

Recreation Advisory Board April 9, 2012



Members Present

Wanda Hawthorne
Mildred Nance-Carson
Wayne Wheeler
Josh O'Connor
Mary Ann West
John Parrish
Hutch Kerns

Council Present

Cecil Bothwell

Guests Present

Aileen Shambleson, Bele Chere Board Chair

Staff Present

Debbie Ivester, Assistant Director
Al Kopf, Parks Planning and Development Superintendent
Abigail Riley, Special Projects Coordinator
Sandra Travis, Festivals Supervisor
Amy Rickman, Recreation Superintendent
Frank McGowan, Business Services Superintendent
Diane Ruggiero, Cultural Arts Superintendent

Wanda called the meeting to order at 12:31pm.

Approval of March Minutes

Josh moved to approve the minutes; Wayne seconded; and all approved. The motion passed unanimously.

Nominating Committee & Board Member Term Update

Debbie reported the following board members' terms will expire June 30: Wanda Hawthorne, Wayne Wheeler, Hutch Kerns, Mary Ann West, and John Parrish. The City Clerk needs the official documentation for those who would like to be reappointed. Debbie said when members resign from the Board with remaining time on their terms; the new appointment must finish out the previous term and must be reappointed to his or her own term. All members are eligible to be reappointed at this time. If someone does not want to be reappointed, the City Clerk will advertise to fill the position.

Wanda said that she does not want to be reappointed.

Mary Ann said that she does not want to be reappointed.

Debbie said it has been a pleasure to serve with everyone. She thanked them all for their service to the City and the Recreation Advisory Board. She added that she would get all the information to the City Clerk.

Wayne said that he would like to be reappointed.

John said that he would like to be reappointed.

Bele Chere Tobacco Sponsorship Update

Wanda said the Bele Chere Board met at the beginning of April, and Project ASSIST was there to present. She asked Bele Chere Board Chair Aileen Shambleson to give an update to the Board on the meeting.

Aileen reported the meeting went well. Project ASSIST gave a presentation similar to the presentation to the Recreation Advisory Board. There was no quorum, and the Board was not able to vote on the issue. Board members asked questions and got clarification from staff and Project ASSIST. The Board will have further discussions on it and bring up the issue again at its next meeting in May. She did not know if the Board would be able to vote in May, but it will be discussed. She thanked the Recreation Advisory Board members of the subcommittee that could be there.

Hutch asked who from the Board attended. Wanda answered John and Josh attended and that minutes were taken. Debbie said the minutes were sent to the subcommittee members.

Hutch said he was curious about the extent of the discussion from the subcommittee. Wanda stated that by banning cigarettes now will lead to other items being banned in the future. She added getting the sponsorship coordinator would help to offset the lost revenue, and she thinks it is a good idea. She added she believes the position can only help the festival. She expressed hope that support can be given that focuses on enhancing Bele Chere and other events. She would like to see more opportunities for youth to choose not to smoke, but she said it is ultimately their decision to make. She spoke to recent commercials regarding cigarette use. She added Asheville has a new brewery coming, and Bele Chere currently sells beer. She said she understands Asheville is about healthy living, but the issue is about being educated to make a decision concerning smoking.

Josh clarified the complicating factors is that Project ASSIST is in a coalition with Buncombe County. He does not know if this issue can be highlighted, but he wanted to clarify that relationship.

Mary Ann said beer and tobacco are different. Patrons need a wristband to drink. Bele Chere's message is that this family festival, she could not agree with that. She said she thought at past festivals, one had to take chew from the tent. Wanda asked Mary Ann to clarify what she meant by tobacco sponsors asking patrons to the tents take chew. Mary Ann gave an anecdote from two years ago. She was unsure about the product that was being given out. Wanda reminded the Board cigarettes are not given out. She added the tent is off the street and not very noticeable.

Hutch asked for clarification on what Council is looking for from the Board. Debbie said through the process, the decision will go through the subcommittees and the two boards. Debbie and Roderick will convene to determine the next step and talk with the City Manager. The board's process needs to be completed before it can move on with staff.

Priority Greenway Connection

Al presented an overview of the process of creating greenways. Relative to other cities, greenways are a new concept for Asheville. There are neighborhood concentrations and destinations built into the plan. The goal of the plan is to unify different parts of Asheville. Al spoke to the Glenn's Creek Greenway along UNCA, Reed's Creek Greenway, Clingman Forest Greenway, and the French Broad Greenway.

Wayne asked for clarification on the names of the road around the Clingman Forest greenway Al answered Hilliard. Debbie added it was I-240 bridge. Wayne asked if it was headed towards the River Arts District. Al added it will commence at the park.

Al said that the on-road connections to the greenways need to happen but the question is how to do that. Bikes and pedestrians both are being encouraged to use the greenways. He said one needs to see he or she is on a greenway corridor while using the on-road connection. It is also important for the area to have subtle recreational qualities. The RFQ for the Clingman Forest and Town Branch greenway is currently published. The question is how to make the roads friendlier for bikes and pedestrians.

