 8 years: the model of fund raising that UNC-A has used for this project is true example. UNC-A Foundation struggled to figure out where to find the funds to realize the vision of Asheville Greenway Master Plan and she is thrilled with this 4 or 5 way partnership when it comes to the funding of this project and she hopes that it is an inspiration for other segments in the greenway system. The way Riverlink has done it is clever and Phyllis thinks that it is very effective from a fund raising perspective with presenting the opportunity to contribute to greenways as symbolically buying a foot of the greenway.
 - Roderick asked for a motion to support the UNCA-Foundation - Marcia moved to support the current plan for the former Momentum Property, now called 525 Broadway; Stephen seconded and carried unanimously.

New Business:

- **Greenway Commission 2012 Annual Report** - Jim asked GC to review the report in the packet. After minor corrections, Jim will send to Maggie Burleson to and copy to Janet. Glen made a motion to approve; Marcia and Sue seconded and carried unanimously.
- **2-14-13 Greenway Commission Work Session:** Meeting with PRCA and Transportation for a work session on the same day of the February monthly meeting but increased the time from Noon-5pm. in the HR Training Room on the 6th Floor of City Hall. Jim apologizes for the short notice.
 - The goal is to begin the prioritization of greenway segments within the plan and for GC to think about this prior to the work session.
 - On 1/14/13, Jim and Marcia will be meeting with Roderick Simmons, Transportation staff and the facilitator to develop the agenda and the materials that will used which will be sent to GC prior to the work session.
 - Ally asked if GC has a certain amount of work sessions per year or does it arise as needed. Jim stated that work sessions are scheduled as needed and due to the transition from PRCA to Transportation there are more than GC would have normally. It was important for GC to understand in direction GC was going.
 - Mariate stated that there is a yearly retreat so that the commissions could revise the mission, establish goals and review what has been done in the past year.
 - Marcia stated that all of the years that GC has had work session and GC is thinking of things differently now and it is a big change and need to be prepared and take the extra time.
- **New Commissioner Appointment Recommendations:** Jim stated that sadly GC will be losing Glen Locascio. Jim thanked Maggie Burleson for deferring to Council recommendation since GC did not have an opportunity to look at the applications. The 5 applications of the candidates do not have a lot of information. Jim stated that Luther Smith and Forest Merithew both live in the County. The remaining candidates: Stuart Smith, Bryan Mitchell and Adam Bowers. After a group discussion, Marcia recommends to Council, Stuart Smith and Bryan Mitchell and all were in favor.

Greenway Updates:

- **Community Outreach Committee Report:** Sue has nothing to report.

- Marcia stated that she spoke with Ann Babcock to discuss Buncombe County Greenways. Both are interested in a following up on getting a "Friends of the Greenways" organization started. They will also try to follow up with the County to find out about plans for the grant from New Belgium that was to be used for promotion greenways.

- Marcia asked about the Thread Trial Conference. Mary stated that she attended the land acquisition was most interesting and great ideas. The Mayor of Greenville, SC, speaking about the swap rapid trail which was most inspiring and an economic engine. Overseas companies are looking at Greenville as a model. Stephen suggests a field trip with Council, GC and staff to Greenville to see the economic impact. Glenn Locascio, Barb Mee and Lucy Crown also attended the conference as well.

- **Asheville Parks and Greenway Foundation Report:** Glen reported:
 - ❑ The successful Dancing with the Stars event was a learning experience for future events.
 - ❑ In 2013 an event yet to be determined with Asheville affiliates as a fund raiser for the Parks and Greenways Foundation.
 - ❑ A couple (Jonah and Lauren Butcher) that has the company "Green Machines" approached Glen and the Foundation will be donating a \$1,000 a month to the Asheville Parks and Greenway Foundation specifically for greenways which is part of the Green Machines mission.
 - ❑ Next meeting in February, Stephen Jones will be attending on behalf of the Foundation as the new member.
 - ❑ There is a Greenway Committee that is being set up by the Foundation which Glen will be involved with at some level.

- **Bike/Pad Task Force Update:** Jim reported no meeting in December.

