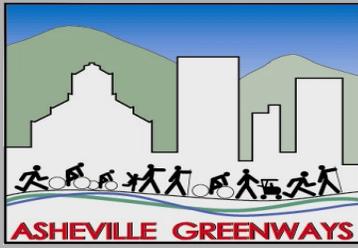


GREENWAY COMMISSION MEETING



March 8, 2012

3:30-5:00 pm

First Floor Conference Room City Hall

Members Present: Jim Grode, Glen Locascio, Susan Barlow, Stephen Jones, Mary Weber, Ally Wilson and Chris Pelly, Council Liaison.

Staff Present: Seth Hendler-Voss, Parks & Rec, Blake Esselstyn, Planning. Mariate Echeverry, Staff Liaison, Martha McGlohon, Legal Liaison, Barb Mee, Staff Liaison, Janet Georgemurr.

Community Present: Claudia Nix, Timothy Sadler

Jim called the meeting to order at 3:30.

Jim welcomed Ally Wilson as the new member of the Greenway Commission. Greenway Commission, Council Liaison and staff introduced themselves.

1. Review and approval of February 9, 2012 minutes:

Corrections: Page 4, #6, #1, last sentence add the word "additional" funding. #2 add the word "greenway" project of interest.

Page 4. #9, #3 correct name of Sue Hackey to "Susan Hachett."

With the above changes, Jim moved to approved 2/9/12 minutes, Stephen seconded and carried unanimously.

2. Discussion of potential new meeting dates: Jim asked the Greenway Commission members if there is a scheduling problem or concerns with meeting on the 2nd Thursday of every month at 3:30pm; and if there is another time better for the GC members. The GC members agreed to keep the same date and time for the future GC meetings.

3. Greenway Commission scheduling of the Retreat: Field Visit and Work Session:

- **Field Visit:** After a group discussion among the GC members on scheduling the field visit, it was determined that Tuesday, March 20, 2012 at 1pm would be best suited for everyone. Mariate asked the members their priorities of sites to visit. Sue Barlow suggested that the greenways that are under the RFQ are: Clingman Forest, Town Branch, and Beaucatcher Mountain.
- **Work Session:** After a group discussion regarding the date for the work session, it was decided to keep the GC regular monthly meeting on Thursday 5/10 and move the time up to 2p-5pm. Mariate stated a legal ad will be submitted to newspaper announcing the Retreat, time and place. Also discussed was the venue for the work session. Mariate stated that Al had suggested the Wesley Grant Community Center or other community centers

Agenda for the Work Session:

1. Prioritizing greenways;
2. The process how Transportation Dept. moved to Greenway Commission and what is the process in getting things done with the new structure;
3. Update on Greenway Master Plan; e.g. what is the plan; how far have we come and where we need to go.
4. Buncombe Connect and what funding sources are available, which was raised by County

Commissioner Chairman, David Gantt. Chris Pelly suggested having someone from the County to talk about where they are on funding which would guide GC on collaborative efforts, e.g. County wide bond referendum. Chris suggested Dewayne Stutzman, Chairman of the Buncombe County Greenways and Trails Commission, who is leading this effort to report on where the County is on their process for a portion of the retreat. Sue Barlow stated that Marcia Bromberg is the liaison on the Buncombe County Greenway Committee.

Mariate announced that there will be a facilitator. Mariate stated that she has found that having an external person helps guiding the discussion and setting goals, and fulfilling the expectations of the work session. Jim asked if he and Mariate could meet prior to the next GC meeting to discuss the agenda. Mariate stated that it would also be best to meet with the facilitator before the 5/10 work session

