

MINUTES

COUNCIL PARKS, TRAILS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

Wednesday, August 17th, 2016 – 3:30 PM

Administrative Conference Room at City Hall

Members Present: Gary Daniel, Chair, Council Member
Ann Hollingsworth, Vice-Chair, Council Member
Dr. Marty Ingram, Citizen Member
Jimmy Perkins, Citizen Member
Colin Izzard, Citizen Member
Ben Hardy, Citizen Member
Jim Fatland, City Manager
Josh Freeman, Community Development/Special Projects Director
Daniel Cobb, Planning Director
Lynn Goldsmith, Parks & Property Management Director

Staff Present: Kerry Lindsay, Secretary

1. Welcome & Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:37 PM.

2. Introductions as Necessary

Only Committee members were present.

3. Certification of Quorum

Quorum was certified.

4. Review of the Minutes

The minutes of the 7/20/16 meeting were approved unanimously and without correction.

5. City of Brevard/Transylvania County Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan follow up

J. Freeman introduced the topic and asked for feedback from the Committee Members. All Committee members agreed that the case was not fully presented for a full merger between City and County recreation staff. There was concern expressed over the lack specifics regarding cost savings in merging. The Committee also wished to see specifics regarding which services are being duplicated at present.

The Committee agreed that the multiuse indoor aquatic center was a great idea, but a large project which would require partnerships between City, County and the College. J. Fatland mentioned the potential to help fund a new facility with the College which the public would have access to. The Committee agreed that such a center would create middle management job opportunities within the community, but would also require more staffing. J. Perkins mentioned that the document said 30-40% of revenue should come from a non-tax related source and indicated that this would be a good opportunity to improve the City's revenue. Concern was expressed that this would create a municipal center in competition with local commercial fitness groups, but there was a counterargument that competition and new challenge can improve other businesses as well.

M. Ingram expressed concerns over the Plan's indication that the City Sports Complex would need rebuilding. She stated that the City should use what it has and improve that both in facilities and programs. C. Izzard suggested using programs with national branding to implement the programs (i.e. SwimAmerica). G. Daniels did point out that there are a few numerical inconsistencies within the document which need review. All feedback provided prior to the meeting is included as Exhibits A, B & C at the end of this document.

6. Added Item – Tannery Park Fundraising

J. Freeman asked for volunteers to help with the Tannery Fundraiser. A. Hollingsworth asked that the fundraiser provide ample conceptual designs and be clear that the money will go toward the planning process for the park. She also asked that more clean up occur on site. J. Fatland suggested getting a rudimentary path in place so that the public can view the park. C. Izzard said he would pass the information along to a client who has previously expressed interest in the park.

7. Added Item – Probart Update

J. Freeman informed the Committee that construction has begun for the Probart sidewalk and to send all schedule concerns to him.

8. Added Item – Pisgah Drive Bike Path Connector

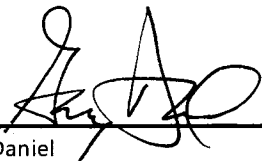
J. Fatland informed the Committee that he has handed the project to Public Works for a cost estimate using City Forces. Hopefully, the project will be under way quickly.

9. Added Item – Arbor Day/Community Appearance Commission

At the request of L. Goldsmith, J. Fatland made a motion to accept the Arbor Day responsibilities into the Parks, Trails & Recreation Committee's responsibilities. The motion was approved unanimously.

10. Adjourn

The Committee adjourned at 4:49 PM on Wednesday, August 17th, 2016.

