

GREENWAY COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

April 11, 2013

3:30pm-5:00pm

1st 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, Bryan Mitchell, Mary Weber, Sue Barlow and Stephen Jones;

Staff Present: Cathy Ball, Executive Director of PW and Multi-Modal Transportation Department, Mariate Echeverry, Transportation Planning Manager, Roderick Simmons, Director, Parks and Recreation Department, Blake Esselstyn, Planning & Development, Janet GeorgeMurr, Transportation Department.

Community Present: Ray and Deborah Gurriere and Jesse Norman

- Chairman Grode called the meeting to order at 3:30pm.
- Introduction by Greenway Commission Members and Staff
- **Review of 4-11-13 minutes** - Add to New Business: Choosing three GC members to Multi Modal Transportation Commission (MMTC); and add Public Comment period.
- **Review and approval of 3-14-13 minutes:** Sue moved to approve the minutes, Marcia seconded and carried unanimously.

• **New Business**

□ **Status Update and discussion of Multi Modal Transportation Commission (MMTC):** Cathy Ball distributed and reported on the update of the MMTC conceptual diagram. Cathy did present to Council, Tuesday 3/26/13 with a revised proposal based on the GC Retreat and other conversations.

1. The proposal diagram revised by placing the committees that will be contributing to the MMTC at the top.
2. Added the note under Greenway Subcommittee circle "Dual reporting relationship with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee."
3. Cathy met with Boards and Commissions and Board Committee of Council (Vice-Mayor Esther Manheimer, Councilman Jan Davis, and Councilman Gordon Smith) who had questions the recommendations that were made by GC. Basically, the Board Committee of Council felt that the strongest part of the Board of the MMTC should be made up of the Transportation groups. The Planning & Zoning, Sustainability Advisory Committee and Neighborhood Advisory Commission should be non-voting members of the MMTC. The MMTC members would take information back to their respective sub-committees. The sub-committees but would not have the knowledge based to weigh in and make decisions effecting transportation. The sub-committees will be highly encouraged to have a liaison or an ex-officio member, but a non-voting member.

The concern was:

- a. Getting MMTC too big to make decisions and having too many members to have a quorum;
- b. Setting the precedent of going to the MMTC model of having one commission feeding into the other commissions and what would that look like City wide.
- c. An extensive discussion about the make up of the sub-committees and how it will be structured; and set up; and what GC will be asked to do. Cathy will give GC a written letter asking recommendations of three GC members to be on the MMTC. The recommendations would go before City Council and most likely be endorsed and will ask the three groups (Transit and Greenway Commissions, and Bike and Ped Task Force) and Cathy will contact the other three of the lower part of the diagram (Planning and Zoning Commission, Sustainable Advisory Committee; and Neighborhood Advisory Commission) to ask to choose a liaison of MMTC. This information will be presented to City Council on 5/14; setting up appointments will be made on 6/11/13; to go into effect 7/1/13.

- d. In moving forward a lot of discussion in maintaining the integrity of the subcommittees. In the future:
1. The potential sub-committee members would make application to the MMTC; and MMTC would appoint to the respective subcommittees with the exception of the Bike and Ped Task Force.
 2. The big reason is to make sure that the makeup up of the sub-committees is diverse and there is clear representation.
 3. The federal requirements for COA to receive funds from FTA state to have a Transit body that make decisions in having certain representation.
 4. There needs to be some ability to reflect and to reinforce that the subcommittees are very important in helping with a lot of decision making and that there is still structure to that.
 5. There was feeling that if there was ad hoc group of people we may not be able to count on attendance, unless, they were appointed and had responsibilities and had a charter.
 6. The goal is that Cathy's report is to be put in an ordinance form so that Council would adopt.