4. **Montford Commons Update:** Jim asked about the implications of the recent foreclosure of the Montford Commons, which is on the Greenway Master Plan. Mariate stated that after speaking with Shannon Tuch of the Planning Department, the greenway is still undetermined. The greenway was part of the Montford Commons application. However, the City can prioritize the greenway and move forward in acquiring the property. Also, if there is a new project/buyer for the property, the same requirements will apply. The property is located next to Isaac Dickinson School and Hill Street. Jim stated that when the developers put forth the project for Montford Commons was originally a mixed use and affordable work force housing, then became luxury apartments or vice versa. The property was foreclosed by TD Bank. But when the initial project was approved one of the conditions was to build a greenway on the back of the property to tie into the Montford Greenway system down to the river. Blake showed a 2005 map of the property, which at that time, were separate parcels of 10 to 11 acres; which has a natural drainage feature. Blake continued to say that it was a conditional zone for an urban village. Therefore, if another developer comes in to redevelop would have the same conditional zone. A different use would need to go to Planning and Zoning Commission and to Council. Blake believes that there were some commercial zoning along Hill Street and residential in the interior. Blake stated that the land lends itself to a greenway. Jim asked aside from the conditional zoning, is there any other leverage that the City has to try to make sure that the greenway is developed. Martha stated that this would be accomplished through zoning, planning and conditional use requirements. Jim would like this item to be kept on the radar.

5. **Clingman Forest Update:** Jim stated that he and Claudia had an earlier discussion and would like to further discuss with GC regarding Clingman Forest. Claudia mentioned that there are several groups who have expressed interest in working to complete the Clingman Greenway:

1. Safe Routes to Schools, which includes Erwin School Campus who have had a successful mountain bike club for a number of years and now there is a waiting list.
2. Healthy Buncombe Coalition bought a fleet of bikes that the school could use.
3. Asheville Middle School is interested in having a mountain bike club.
4. Trips for Kids is another group that Steven James is working with Erwin Middle School and is looking for a place for the kids to bike.

The Clingman Forest would open up opportunities and make it possible for the kids to go down to the greenway along the river and other great ideas.

Jim introduced Claudia Nix as the co-owner of Liberty Bicycles; Claudia started the Blue Ridge Bicycle Club and is the advocacy chair; former facilitator of the Asheville Bike/Ped Task Forces; Strive Not to Drive; The Healthy Buncombe Executive Council. Jim suggested for GC to think about ways to connect with these groups to increase all of our voices. Chris Pelly stated this is the same reason why this is important to discuss at the GC Retreat field visit. Mary asked if the middle school was looking at another building and as part of the process to make sure that there is a good tie in to the greenway connector and if there is funding available. Barb stated that she is aware of the discussion but not of the funding and feasibility stage.

6. Staff Updates:

1. **PRCA:** Seth introduced himself and is filling in for Al. Updates on:

Town Branch which is one of Tiger II projects. At this time, the RFQs are out and proposals are due in a couple weeks. There is a lot of interest and consultants are calling and visiting the area and Seth is hoping for a good pool of candidates to consider for interviews. Jim asked what physical length the RFQ covers. Seth stated that the RFQ covers Clingman Forest and Town Branch greenways in the same for RFQ, so the selected consultant would be responsible for the planning and designing of the development and construction drawings for both corridors. Jim asked how far would the Town Branch greenway extend. Seth stated that Town Branch will extend from Dr. Grant Southside Center all the way to McDowell Street. There is a stretch in between the two corridors which is Depot Street, and is included in the RFQ, and is essentially will be an on road connection via bike lanes, sidewalks, which is important connection because without it there would be a large gap between the two corridors. Clingman Forest is primarily off road corridor and Town Branch will have some off road and some on road or sidewalk connections.

- Reed Creek Greenway Phase II: The bridge was set in place this morning. The expected deadline to complete the project by the first of April. Also working with the University Foundation on Phase III, the old Health Adventure Property. At this time, there are no plans, specs, estimates or easements. The department is working together with Riverlink and the University Foundation for planning and an agreement for moving forward. The good news is that we have a great owner who is willing to help to get the trail close to the creek.
- Beaucatcher Greenway: About to issue a RFQ for this project that is not federally funded. Will go through the same process with a national advertisement in receiving proposals from a pool of consultants. There is a grant deadline therefore a push for this project to move as quickly as possible. This project is 100% construction drawings, which the grant covers through construction drawing development and Council has allocated funds for construction.