X 

Gary Daniel
Council Member, Chair

X 

Kerry Lindsay
Secretary

Exhibit A – Lynn’s Feedback

Good morning:

I wanted to follow up on our conversation yesterday from the meeting. Since operations is a very key element in understanding the needs of our entities, I felt I should be more definitive on some points from the study. As I said yesterday, members from my staff were interviewed and feel that they were misrepresented on a large portion of the information. I wanted to give you the correct information from our department so that you can make an informed conclusion. This information can be substantiated if you want to visit our facilities and interview any of our staff, after reviewing the subject. In Section 3.3.3 Maintenance Assessment, the information says for County and City. These items do not represent the City. Below are some points that will clarify the Cities Maintenance involving recreation:

- ☐ We do have a maintenance plan. I and my Horticulturist Technician and Recreation Technician do have a schedule that we use to direct operations.
- ☐ We have had master plans for the Sports Complex and Franklin Park that are completed. They may want to create new ones.
- ☐ My staff members do not want to join work forces with the County. Staff believes that their work output is of the highest standard. Collectively we feel that the Cities needs may not be a priority if they were joined, and that the employees and the citizens of Brevard would not be served as well as they are currently.
- ☐ Our mowing standards during ball season are: the fields are mowed 2 to 3 times per week depending on vegetative growth.
- ☐ It’s true we could use more people. The six people we have maintain: facilities, grounds, recreation, custodial and special events that are listed on the report you received yesterday. We have been able to meet the demands from each area of maintenance with the staff that we have currently.
- ☐ The City Finance Department maintains our asset replacement schedule. A portion of replacement is budget driven.
- ☐ Most of our signage is fairly current and in place. The bike path may be lacking some signage, but that now comes under our Public Works Department.
- ☐ Our trail maintenance is something that is always a priority. The bike path was resealed last summer and I have a contracted Forrester and part-time staff from the Fire Department that keep the Bracken Trail in good order.
- ☐ We all probably need restrooms, but they would have to be winterized and maintained. Hap Simpson is flooded and totally under water at least 7-8 times per year and won’t support restrooms.
- ☐ The City Sports Complex fields do support major tournaments. We serve not only Transylvania Little League, but the Brevard Middle School, and several Travel ball teams, and they all sponsor regional tournaments and sometimes state if they advance that far. You can contact Cody Owen, Little league President 551-6375 or Mark Bumgarner, Brevard Middle School Coach 507-6443, for more detailed information on tournaments at our fields.
- ☐ Our buildings have signage and address numbers for 911 requirements.
- ☐ We do have some in-house cost data on our maintenance of the Sports Complex and pool from several years past that we use.

- ☐ Wi-Fi is available at Franklin Pool.
- ☐ We do have some specialized equipment for snow removal and we do plow the parking lots and the trails. We have a tractor with a scrape blade and front end loader. We also have a backhoe with a front end loader.

This information accurately describes the items discussed in section 3.3.3 for the City. I hope this helps in your understanding of City operations. As I said, you all are welcome to contact me (553-9396 cell) and my staff, if you need more information or would like to see our facilities. You also can use the sheet I had yesterday for a reference if you have time to visit the sites on your own. Thanks.

Lynn Goldsmith

Lynn Goldsmith

Director

Parks & Property Management Office

City of Brevard

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Brevard, North Carolina 28712

828-862-4119

Exhibit B – Ben’s Feedback

Memorandum

To: Josh Freeman

From: Ben Hardy

Date: 8/5/2016

Subject: Feedback on Parks and Recreation Draft Master Plan

Before I offer any comments on the plan’s specifics, I’ll first address the overarching question of whether the Draft Plan really makes a case for consolidation. From my reading, the answer is definitively no. I see clearly, and in bold, on page 87 that “**the consulting team strongly recommends the combination of the Transylvania County and City of Brevard park systems**”; however, I cannot see any evidence offered to support the recommendations. If this document is intended to make a case for the merger, then I do not believe that it has effectively done so. Rather than offer any information, qualitative or quantitative, that would support the recommendation, the report simply makes the recommendation then explains how the merger could be undertaken. Other unsupported claims include the purported “significant” opportunity to make improvements to existing parks, facilities, and trails (87), and the “improve[d] financial position with respect to operating revenues and expenditures, and capital projects” (90). Are those improvements really dependent upon a merger? And, while there may be some current redundancy between the two systems, the report indicates that “staff will or should not be reduced” (87), so there will be no savings there. Additionally, according to the report, “there are six park and recreation systems that are combined” in our state (87), which means that the option is rarely implemented since there are 100 counties in the state. Likewise, the information about Charlotte/Mecklenburg seems irrelevant as I see little comparison between our situation and theirs. Before we continue a conversation about consolidation, I’d like to better understand how it will benefit the community.