Cecil asked if the railroad track is abandoned parallel to Riverside Drive. Al said that it is not. The land is owned by Southern Railroad, but they are allowing for permitting.

Wayne asked if a bike lane could be put along the tracks. Al said they are analyzing that.

The Town Branch Greenway project is being funded through the TIGER grant. This will set the stage for implementation and be applied for planning purposes. It runs along the new Dr. Wesley Grant, Sr. Southside Center. There is more recreation and agrarian uses planned for it. It will eventually come out by the fire department at the very southern end of the S. French Broad Avenue.

Wanda asked if there were plans to pave Depot Street by the Dr. Wesley Grant, Sr. Southside Center. Al said there has been discussion to put parking there. Wanda said the road is rough in this area. Al said he did not know, but he would talk to the city's Transportation Director Ken Putnam to see if there are plans. Wanda did not think it was beneficial to have such a rough road to come out the River Arts District and come by the Center.

Beaucatcher Greenway is near Memorial Stadium and White Fawn Park by Festiva, an old mansion from the 1920s. This project is being funded by the City. The RFQ is currently out and response will be received shortly. This greenway is very close to and overlooks Downtown. An old road bed was cut through the mountain already, which will be helpful during the future construction.

Mary Ann asked how long it is. Al said it is 1.25 miles.

Wanda asks the total length of the greenways. Al said Clingman Forest is 0.5 miles. Town Branch is 0.75, and Beaucatcher is 1.2 miles. Reed Creek Greenway is 1 mile, and Glenn's Creek is also 1 mile.

Wayne asks how to get across South Charlotte to get into the Beaucatcher Greenway. Al answered from Memorial Stadium. Al said they are looking at getting connections from Memorial Stadium and go up from there. Wayne clarified how to get across South Charlotte. He asked if there would be a bridge. Wayne asked about the enclave of the campers that is privately owned. Al said that needs to be worked out because it is private property and nothing can be done at this point. Al added that the trail has great views. There is a small on-road connection, but it has been cut out. It will be coming out towards the Sky Club area. Hellen's Bridge is where it might exit.

Wanda asked about completion date. Al said there are two phases. The TIGER grant allows 1 year completing projects. Community Development Director Jeff Staudinger has been helping with that. Beaucatcher will be about ten months. The construction timeframe will begin after that.

Cecil asked about the Waller Tract. Al said funds have been shifted. Cecil said there were volunteers willing to work on that greenway. Al said there were agreements in place with the volunteers to work long term. They need to be able to work on City property and not private property.

Josh asked how the greenways will be connected and tied together in order for citizens to get on one in one area and travel to another area via greenway. Al answered it is in the plan to get to that point. He needs to figure out work with transitions between greenways to fulfill that.

Wanda asked about showing how greenways connect on maps. Al said the most effective tool will be the website; handouts might be difficult. Wanda suggested the Pack Square Park pavilion would be a good site for the handouts.

Al spoke to integrating and transitioning the Transportation Department into the planning of greenways. He added the city will be integrating greenways into all of its transportation plans. He said the good thing about this transition is greenways can be tied into and connected to sidewalks and other Transportation Department plans.

Josh said Raleigh has recently implemented signage on its greenways. Al said s a good idea and model.

Director's Report

Debbie reported the RFP for the golf course operation had closed, and the Department received eight proposals. She is in the process of sorting through them and preparing for the different

review committees. There will be review by staff, Muni Alliance, and senior management. They will be able to set priorities. It is in preparation for Council Finance Committee. She said receiving eight proposals was a good response.

For the capital improvement projects, Debbie said the Department is focusing on the deferred maintenance and planning for greenways. Building the CIP budget and implementing those projects is a current priority during the warm weather months.

Pack Square Park Pavilion is closer to being completed. The contractor should be complete within the next 30 days. Wayne asked if there would be a ribbon cutting for it. Debbie answered the Conservancy is the project manager. More information will be available later.

Debbie added that it is peak time for hiring seasonal employees. Staff is also at peak time getting ready for summer programs including the opening of swimming pools and extra mowing in park maintenance.

Reports

Wanda said the Bele Chere Board met April 4. The music committee met and made their decisions and selected headliners. Everything is going well. There is a new code for crowd management. Training needs to be implemented. Merchandise is going well because the artwork is in. It might be unveiled at the next month's meeting. Children's area planning is also going well. Wanda reminded the Board she will be leaving the Recreation Advisory Board and there will need to be a new Bele Chere liaison appointed. She also encouraged members to give some thought to volunteering at the festival.

Wayne did not have a report for the Asheville Parks & Greenways Foundation.

Wanda added she has the presentation made by Project ASSIST at the Bele Chere Board meeting if anyone would like to see it,

Other Business

Debbie asked Wanda to return to the discussion for a nominating committee and to appoint committee members. Wanda asked Hutch if he would like to be a part of that committee. Hutch agreed. Wanda also asked Josh if he were interested. Josh agreed.

Debbie explained their role is to talk to other members to see who they would like to nominate for the chair and the vice chair. At the May meeting, the committee will make a report, and in June the committee will present its slate of nominations.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 1:21 p.m.