Transportation Updates:

1. **Complete Streets:** Barb stated that the members have in their packet a rough draft of the Complete Streets Resolution. Barb requested GC to review the attached resolution and send comments to Barb. Barb will return to the April GC meeting with a revised draft for GC to endorse. Barb stated that the resolution is scheduled to be adopted by the end of this fiscal year. Stephen asked if there is any point in Barb pinpointing the areas that she thinks require a response. Barb mentioned the parking issue; what GC thinks of the Exceptions that have been built into the Policy; walking the line between we can do every day and what our goals are and how GC views them. Jim asked if Barb would like one group of GC comments or individually comments. Barb stated that she would prefer individual comments. Jim asked Barb to send a reminder in two weeks. Mariate added that the Complete Streets Policy is in the Council Strategic Goals for the past 2 years. There is a group of members from different City departments who are also reviewing the Complete Streets resolution. Barb is requesting the same review and comments from the Transit Commission. Once the resolution is endorsed by Greenway and Transit Commissions, Barb will go to Planning and Economic Development with the two the endorsements and then to Council for approval.

2. **Transit Master Plan (TMP) Implementation:** Mariate updated the GC members as to where we are in the TMP implementation. Mariate stated that since Council approved the TMP in 2010, Transportation Management Division has been working to implement the first phase that is scheduled this spring in introducing the route changes. Mariate continued to say that this first phase of TMP will have a considerable media coverage announcing the release of the new brand; changes in bus stops, designing of new maps and schedules for more efficiency. Mariate continued to say there was not an increase in the budget with the first phase of TMP. Mariate is requesting GC to volunteer their time at the Transit Center on a one on one with the riders or as bus ambassadors. Mariate is requesting GC members to volunteer some of their time in this a very ambitious project.

3. **Announcement of Buncombe Environmental Leadership Award:** Barb is suggesting GC members to nominate men, women, and children, businesses who actions and leadership have made a positive impact on the environment. Chris asked if there was a website to send in BELA nominations. Jim suggested emailing Gillian.Phillips@buncombecounty.org. Barb stated that she is giving this to the GC members to individually nominate or if the GC members know someone that would like to nominate someone.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT UPDATE: Blake stated that the Metropolitan Planning Organization is primarily concerned with Transportation is now located at the Land of Sky Offices. But the NC Association of MPO is having the state conference in Asheville in early May 2, 3 4, 2012. Mariate and Barb may know more about the specific programming but he knows that the theme is "Transportation for the New Normal" and they are interested in multi-modal and alternative transportation ideas. There will be bike tours as part of the program. If GC members want to contact Blake as he knows more and will share more information about opportunities that members could be involved. If GC registers it would be for the whole 3 days. Mariate stated that there are volunteer opportunities that will waive the registration fee which is \$175.00 for the three days. Mariate stated that there will be two presentations at the conference. Barb stated that her presentation is related to bicycling in the way that we built the strength of city community and County Health Department. Mariate stated that there will be a Transit Master Plan session to be conducted on one of the hybrid buses and will showcase the whole process. Jim stated that he received the information which referred to have a visit with one of the green bike lanes. Barb stated that they have been working on this project to pilot test some materials for green lanes with federal permission in hopes that it will be available for the conference.

Community Outreach Committee report: Sue reported a number of publications about greenways: Verve with Lucy Crown, Coordinator for Buncombe Connect, on the front cover; also Mountain Express highlighted greenways. Sue asked each commission member who are part of Buncombe County Connect to take the sign that Sue has distributed and go to a greenway between now and next month and take a photo and make a note on the sign that you are City commissioner. Sue reported future projects: For GC members to set up tables at Farmer's Markets, which will start soon. Sue is aware that this will take a lot of volunteering and she hopes to have a list of the areas. GC could talk to the people who are like minded and they will go to talk to their neighbours as to what GC is trying to do with the greenways. Jim had sent out a notice if GC wanted to bike for St. Patrick's Day which would also be a great opportunity to get out in the public.