Questions and Comments:

- a. Marcia Bromberg asked if GC could review the ordinance before it goes to Council. Cathy stated that GC could review the ordinance prior to Council.
- b. Marcia - asked about how the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee would work. Roderick stated that can be decided on the best model. Marcia stated that was discussed to have the sub-committee to be half of the people on the MMTC and half or part would be the people who are actually on the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) in order to have real interaction. Roderick stated that could be worked through and have the ordinance changed to the PRAC.
- c. Jim Grode stated that there will be another GC meeting on 5/9. Cathy suggested recommending the members to MMTC today since the list has to be submitted in advance in order to go to Council before the next GC meeting.
- e. Mary Weber asked for clarification that MMTC will be appointing Transit and Greenway Sub-committee members and Cathy verified this information.
- f. Cathy stated that the only requirement of Bike and Ped Task Force (BPTF) for appointments is to be City residents.
- g. Marcia stated that since BPTF is dominated more by bike to ask that the person be represented by pedestrian as well. Cathy stated that she will indicate that it is the desire of GC to have pedestrian influence as well as bike representation.
- h. MMTC would have 9 members and GC will elect a chairperson to the subcommittee. Marcia stated that she had a preference. The MMTC concept came from GC and she has concerns about dominance from Bike and Ped Task Force which has a strong group and Transit which has a constituency in a way that GC does not. Marcia suggested to get started that the Council appoint the Chair from the GC constituency. Cathy will include in the staff report that Marcia requested that but not make a recommendation from the staff; but will let the Board know that Marcia voiced her suggestion.
- i. Jim asked what are the terms from the initial appointment and how to stagger terms on the MMTC in order for the original group of 9 not all cycle off in the same year. Also, how do you figure out years of service on one committee or commission? For instance, this is Marcia 6th year on GC - she will be cycling off in December, 2013. Does that mean that she will also have to cycle off of the MMTC this year or does it start over? Cathy stated that for continuity you would serve on both, so if you were cycling off one, you would not serve on the other one. The terms would be the same as they are currently set up. Jim stated that it needs to be spelled out. What to say is: Wherever folks are in their term on the current commission is where they would be when they move into the new MMTC. Cathy would look at, based on who is recommended for TC and GC, is to set their terms based on making sure that the term limits of members are out and we always have at least members who have history on the commission, so the terms may be less at the beginning of the new MMTC. This is also true for Bike and Ped Task Force members.
- k. Marcia stated that the diagram does not have a clear charge for the MMTC and it would be nice to see exactly what that would be. MMTC would be advisory to the Council as GC has been in the past.
- l. Jim stated the MMTC concept has the potential to maximize the funding for multi-modal transportation.
- m. Mary asked when the MMTC will meet - Cathy stated that the members of MMTC will decide.
- n. Jim stated that a discussion on who would be the members from GC appointed on MMTC. Marcia suggested that Chair and Vice-Chair be part of MMTC. Sue agrees. Mary Weber is interested. Bryan stated that he would be interested but he does not have the knowledge base but will continue to serve on the sub-committee. Stephen moved to accept the appointment of Jim Grode, Marcia Bromberg and Mary Weber to the MMTC, Bryan seconded and carried unanimously.
- o. Husband and wife can be on the same commission per Mariate.

● **Greenway Commission Update:**

□ **Community Outreach Committee Report - Sue Barlow:**

1. Sue reported that GC was represented at UNC-A Building Healthy Communities on 2/18 and by Mary Weber on 2/25 with representation from many people of Asheville.

2. Jim Grode spoke at the Kiwanis Club on 4/10/12 with Lucy Crown of Buncombe County presenting an update of greenways with City and County, who were very receptive.

□ **Asheville Parks and Greenway Foundation (APGF) - Stephen Jones attended his first meeting replacing Glen Locascio as liaison. Glen is still involved with the organization.**

1. APGF will be marketing and public relations sponsor for Healthy Kids Day on Saturday April 13 at Pack Square with Asheville Greenworks. An information table will be available for educating and to have literature about the Parks and Greenways Foundation. Part of information will be on the new "Friends of the Parks and Greenways Foundation" promoting membership. There will be three different levels of membership and possible annual income which is much needed outside of sponsored events. Dana Davis who is the chair of that group coordinated with Susan Roderick of Asheville Greenworks on a shared membership benefit meaning if one becomes a member of the Parks and Greenway Foundation; they will receive the benefits from those organizations that have supported Asheville Greenworks.

