

MINUTES

City Council Parks, Trails, & Recreation Committee

Wednesday, August 19, 2020, 3:30 PM

Railroad Depot

Members Present: Mac Morrow, Chair, Council Member
Maureen Copelof, Vice-Chair, Council Member
Jim Fatland, City Manager
Paul Ray, Planning Director
Nancy DePippo, Citizen Member
Howie Granat, Citizen Member
Matt Christian, Citizen Member
Ryan Olson, At-Large Member

Absent: David Lutz, Public Works Director
Erik Emaus, Citizen Member

Staff Present: Denise Hodsdon, Executive Assistant
Aaron Bland, Assistant Planning Director
Kaitland Finkle, Planning Department

Media: Matt McGregor, *Transylvania Times*

A. Welcome & Call to Order

Committee Chair Mac Morrow introduced new member Matt Christian. He welcomed all in attendance and called the meeting to order at 3:33 PM.

B. Certification of Quorum

Quorum was certified by Executive Assistant Denise Hodsdon

C. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Olson asked to add a discussion about Bracken Mountain and Mr. Ray asked to add an update on the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Motion by Ms. Copelof, seconded by Mr. Granat, to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

D. Approval of Minutes of July 22, 2020 Meeting

Motion by Mr. Olson, seconded by Ms. DePippo to approve the minutes of the July 22, 2020 meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

E. Project Updates:

1. Dog Park

Ms. Copelof reported that the dog park is moving along very well and she shared three formats of the new dog park logo. The Task Force is also working on creating a Brevard Dog Park Facebook page which will include a “Pooches in Profile” feature and hopes to have it up and running in about a week. She said Public Works has made a lot of progress at the site, despite some weather delays. All of the brush and cut trees will be removed by the end of next week and that will allow the design team to finalize the design. Ms. Copelof said we did leave an area of brush on one side for bird watchers. We are starting conversations with some of our conservation partners to see if we can do some natural bog planting in the drainage ditch to make it more attractive. Mr. Morrow added that the Public Works Department hopes to have a walking path around the park. Ms. Copelof said we will be looking at perhaps adding some benches along this path.

Ms. Copelof said we have worked out the procedures and rules, which will be published and because it will be a passive park, we will rely on the public to follow the rules. She added that there will be security cameras at the park.

2. Brevard Skate Park

Mr. Fatland reported that City Council approved refunding the balance of the Tannery Skate Park fundraising monies to Sk8 Brevard and the project has been accepted as a City asset.

Mr. Ray reported that the concrete structure at the Sports Complex will be completed next week. It won't be ready to open yet as we still have some landscaping and backfilling to do. Mr. Morrow recalled that at our last meeting, we discussed that we still needed to raise \$20,000 to complete the additional features of Phase I. He reported that the ABC Board gave us the \$20,000.00. Mr. Ray reported that Toxaway Concrete gave us a 50% discount on the additional concrete, and with the in-kind donations and help from the Brevard ABC Board, the total square footage for Phase I is 3,200 s.f.

F. Bracken Mountain

Mr. Morrow said that on August 4th he received an email from Torry Nergart of Conserving Carolina and Mr. Nergart asked that it be read into the minutes: “I would like to provide the City with a report of volunteer activities hosted by Conserving Carolina on the Bracken Preserve. Our current COVID-19 volunteer rules allows for registered and trained volunteers (those having been with us from before lockdown) to conduct activities only if they travel separately, convene in outdoor groups of ten or less, use their own tools, and maintain 10-foot or greater social distancing. These rules are in place until August 31st when they will be revised or

renewed. Prior to about 1½ months ago, our rules were a bit stricter and we have moved forward and are learning better how to keep our folks safe while getting a bit of work done. Some of our longtime trail volunteers working on the award winning trails in the Bearwallow Mountain upper Hickory Nut Gorge area, a/k/a the “rock crushers”, have shifted over to the Brevard area. These highly qualified folks have removed downed debris, cleaned drains, restored berms, and blocked switchbacks. All total, six volunteers have logged 49 hours of work in the last four weeks. I would like to request that these stats be entered into the minutes of the Parks, Trails and Recreation Committee and we are thankful and gladly able to work on City trails.”

Mr. Olson said it is wonderful that Conserving Carolina has committed to giving back to communities, although it is really not the intention of their land trust to do this type of community work. He said they might do this work for the next ten years and be an awesome partner to us, but he does have a little bit of concern long-term that that could change. How do we tackle a problem on the trails, be it an immediate need to clear or a longtime erosion problem that we need to deal with? He said a lot of Bracken looks great, but the lower section continues to get wear and tear. He said I know that there was a planned climb trail at one point and I still really think that there is a demand to bypass the intensity of that section. He noted that it is not a bad hiking trail, but if you put bikes on that lower section it’s just a lot of speed and the wear and tear will require continued maintenance. He asked if the climbing trail is still on the table?

Aaron Bland said the climb trail and the downhill trail are both still in the plan. The climb trail needs two easements – one from the Music Center and one from the Home Trust Bank that owns the parcel around it. Mr. Bland said he has had conversations with the bank about the possibility of getting an easement and they asked if the City would be interested in purchasing that property. He said if we purchased it, we could do whatever we wanted to with it because it would not be subject to the trust.

There was discussion about the benefits of the City purchasing the Home Trust Bank land. Mr. Morrow said he knows they would love for the City to have it, but it would need to go through the planning and budget process. He noted that this year’s priorities are the Dog Park, Skate Park and Silversteen Playground. He said maybe the next piece would be to get a PARTF grant to buy the Home Trust Bank land.

Mr. Granat pointed out that from a tourism perspective, when people come to town they want to ride right from their B&B, which you can do to Bracken, but it is only the intermediate to advanced that go there. There are no beginner trails here so the premise is even if we added just a section, having that right here would help keep people in Brevard and keeps them from going to Pisgah Forest or Hendersonville. Mr. Bland said we are really limited on what we can do on the main part of Bracken, but if we owned that bottom piece, it would be great for that because you could bill that as the lower easier section. Mr. Morrow thought this would be a good opportunity to look at that terrain and come up with a proposal before we decide if this is something we want.

G. Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update

Kaitland Finkle reported that the City is moving forward with updating the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. City Council has adopted the name "Building Brevard - 2030 Comprehensive Land Use Plan." We are trying to creatively get input from various stakeholders throughout the process. The Blue Zones Project is spearheading and helping us work through this so we are doing it in-house. This fall we are going to start our outreach and in the coming months we will send out a survey and have various virtual public meetings to hear from our citizens and businesses as to their plans and vision for the future of Brevard. She will be reaching out in the near future and welcomed any suggestions as we move through the process. She said the process will take approximately nine months, with the ultimate adoption going to City Council in the spring of 2021.

H. Set Date for Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Parks, Trails & Recreation Committee will be on Wednesday, September 16, 2020 at 3:30 PM at the Depot.

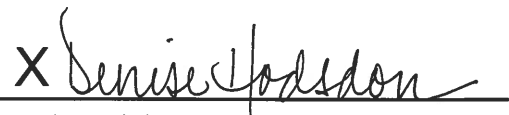
I. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:41 pm.



Mac Morrow,
Chair, Council Member

Minutes Approved: September 16, 2020



Denise Hodsdon
Executive Assistant