

GREENWAY COMMISSION MEETING

November 8, 2012

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, Chris Pelly, Council Liaison

Staff Present: Mariate Echeverry, Transportation Planning Manager, Roderick Simmons, Director, Parks and Recreation Department, Blake Esselstyn, Planning & Development, Janet Georgemurr, Transportation Department.

Community Present: Jack Igelman, Brotherhug Barlow, Marc Hunt

Jim called the meeting to order at 3:30.

Review and approval of 11-8-12 agenda: Agenda was approved unanimously as written.

Review and approval of 10/11/12 minutes: Marcia moved to approve the minutes as written, Mary seconded, carried unanimously.

New Business:

• **Hominy Creek Greenway Easement Negotiation Update and Hominy Creek Greenway Access:**

□ Roderick Simmons provided updated documents of the current projects and will provide updates in writing for future Greenway Commission meetings.

1. French Broad River (FBR) Greenway-Hominy Creek Park legal issues regarding the public using the park. After a site review of the inventory by City staff, the staff is working on a plan to make the site park safe and accessible to the public that satisfies the Risk Management and Legal Departments.

Roderick stated that City staff had a productive meeting with the FOHC Greenway Board Members.

Topics that were discussed:

A. A partnership agreement between COA and FOHC stating that FOHC to maintain and be stewards of the property with a management plan to be put place by January,2013.

B. Stormwater issues on the property: Staff from Stormwater and APRCA met with FOHC on 11/5/12 identifying three areas of stormwater concerns: Two areas on City property that are not in the floodway and to make minor improvements now to provide safety for stormwater. The major stormwater concern is on the Trinity Baptist Church property. City staff identified a plan to work with the church to have an easement for COA and use stormwater money for managing and to correct erosion or stormwater problems. Once the stormwater issue is resolved, City staff can discuss the terms of development and look at the greenway corridor. Waller Tract is moving up on the priority list due to New Belgium development on the west side of the French Broad will create a natural link to the FBR Park through Carrier Park into Waller Tract.

C. Easements - COA Real estate staff are working with Trinity Baptist Church and Jesse Corpening Property in obtaining easements/surveys in order to have a continued corridor of public access.

After a discussion among GC members and Roderick, it was established that now that the FOHC is incorporated and a proposal was submitted this can be accomplished. There needs to be an expectation from the City and what the City can expect from a volunteer group with benchmarks in order to have reason and purpose for review and renewal. The agreement will allow having fund raisers and events which is common among other partnerships of parks throughout the City. The first part will be to lay out a maintenance agreement of what FOHC would like to do and will have a sense of liability.

Roderick stated that the FOHC Board is to meet and discuss the agreement of the maintenance plan:

1. How many times they will be on the property;
2. How much will they maintain it;
3. What to expect from the City;
4. What is the maintenance plan and activity on the property.

Marcia stated that the activity will be more continuous flowing activity and that the agreement would stipulate an on-going presence and involvement of FOHC. Roderick stated that with similar community and volunteer groups of managing the property for the COA that outlines the scope of responsibility in order that there is good communication in that everyone knows their role and not to have missed steps.

Mary Weber asked if FOHC wants to construct something, i.e. outdoor classroom, picnic tables or plants, what the review process with the City is. Roderick stated it would be outlined in the agreement:

1. What is the review process;
2. What is the oversight, similar with the soccer association that include improvements to City property;
3. How is that handled.
4. How the liability is handled.

Roderick stated that the COA does not impose upon the groups what to be done; but rather than what are resources that groups can do, which will be placed in an agreement. This will protect the City to make sure that we have everything covered. It is not to put barriers or to stop volunteer groups from managing property, to meet the mandates of Risk Management and Legal Departments in having a partnership in place. Roderick sent FOHC Board templates of some current agreements that the City has to Kristen and Jack of what type of elements in an agreements. Staff is ready to move whenever FOHC is ready.

2. Beaucatcher Mountain Greenway and Park Construction: Included in the packet for GC is a letter from the City Attorney stated that they did not find evidence that the property was not a public right-of-way. City staff will move forward with the survey. There are two acquisitions on the Beaucatcher Mountain: Wind in the Oaks Property and Festiva Property on track to be completed. The contract will be presented to Council to award the contract in order to begin the design and construction by next fall, 2013.

3. French Broad River Greenway (East & West) corridor. Roderick stated that now RADTIP is finished we will be moving ahead providing design drawings for the greenway. New Belgium is building one part of this corridor on their site and COA is now looking to go from Twelve Bones up to Craven Bridge to New Belgium site and from Haywood Street to Riverlink Bridge all way down to French Broad River Park.