2. The Greenways Subcommittee of the Foundation is designing a handout map for hikers and cyclists which will be free and available at hotels and other tourist's locations. Stephen will bring a hard copy of the map at the next GC meeting.

3. The Parks and Greenways Foundation are supporting an Adopt-A-Street by Broadway near Reed's Creek.

4. A campaign for the support of a splash park at the Wesley Grant Southside Center is on hold until more information about City funding.

5. Stephen is also on the board of Asheville Greenworks. Stephen met with Susan Roderick, Roderick Simmons and Cathy Ball regarding a development of a park on a City owned land at the top of White Fawn Reservoir or Overlook Mountain. The first phase of this project would be to have a landscape designer who will provide the basic outline/description of a community park, paths, seating for picnics, bathrooms, parking and to have it reviewed by the public. The City stated that they could help with the public view, which is an important part of the process and that would lead to having a clear sense what the first phase and costs of the park and making steps from that point.

□ **Bike/Ped Task Force:** Bryan reported on updates from the last two meetings:

1. Two different bicycle competitions in Asheville:

a. 2016 International Police Mountain Biking Competition;

b. 2016 US National Cycle Cross Championship at Biltmore Estate.

2. Local Event - Complete Streets Policy was passed by the MPO for projects starting in 2016. There will be a Complete Streets Workshop in Asheville the first week in June, 2013.

3. APD gives out free lights to bicyclists, if they are caught after dusk, rather than giving a citation. There is a local Bicyclists Retail Association who donates lights.

4. There are positive efforts being made to determine what the State Wide Safe Passing law for folks who are not driving autos. Bryan hopes to have more information by next GC meeting.

5. Bryan suggested a resource: walkbikenc.com would be a good place to put the new map that the Stephen mentioned. Stephen asked if there is a website for bicyclists on how to get to Point A to Point B on bike lanes. Bryan stated that Google maps have a bike and pedestrian modes for local communities and to contact Google of which streets and off streets. Bryan suggested adding greenways to the Google maps. Mary Weber stated that Buncombe County may have a greenway map. Mariate stated that on Google maps there are options by walk, bus or auto. Jim stated Buncombe County has a suitability layer of the map which is color-coded by green, yellow and red; purple are roads that illegal to ride a bike.

□ **Friends of Connect Buncombe:** Marcia reported.

1. This group does not exist yet, but there are former members of the Buncombe County Greenway Commission who have met to plan a Friends of Connect Buncombe, which is the brand that was used to gather information, community input and buy in during the master plan process with its own website and PR. The plan is to continue to raise public awareness and funds for greenway related projects.

2. The MPO grants for the Complete Streets that Claudia Nix brought to the Bike/Ped Task Force. Friends of Connect Buncombe plan to form as a non-profit in NC with a partner where funds can be deposited. Marcia understands that with grants of whatever municipality applies would pay 20% and the grants covers 80%. Marcia asked Roderick if a feasible study along the Swannanoa River for a greenway, COA would apply for the grant and COA could not pay the 20% then the Friends of Connect Buncombe pledge to raise the funds. This gives an

opportunity for the proposal to take place. We can learn from the Complete Streets Workshop. To find specific projects in raising money, partnering with a group or municipality of the County or City or both; or a potential project in Weaverville begin the process.

● **Staff Updates:**

□ PRCA - Roderick reported:

1. As discussed at the GC Retreat working to put the RFP together to get cost estimates for a feasible study. If all goes well, in June to talk about the corridors.
2. State application from the UNC-A Foundation submitted for the Reed's Creek Greenway. The State grant will not know until end of April or May and will send out a notification. The State budget is trying to decide which State or Federal money and how to fund the projects. Potential delay could be until early June.
3. With some of the other projects we have with PARTA funds, the governor and his budget has taken some of that trust fund as well. There are many grant projects that are questionable for funding.
3. Friends of Hominy Creek (FOHC) working with Risk Management to cover the liability and making sure that all of the activities that are performed on that site would have appropriate insurance. The document is ready to go and working through the last process and will be ready to be signed. FOHC have continued to work on the site and will be solidifying the relationship, hopefully, by next month.

