



Asheville Greenway Committee Retreat
Minutes
March 3, 2016
Harvest House

Board Members Present: Amy Vanden Heuvel, David Nutter, Forrest Merithew, Jim Grode, John Ridout, Kimberly Williams, Mary Weber, Richard Lee, Sarah M. Goldman, Stephanie Gillis

Staff in Attendance: Mariate Echeverry, Lucy Crown

Guests: Nancy Brown and Geoff Kemmish.

Business Meeting

- Previous meeting minutes approved with corrections
- Upcoming public meetings announced
- Public comments

Review 2014 Goals

Improved Communication with City

- There has been improved communication with the Transportation Department in large part due to Lucy's new role
- There has been little improvement with the Parks & Rec Department, although Forrest attends both meetings and attempts to keep the Committee informed that way
- The best way to communicate with the Parks & Rec Department is through Lucy

Serve as Community Liaison

- There is now a calendar of events
- Information has been updated and more is being conveying to the public through social media
- There is more press
- Updating the map is in process

Assist in Greenway Prioritization

- Feasibility studies were ranked
- Top 3 studies were recommended
 - East Asheville – Azalea Road
 - East Asheville - Meadow Road to Tunnel Road
 - Extending Reems Creek
 - French Broad River East
- There has been some movement on the Goat Trail identification and Pilot program

Develop Partnerships and Projects

- Little has been done in this category due to duplicate efforts with fundraising, too long of a timeline and lack of prioritization.

What We Learned about Planning from Last Year

- We do better with tasks that can be handled in meetings
- We're better at setting policy than creating products

- We don't want to duplicate staff talent, but we want to integrate with staff and consultants
- Changes in the organizational structure (ie moving from P&R to Transportation) have impacted our committee
- We are most successful in an advisory capacity when we can use our talents. We're less successful when we have to be self-driven

Defining Committee's Role

How Staff Sees Our Role

Lucy presented results from an anonymous online survey with staff, inquiring how they see our role. (See attached Survey Results)

How We See Our Role

- Educate Council about Greenways
- Provide policy direction
 - assistance with technical questions
 - with designing the public comment process
- Assist in the selection of consultants
- Involvement in the project Steering Committees
- Prioritize Community input
- Advocate for the process or at least the concept
- Advocate for Greenways in the city not City Greenways
- Serve as a two-sided conduit between the City and the community
 - Staff may see us as separate from the community
 - Committee sees themselves as speaking for the community
- Provide a sounding board for interest groups
 - Listen and consider in planning
 - Advocate for proposals to Council
- Educate the public and advocate for benefits
- Partner with other organizations

Priorities for Next Year

Policy & Planning

- Formalize the process of public engagement
- Support new multimodal greenway developments that connect with transportation and connections
- Prioritize greenways and features
- Advocate for more feasibility studies for the future
- Advocate during upcoming Comprehensive Planning process

Outreach & Marketing

- Compile wants
- Research and compile statistics
- Create a PowerPoint or PechaKucha presentation
- Find out what other groups have
- Determine process for disseminating information and correcting misinformation
 - HOA
 - Neighborhood groups
 - Asheville Downtown Association
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - Rotary
 - City's website
 - Op-Eds- particularly for correcting misinformation

Build Capacity with our Partners

- Meet with West Asheville Parks and Greenways Foundation and get a better understanding of their status
- Meet with FOCB to share our plans and learn of theirs
- Talk to Asheville on Bies about publicity and/or ride for the East Asheville Greenway
- Seek new partners

Advocate to City Council

- Meet with new Council members
 - Provide them with a packet (created by Outreach & Marketing subcommittee)
 - Potential greenways
 - Include members of the community who use greenways regularly to the meeting
- Meet with all Council members once the East Asheville study has been completed
- Organize Council greenway walk to show them users and diversity

Project Specific Advocacy

- Prioritize projects
 - Walk 2-3 less-known greenways spring-summer 2016
 - Schedule a fall 2016 meeting for reprioritization
 - Research advocacy groups and neighborhood groups
 - Try to have new priority list and "ask" by 2017 budget process
 - 2016-2017 Comp. Plan: Integrate prioritization and getting to know neighborhood groups during comprehensive planning process-MAKE SURE greenways are a focus in the Comp. Plan

- Keep Projects Moving
 - Periodically (3 months) request presentations from designers
 - For greenways in progress, track what we have and what's the next stage at each meeting; train on stages of greenway design and construction (feasibility, 30% designs, etc.)
 - Use neighborhood groups for outside advocacy
 - Staff updates committee on roadblocks and delays as they come up, committee advises on what to do about them.
- Adding the Extras
 - During design review, identifying and designing in areas for partner projects (pollinator areas, recreation areas, etc.)
 - Design review: advocate to the city for some extra elements to be included, depending on user type.

Next Steps

- Rich Lee and John Ridout will take the ideas listed above for 2016 goals and develop a SMART plan for Committee
- At next Committee meeting
 - Review Rich and John's draft
 - Fill in missing parts, modify
 - Include who will be responsible for what