4. Roderick stated that COA is looking at the Cauble and Burris properties in "no man's land" to obtain an appraisal and make a final offer. City staff will move forward with Council if that offer is refused in how to continue to create the missing link.

5. Town Branch and Clingman Forest Greenway which is part of the Tiger grant will go to Council in December. There will be three greenways under design at that point.

6. Reed Creek Greenway: City staff is working with the UNCA Foundation which is their property. The Foundation will take the lead to get the design drawings completed which can speed up the process

for City staff because it will not go through the City's processing contract procedure. The Foundation will cost it out and ask the City to support it depending on the amount. There may be some design drawing money allocated for a greenway program. Once the design is completed, the construction costs will be determined which could be approximately \$400,000; and to identify funding potential partners. This design will also include the southern corridor to complete both designs. Roderick anticipates by spring of 2013 to know the costs for the City to construct.

Roderick also included a map to the commissioners of the projects underway identifying which projects are under design and which projects are under construction and how they connect. A piece that is missing on the map is the other side of French Broad. Roderick will provide an updated map for the next meeting.

Next month, Roderick will bring the River to Ridge initiative. In taking all of the greenways, sidewalks, and bike ways to tie into the initiative. This plan will get people from the river to the ridge top, to the overlook of the City, to find destinations within the City. This will position P&R to apply for TDA grant. Marcia stated that is exactly what the GC wanted to hear and to part of and thank Roderick for the update.

Roderick also provided a list of the City's current allocation for greenways and are in the process of looking at next year's CIP. Money that is currently allocated in the six year CIP and how is it allocated by the year. In the year 17/18 there is no funding at this time but does not mean that there will not be projects. Roderick is asking GC for ideas for the corridors that need to happen in the year 17/18 in order to propose land acquisition and design money in the budget now to be ready for construction. Marcia asked what the monies listed be used for. Roderick explained that with potential grant money could help accelerate land acquisition and construction. The document list only projects that are not funded by grants. The list could change and move other projects up on the list if TDA grants are awarded.

Roderick explained each item on the list. After a question and answer session:

- Roderick stated that on the Greenway priority list the French Broad Hominy Creek Corridor will be added as #5.
- Marcia suggested informing the Greenway Commission of the updates of the projects sooner.
- Roderick stated that over the next three years COA will have five miles completed and are developing five more miles.
- Roderick stated that the City is trying to get to a point to be "shovel ready" with all of the greenway projects. The further along on the design process and land acquisition will make it easier to lay down pavement by PW crews and to be creative in finding the funding sources for construction.
- Marcia stated that Buncombe County Greenway are prioritizing their greenways and to be able to connect with RAD and FBR North connecting to the County and to the South towards Bent Creek.
- Roderick is asking for guidance from GC to discuss the next 5 priorities in acquiring land and design to begin laying out the corridors and doing ground work now instead of waiting 24 months.
- Mary inquired into the \$80,000 for Reed Creek for year 16/17. Roderick stated that it was for land acquisition at the time the budget office set out the CIP, there was a certain amount of money that we had each year and that money was free to go towards a greenway project. The money would be used to acquire the parcel. A grant from last year was denied due to land acquisitions are not allowed. The allocation is more for a place holder.
- Glenn asked about the \$200,000 stated in the Greenway list of land acquisition. Roderick stated that the money is being used to purchase the Burris property; and to pick up all the pieces where funding was available before for land acquisitions. Last year was the first year in allocation to get ahead of these projects, i.e. at Clingman Forest between the school board sites. As the Tiger grant is finished to acquire property for Town Branch and Clingman.

- Roderick stated that the issue with Hominy Creek that there was design of the greenway before the land acquisition because COA was "squeezed" on the price. In order to do that we need to be ahead in identifying the corridor 5 years out and then purchase the property at a fair price.
- Roderick suggested if GC has questions to send to Mariate to compile before the next GC meeting in order to have a good dialogue.
- Brotherhug Doug Barlow stated that he has been up front with GC and COA through the FOHC process. There is a big difference in leasing a piece of land to create a park and doing a maintenance agreement on a City park and that there was no discussion on Monday at the meeting about the idea of a lease; there was no mentioned of the proposal; and he does not remember that FOHC agreed to have a maintenance agreement to Roderick by January. Brotherhug stated that he is out of the process and the Board will be working on this.
- Marcia stated that the way Roderick stated that it will not be a maintenance agreement but it is a management partnership agreement which essentially looks very much like Brotherhug's original plan but used different terminology. Marcia stated that what she heard from Roderick the partnership agreement is similar to what Brotherhug proposed.
- Glenn stated that FOHC should be able to achieve their objectives and satisfy the City.
- Jim stated that GC will keep the pressure on both sides to try to make this happen.
- GC thanked Brotherhug for all that he has done.
- Jack Igleman serving as the FOHC Board President stated that the next Board meeting is November 19. This was the first time that FOHC heard of a timeline. FOHC is interested in figuring out how to make this agreement work. There are concerns about design which is unclear to him and what freedom and ability that FOHC will have to design.
- Stephen and Jim recommended communicating with Roderick before the 11/19 Board meeting as to where FOHC Board is in the process and that FOHC is not aware of a time table.
- Jack stated that Kriston Peppel on FOHC Board has taken the role of being the direct communication with the COA in working closely on the agreement.
- Marcia stated that there is a negotiating piece in the agreement and perhaps there may be a subcommittee to work on the negotiations.