□ Transportation: Mariate reported:

1. Sharrows have been installed on Kimberly Avenue on the downhill that the Sign Shop installed. Since it is very time consuming, the installation of the sharrows will be contracted. The idea is to connect downtown with the north part of the City. With the sharrows in the middle of Kimberly Avenue, drivers will have more awareness from both cyclists and drivers.
2. Contract was awarded for the Ped Signal at Clingman and Hilliard, but waiting for parts. This intersection will have pedestrian signal with crosswalk and ramp for ADA purposes.
3. Received RFQs for the design of three areas: at McDowell and Choctaw; N Louisiana and Haywood Rd and a third place for pedestrian signs which is funded by a federal grant with Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC).
4. Kick off meeting for the Clingman and Town Branch Greenway on Monday.
5. MPO - call for projects - requesting funding for the Multi-Modal Study. The City will apply for the whole scope of the multi-modal study with MPO. This will be the first task of the Multi-Modal Transportation Commission (MMTC.)
6. Bryan asked if there is an update on the pedestrian signal at Merrimon Avenue if there has been timing on the traffic lights. Mariate stated NCDOT is usually reluctant to alter the progression of the "wave" of the traffic lights from downtown to North Asheville. Stephen stated when a serious accident happens, then NCDOT decides to do it and that the City should let them know that it is dangerous intersection. Mariate stated that NCDOT has been contacted.
7. Jim stated that a gentleman who lives on Town Mountain Road asked if there is a possibility of having a climbing lane. Mariate stated that she will look into the Bicycle Master Plan. Mariate will first check to see if it is in the Bicycle Master Plan. Secondly, if it will be helpful to know how many cyclists ride on Town Mountain Road. All of the priorities need to be ranked.
8. Jim asked if there are plans at the intersection in front of the St. Lawrence Basilica to fix with different places to cross and is unsafe. Mariate stated that area is a City street and she will pass the information to the traffic engineer. Blake stated there is a discussion about this in connection with the hotel project on the City-owned property including Page Ave and Battery Park. The initial concept plans had a plaza on the hotel side of the intersection. If there will be open space between the Basilica and the hotel, there is an opportunity to improve pedestrian options as well as traffic flow. Blake knows that there are people looking at that concept in the context of the hotel project.

□ Planning: Blake reported that Mariate and Roderick touched on the topics.

1. There is uncertainly based on the legislation that is being introduced if it will become law, everything from design standards to funding will be affected.

Mary Weber attended the Council Meeting regarding the budget. A lot of the proposed cuts are affecting Parks and Recreation. Roderick stated that House Bill 418 - Regional Authority and the City and County are trying to figure what it would look like and the impact to greenway development. In terms of the regional concept, the County is trying to move the regional greenways - the question is where does it fall - is it in the City or County or Regional Authority. Part of the Bill says that the Regional Authority cannot have eminent domain power. If they are

developing regional greenways which will impact how the Multi-Modal Transportation connections come about. There will be a meeting tomorrow to figure out what is the language of the House Bill because the City technically does not have to have legislation to merge departments so this is thrown out there in order to get the County a chance to raise taxes to use towards regional assets.

Mary stated she heard from another landscape architect that one of the items of the legislature affects our environment on erosion control and stormwater standards. Basically, setting a minimum standard across the State and municipalities, which would not allow stricter regulations, as we have now. If an engineer seals the plans it is fast tracked through; as opposed to a landscape architect who would go through the review process. This could have serious implications for Asheville with the steep slopes and storm water run-off issues that we have had.

- **Public Comments** - None

- **Agenda Items for Next Meeting:**

- Review the map from the Foundation from Stephen

- View the Ordinance

- Discuss what the sub-committee on meeting times, how it will work and accepting new members.

- To go through Roderick for P & R Advisory Committee to join GC

- MMTC to appoint to sub-committee members.

Meeting Adjourned: 4:33pm.