STAFF UPDATES:

- **PRCA Update:** Roderick reported:
 - ❑ On 1/8/13, Council approved the construction drawings for Town Branch Greenway and Clingman Forest. Anticipation to have the contract next week and the design completion by October.
 - ❑ Appraisals for the Burris property which is between Amboy Road and French Broad Road. Working with the land owner and in hopes to come to a conclusion in the next 3 to 4 months.
 - ❑ In the final draft of the Friends of Hominy Creek Greenway (FOHC) agreement. FOHC Board meeting in approximately two weeks for approval by the end of January.
 - ❑ GC work session to identify exactly how PRCA and Transportation to be moving forward. Since Stephen will not be able to attend the work session, Roderick suggested for Stephen to email him some ideas.
 - ❑ Preparing the RFQ for French Broad East and West. The East part is River Road and now that RADTIP is 95% completed, the alignment is identified, PRCA are working on the specifications for the RFQ to complete the design work. The French Broad West which is from Haywood to French Broad River Park working on construction request for qualifications.
 - ❑ Hominy Creek from County to the Waller Tract - working on the specifications to be "shovel ready" the next time funding is available.
 - ❑ Three grants: Reed Creek Greenway, Beaucatcher Greenway to leverage money with those three projects and Town Branch as well. The Beaucatcher and Reed are funded through the federal state trail grant. Town Branch Greenway on the section that is the current recreational site is through PARTF (Parks and Recreation Trust Fund) grant and if funds are receive for any those projects it would then free up funds to go towards the design for the RFQs for these projects and trying to leverage these funds to move forward with the greenway development program.
 - ❑ Marcia asked about the alternate path from Beaucatcher that the residents of Ardmion Park was suggesting. Roderick stated that the consultants are working on this issue. David Tuch is handling

this with the property owners. The contract was finalized two weeks ago so they should be mobilizing within the next 3 to 4 weeks. Roderick requested consultant to begin on that particular area to remove any issues instead of waiting for the design to be finished and then go back to address.

- ❑ Similar situations with Town Branch design where McDowell Funeral Home is located and how to get from the funeral home and the business then to Choctaw. The consultants were asked to start with that area to see how to navigate and to negotiate with the property owners.
- ❑ Glen stated that related to the Asheville Parks and Greenway Foundation that there will be 2013 fund raising for the splash pad and greenway at the Livingston Street center.

- **Transportation Update:** Mariate reported:

- ❑ The Bicycle Master Plan is moving forward. Sharrows were purchased for north part of town in Montford and Kimberley.
- ❑ Working with NCDOT to design the bike lane on Haywood Road and sharrows will be placed down hill. Anticipation by the end of the year to have new bicycle infrastructure installed. Marcia asked if this will be impacted by the trucks from New Belgium. Mariate stated there is a right of way to install everything. The lanes do not need to be reduced and keep the same lane width of 11 feet. Originally, the Bicycle Master Plan calls for bike lanes up and down, but it is not necessary to have the bike lane going down the hill. We would like to provide the guide for the bicyclists and bring attention to drivers and that sharrows will be sufficient and to accommodate all sorts of traffic.
- ❑ Transportation Demand Management Plan (TDM) which is project working with Land of Sky Regional Council and the MPO. The Plan is ready and in draft in the MPO website. The reason for the City's involvement due to the City hosting the TDM program for many years and last year due to the State for the program to move forward and the economic constraints, the TDM was cancelled. The State and Federal government funded this plan to see how the region can engage in a TDM program or if the Region wants to engage in this program. Mariate suggested GC to review and if they have questions.
- ❑ Marcia stated that there is funding available for the Plan. The Plan is proposing different scenarios to fund a position. NCDOT will fund 50% and what the person in that position will begin working with marketing and then when the communities are involved in the plan, then building could be begin in the other programs that could be part of the TDM, i.e. van pool, park n ride, etc.
- ❑ Grow WNC which is Land of Sky initiative moving forward. There is a virtual meeting at this time until 1/25/13 on the website that has a brochure with all of the alternatives that the consultants are proposing and there is a short survey as to what it preferred; what alternatives are better, the alternatives are based on energy and development. It has been a long and complex plan and it would be good if GC would participate in the plan that will shape the future for the whole region.

- **Planning**

- ❑ Planning and Zoning Commission voted last week to recommend approval for the New Belgium projects to go to Council on 1/22/13.
- ❑ On 1/8/13 Council set aside funding for a pilot program for formed based code either in the River Arts District or along Haywood Road and Council decided on the Haywood Road corridor.

- **Special Presentation:** Jim presented Glen Locascio a plaque for his many dedicated years on Greenway Commission. Glen stated that he enjoyed working with everyone on GC and staff. There is good momentum and it is exciting to see the movement continuing. Glen encourages GC to do a second term because it takes time to get up to speed and understand what is going on in the area...

Jim Adjourned at 5:00 pm