● **Plan Review Proposal:** Marcia provided a document to GC of Proposal for Review of Existing Plans As a First Step in Development a Multimodal Transportation Master Plan by reviewing plans that are in are in place to become part of it in the future to include old greenways master plan, the P&R plan, the Transportation Plan in using the City's website to gather the information to include the bike and side walk plans. The first step is to review the plans that are in place. Whoever does the Master Plan will have to do the research and rather than wait until funding is available perhaps we could take the first step which Marcia feels is an inexpensive first step and the funds are within the financial gasp of the City. By completing the research, the potential consultant would have a better idea of the next steps to take to have viable information that can be rolled into a new plan rather than starting from scratch or maybe the plans are so outdated to throw them out.

- Mariate stated that the COA practice is that items that do not require a bid would need three quotes to compare pricing. The staff will write the scope of work and need an inventory of the deliverables and the budget.

-Councilman Pelly will speak with the City Manager and Mariate will speak with Ken Putnam.

-Councilman Pelly asked Mariate to review the document with Ken to verify that it defines the need as clear direction on exactly what GC is requesting.

-After a group discussion the following motion was made:

Marcia moved to take the Proposal for Review of Existing Plans as a First Step in Developing a Multimodal Transportation Master Plan to Council using the best method possible with advice from staff and from Greenway Commission Council Liaison. Sue seconded and carried unanimously.

-Mariate thanked GC for taking the steps forward.

● **SACEE (Sustainability Advisory Committee on Energy and the Environment) Presentation Report:**

Marcia presented to SACEE meeting as to what GC does from an environment perspective. That SACEE

attended the Transportation Advisory Committee to share what they do. GC will invite SACEE to share their information and also from the Transit Commission.

- **Boron Properties Proposal:** Stephen reported that James Boron of Born Properties and Green Earth Development located close to Sand Hill is willing to donate land to the City for greenways. Jim presented a map and as public record. Blake stated that this is the Lollis Tract. The GC reviewed the map with Blake who gave more detailed information of the tract of land. Stephen stated James Boron offered to donate the whole parcel of land. Blake stated that this property is in the flood plain. Stephen stated that the advantage to publicizing the donated land to market the idea. Blake will inform Nikki Reed of the Boron donation. Blake stated that the deed was registered in April 2012 and purchased it 2007 for \$32,000 Blake will follow up with Nikki.

- **Update on City Council Resolution support County Greenway Plan:** Councilman Pelly reported that the Council voted 7 to 0 in support of the resolution for the County's Greenway Master Plan.

- **Greenway Commission Updates:**

1. **Bike and Ped Task Force Report** - Jim reported that the most of the discussion related to a new initiative of the Bike There 2016. The National or World championship for cycle-cross will be held at Biltmore Estate in 2016. Bike/Ped Task Force discussions on making the event feasible, safe and appropriate to ride from each of the corners of the City to the Biltmore Estate through downtown. Discussions in establishing a precedent for allowing some bicycle use onto the property without the use of a vehicle, if the entry fee is paid, which could potentially tie into greenway opportunities.

2. **Community Outreach Committee Report:**

- Sue reported that the FOHC outreach was supportive and well organized. Sue encourages the communities/neighborhood to do the outreach. Marcia stated that the if the Friends of the Greenways grow out of the County Commission effort that would be a place to hook on and support of the County's Master Plan to flow into the City's projects.
- Stephen reported that he attended the Montford Greenway gathering which was very well attended. Stephen suggested that the map from Roderick that shows information on the greenways to send to Mountain Express or Citizen Times. Jim suggested waiting until Roderick brings the map up-to-date before sending it to the local newspapers.

3. **Asheville Parks and Greenway Foundation Report:**

- Glen reported that the DWTS event was successful and raised some money and is good for visibility for the Foundation and a big step forward. Money was donated at all levels. The Foundation is a good place to move momentum forward. Glen may continue with the Board of the Foundation in 2013. Glen is meeting with someone on Friday to discuss his role. Glen made a motion for Stephen Jones to be the new liaison from the Asheville Greenway Commission to the Parks and Greenway Foundation starting in 2013. Stephen accepted, Marcia second and carried unanimously.