Rexpo Exhibition with the Realtors on May 17, but at this time, a table has not been given.

Reed Creek - Sue suggested a ribbon cutting and Sue is looking for City direction on who should be involved. Sue suggested partnering with the Montford neighbourhood to involve more people. Mariate suggested speaking with the City's Communication Officer to coordinate this type of event. Chris said that Montford has a neighbourhood community fare and suggested to have the ribbon cutting the day before the festival.

UNCA Sports Day: Jim reported that there were hundreds of girls at the Girls in Sports Day at UNCA Women event. Jim was largely overshadowed by being next to Lucy and very active, energetic from Buncombe County who were taking photos of people with the sign "I Want to ____ on a Greenway." A number of people came up to view the City map and several people found their house on the map and figured out the closest greenway. Jim observed that there seems to be a lot of interest in greenways, generally. Jim completed his sign that read: "I want to find dedicated funding for a Greenway."

Sierra Club: Stephen stated that he attended the Sierra Club meeting last night which was very well attended. Karen Cragolin spoke about the history of the greenways.

Lake Craig/Azalea Rd: Jim stated that there was a public drop-in meeting for the Lake Craig/Azalea Rd. Jim updated GC on the meeting: The project includes grading for a greenway on one side of the river in the first phase. It is proposed to have a greenway on both sides of the river, but cannot grade on the north side until the river stream bed relocation part is completed, in the phase II. Stephen stated the big issue is whether or not to divide what is going to be one way and what was going to be two way. Stephen thought that the improvement from the original design was excellent. The other interesting factor that GC should be aware of is that DOT is now willing to pay for a second study on a light exiting off of Azalea Rd. At the first public meeting DOT was not present and was holding to the original traffic count which was completed before the soccer fields were created.

Asheville-Buncombe Bicycle Pedestrian Task Force Report - Jim reported that there was a discussion of the bike friendly application. Barb stated that Asheville Police Department attended but Asheville Fire and Rescue was unable to attend this meeting. Claudia stated that APD donated 50 bike lights. APD will choose a day during spring at Pack Square and Prtichard Park where APD observes cyclists without bike lights and to stop the cyclists and give them a bike light. This is a good way to give APD a positive way to communicate with the public. Claudia will be attending the Bike Summit in DC. Barb announced the bike education class on 3/32 Sat at TD Bank on College Street at the round-about for \$20.00 for 6 hour class and workshop.

Asheville Parks and Greenway Foundation - Glen reported that the foundation did not meet in February. The two committees did meet and Glen is part of the public relations committee, but he was not able to attend due to work in Raleigh.

Announcement: On Friday, March 9, Glen will be meeting with community leaders from Beaverdam and the YMCA to obtain community support for a greenway. Glen will report back to GC in a couple of months of any progress.

Buncombe County Greenway Commission Update - Sue reported that this commission did not meet in February. Sue was able to speak with Lucy for an update:

- The next round of public meetings in Black Mountain, Enka, Skyland and Weaverville with an anticipated 250 people attending these meetings.
- Consultants are working on the field maps for the Master Plan and preliminary maps should be available in May.
- Ally stated the Buncombe County is doing a greenway challenge fund raiser at the end of March that goes around Black Mountain and the proceeds go to greenways on 3/31.

Public Comment:

Tim Sadler is advocating horse trails on the greenways. Tim stated that he is a cyclist and that is his main mode of transportation.

Tim nominated Julie Mayfield for the Buncombe Environmental Leadership Award (BELA).

Tim asked if there was a funding subcommittee in the Greenway Foundation to fund horse trails. Glen stated that the Foundation is a non-profit organization. Mary asked if there are other cities or communities that Tim is aware of that have horse trails on greenways. Jim stated that horses would not be compatible to other users and he would be concerned with cyclists and horses. Stephen stated that Biltmore Forest has horse and bike trails that are separate. Glen stated that he could see parts of the county next to the National Forest as a potential place for horse trails.

Jim Adjourned at 4:54pm