I am also skeptical about the level of cooperation required. I question the County’s support of some of the high-priority projects listed within the report. Greenways, for example, simply don’t seem to be something the county is willing to support, yet the table on page 63 ranks “Walking, biking trails, and greenways” as the top priority gleaned from community surveys, interviews, as well as other sources. The City, conversely, is obviously supportive of and actively developing greenways. I fear that these differences in values will complicate a merger that will require agreement of both the City and County governing boards. Such disagreements could stymie progress made by the City.

As for specific recommendations, like Marty, I am happy to see such import placed on greenways. They are an asset to our community as they definitely provide transportation and recreation opportunities. I’m not so excited about the pool or the fitness facility plans, but that is probably biased by the fact that I am an employee and member of Brevard Health and Racquet Club, so I don’t feel that need as others in the community may. It also seems that these things will carry a large and ongoing cost. I definitely think that improvements need to be made to many of the existing facilities, and I found some of the recommendations for potential programs to be interesting; however, as my comments above indicate, we must first answer the big picture question before we concern ourselves with specifics like which facility needs a makeover or whether we should offer pickleball leagues or adventure programs. Of course, facilities improvements and expanded offerings could occur without a merger, so the specifics aren’t useless; they’re just further along the conversation than I think we need to be.



In a nutshell, prior to discussing the how and the what, we need clarity regarding the why. I don't think the draft plan offers a compelling case for a merger. Even with a clearer understanding of the benefits of a City/County merger, as a representative of the City, I'd want assurances that the merger would not negatively affect the progressive steps the City has already taken and hopes to continue.



Exhibit C –Marty’s Feedback

Josh Freeman

From: Marty Ingram, ND <drmarty@throughwoods.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 03, 2016 11:31 PM
To: Josh Freeman
Subject: Feedback on Strategic Plan

Dear Josh,

I am quite happy with the #1 priority being trails as this is relatively low cost compared to a fitness center and also provides transportation options as well as fitness options. They mention the importance of destination trails for tourism and the community (such as along the French Broad river) but I did not see anything about their recommendations for the Ecusta Trail which I think is the most feasible destination trail in terms of ease of construction and land acquisition and would really benefit our community.

I also agree that indoor pool is greatly needed. Franklin pool is open such a short time of the year (not even in May or September when it is still hot) and we have been frustrated because there is often thunder in the afternoon which really limits its use. The indoor rec center is also needed since our rec center leaves a lot to be desired. Their recommendation to update would be a good start, but it is still not a vibrant community center that serves many interests. Silvermont is also underutilized (big building with not a lot going on) and is in such a great location. The fitness center really needs to have child care options like the YMCA that was proposed a few years ago.

I think it is crazy to buy more property and make all new ball fields. They should just work with what is already in place and perhaps add a few new ones if needed in some of the existing fields.

I think the youth/teen programs could be considered "core essential" (almost entirely subsidized) but I am not sure about the outdoor adventure programs. It seems the city/county should cover their costs at least. Maybe I am misunderstanding the chart on page 77.

Combining City and County forces makes sense because it seems that there must be duplicate administrative positions and perhaps work could be more effectively distributed with a larger combined team. The transition sounds quite cumbersome however. It would be great to hear how much money Charlotte saved (or other statistics) as we consider this process. The consultant did not provide much motivational evidence for this merger.

Lots of decisions to make but what an exciting vision! I think the money will come once we have the vision in writing and put out to the world.

In health,
Marty Ingram, ND

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