4. **Buncombe County Greenway Commission Report:** Marcia stated that this will be the last report until she hears anything new. The group on the oversight of the master plan was looking at "low hanging fruit" or the best way to go:

1. North and East of the County towards Bent Creek;
2. From Biltmore Square Mall into Bent Creek with cluster of hotels with bike trials which would be a high priority to extend to Farmers Market, but the problem would be crossing I26.
3. The possibility of the bridge may be redone and to have right-a-ways for bicycles and use of a pathway along the reconstructed Brevard Rd. to Farmers Market;
4. To get across the road over I40 to use the old bridge over Hominy Creek to Hominy Creek Park.
5. A lot of potential of connectivity continuing along the French Broad River to the south where a lot of county property is located.

6. North to 251 to SFB which is difficult going out to the East and where the connections take place.
7. What are the priorities and what is doable, to include shorten links in Weaverville and how they would tie in based upon property already owned. It was an official commission meeting and we do not know what will happen with the commission, but Marcia will let GC know and the feed back from the priority setting.

- **STAFF UPDATES:**

- **Transportation Update:** Mariate reported:

1. The implementation of small adjustments to two of the routes: C and N. On C - added a 2 minute section to go into the Emma neighborhood, which we had received many requests in that area. The change was made in November 1st.
2. Bringing route N to the ART Station. Previously Route N was coming through downtown and stopped in front of Pritchard Park. Transit received "tons" of requests from riders to bring the route to the ART Station. The time was absorbed in the current schedule.
3. Beginning January 1, 2013, Council approved in the budget cycle holiday bus service. There was a public meeting 11/1 to receive comments from the public about what Transit's main purpose was to know what times we can offer that service b/c the funding is small and we cannot provide the 13 hour that we provide on most of the other routes. It will be approximately 7 to 8 hours only on the main corridors. We wanted to hear from the public what was best for them. Mariate stated that Transit will provide six of the eight holidays especially for people who use transit to go to work. The only two that will not have bus services is Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.
4. A permanent change to route E1 which is carrying 15% of the ridership is very high and the buses were crowded and a 2nd bus is allocated on a temporary basis. We have received funding from FTA so we are required to do the whole planning process in order to implement a new thing. The 11/1/12 public meeting was also addressing this new addition to E1 to begin 1/1/13.
5. Transit has received 5 of 9 new buses. There will only be two new buses to replace by January, 2013 all of the new 9 buses will be on the road.
6. Yesterday was the ribbon cutting for the Emma sidewalk which is a very important project not only to the service of the neighborhood but because of how Transit was able to put the funding together with three different funding sources: Safe Routes to School, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) from the FTA. It was along process to complete this project with obtaining easements from the neighbors who agreed to donate them.
7. There is an RFP released to build the ADA pads to install 10 new shelters that are already purchased in the next 5 months.

Stephen asked about future plans for Sunday bus route which is a controversial issue. Councilman Pelly stated that the need is known and given the budget constraints and a new budget cycle will begin in January and this is on the list. Stephen stated that since there are limited hours for holidays there is a place of worship issue on Sunday as well getting to the hospital for visitation, etc. Mariate stated that the approximate amount to run Sunday service is \$800,000 and the holiday service is roughly \$30,000. Mariate stated that Sunday service is number one request on the Transportation Master Plan. Mariate stated it is an equity problem. If we cannot get people on the bus, they cannot be productive.

Planning:

- Blake reported that the New Belgium application was received. Barb and Ken P. are reviewing the transportation elements and all of the technical departments will also be reviewing the application for the first steps.
- The Development Services Center is now under integrating staff from other departments. On October 16 there was an Open Data Day for "Data Artisans." Jonathan Feldman is committed to make available through an open data portal. Some of the successes that often related to transportation data. Portland worked with the communities to improve their data on such things as applications related to transit and biking, etc. and IT is engaged to civic minded computer jocks. Glen commended the City for putting this event on and a lot of good came out of it. Glen stated that he needs to call Stephanie Monson that the group

had some idea to present to the Public Art Board in bringing geographical intelligence to some of the work that they do.

- Blake stated that it will be a factor to replace Map Asheville that it does trip planning. Blake suggested to Google "Trimet" which is Portland's Metro Transportation Planning Organization and the Trimet trip planner lets you plan your travel routes multimodality in doing bike and bus. Within your bike planning you can specific the route to be flatter or bike friendly or faster.
- Marcia mentioned to talked with Glen about getting together to be a nominating committee to nominate leadership and will bring a slate to GC.

Announcements:

Jim adjourned the meeting at 5:11 p.m.