

MINUTES

City Council Parks, Trails, & Recreation Committee

Wednesday, January 12, 2022, 3:30 PM
City Hall Council Chambers

Members Present: Mac Morrow, Chair, Council Member
Aaron Baker, Vice-Chair, Council Member
Steve Harrell, Interim City Manager
David Lutz, Public Works Director
Paul Ray, Planning Director
Nancy DePippo, Citizen Member
Ryan Olson, At-Large Member
Matt Christian, Citizen Member (via Zoom)
Howie Granat, Citizen Member (via Zoom)
Tim Robinson, Citizen Member (via Zoom)

Staff Present: Aaron Bland, Asst. Planning Director
Emily Brewer, Planner
Denise Hodsdon, Executive Assistant

Guests: TYSA Representatives Caitlyn Murray, Mary Jo Gordon, Randy Baron,
and Chappie Powell
Mark Burrows, Blue Zones Project
Torry Nergart, Conserving Carolina (via Zoom)

Media: Alex Perry, Transylvania Times

A. Welcome & Call to Order

Committee Chair Mac Morrow welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 3:31 pm.

B. Certification of Quorum

Quorum was certified by Executive Assistant Denise Hodsdon

C. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Ms. DePippo, seconded by Mr. Baker to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

D. Approval of Minutes of November 17, 2021 Meeting

Motion by Mr. Ray, seconded by Ms. DePippo to approve the minutes of the November

17, 2021 meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

E. Transylvania Youth Soccer Association – Update re Soccer Fields

Caitlyn Murray, Mary Jo Gordon, Randy Baron, and Chappie Powell of Transylvania Youth Soccer Association updated the committee on the organization's programs and goals for the future. They shared some ideas in hopes of forming a partnership with the City of Brevard to move projects forward that align with the mission and goals of both organizations. A copy of their Partnership Proposal is attached as Exhibit A.

Caitlyn Murray explained that they are currently using the County's facilities for the most part. While they are extremely grateful for those facilities, ultimately one of their strategic goals in the long-term is to initiate a capital campaign for their own facilities and in addition to that, develop existing facilities so that they function better and have a larger impact. There are a few things about the Ecusta field that they feel can be key in updating it to increase that impact. They are proposing adding lights, fencing, seating, and sports turf.

Randy Baron added that they are trying to initiate a soccer culture within this community. They have Academy teams that travel to Asheville to play and that other teams don't come here because we don't have the facilities for teams to come here and play. He said many of our kids are leaving Brevard to go play for other teams in South Carolina because we don't have it to offer the kids. Mr. Baron said they see the potential to grow the program and eventually would like to invite other teams to come play us and when we have our own fields, we can put on tournaments and draw hundreds of people to Brevard over a weekend. He said right now the high school has allowed them to utilize their lighted turf field in the evenings, but they don't have control over it. If they were able to work with the City on the Ecusta field, they would manage that field for the City and be responsible for coordinating the schedule there.

Mr. Morrow thanked them for what they are doing as an organization. He said there is no doubt the City would want to be a partner in some kind of fundraising. He asked if they have some ideas of plans, priorities and a budget and what support would they be looking for from the City. Ms. Murray said their priorities would be lighting and the sports turf, which they feel would provide the most improvement and most opportunity. She said they would ask for support, probably in pieces of the capital campaign. That might look like being a part of events, helping to spread the word about what TYSA does, and actively being a partner at all times.

Randy Baron explained that they are looking at phasing this over the next 5 years and are hoping that initially they can work with the City in conjunction with the skate park and end up with some lights on that field. The next phase potentially could be the capital campaign where we help raise a significant amount of money, because it's a \$1M project to turf a field. He said they have reached out to different manufacturers and installers and different lighting people but didn't feel they were at a point where they could sit down with them and talk hard numbers until they met with this committee.

Ms. Murray said the idea of them coming here today really was to just say here is what we do, here is what we're looking at, and to ask if the City is onboard to be partners with us. Mr. Morrow said he hopes that in the next five years we can work together to meet some of these goals. Ms. Murray will put together a more detailed proposal to present to the committee at a future meeting.

F. Project Updates

1. Estatoe Trail

Mr. Ray provided an update on the Railroad Avenue expansion from Whitmire Street to West Main Street. Patton Construction is about ready to get started on that section, which will be done in conjunction with a major stormwater improvement project as well. They have been accumulating all the materials necessary for this project, but it has taken longer than anticipated because of problems with getting the materials. From Main Street, we will cross over and go to the Mary C. Jenkins Community Center. The surveyors are going to start on this next week and then the engineers can start laying out that portion.

Mr. Ray reported that now that we finally have our Brownfield agreement in place, we have hired Summit Engineering to propose a route through Tannery Park all the way to Rosman Highway. Mr. Ray presented a map with the proposed route (copy attached as Exhibit B) and asked for input from the committee. Mr. Ray noted that we are running along Cashiers Valley Road and not following Norton Creek at this time because we want to do a streambank restoration on the creek. Summit Engineering tells us that with the streambank restoration money, we could probably lump in the trail construction costs as well. Mr. Ray said we will be applying for a large grant and it will cost a considerable amount just to apply as we will have to submit 80% drawings as part of the application. That will be something for City Council to consider how to fit that into the next budget year.

Mr. Ray explained that what we would consider doing while we wait for the streambank restoration grant to happen, is to build the first trail along Cashiers Valley Road. We could then do a second one along the stream with the restoration project, and maybe do something recreational in the middle, like a pump truck or something else after some public input and consideration from this committee and City Council.

Mr. Ray said he has been talking with NCDOT on how to cross Rosman Highway and they have given him some ideas of what they would approve. He said they are not fond of mid-block crossings, but they are receptive to a center island like the crossing on Asheville Highway near Lowes.

Mr. Baker said he would be interested in the details of how they are going to get around the Skate Park.

Mr. Ray noted that Aaron Bland has recommended that instead of going so far along Cashiers Valley Road, we could go across the city-owned parcel to get off the road sooner. Mr. Ray will have Summit make that adjustment and ask about the Skate Park.

2. Alta – Pedestrian & Bicycle Master Plan

Aaron Bland reported that Alta is still finalizing their draft document. Once we have that it will come back to this committee and then go out for another round of public engagement.

3. Community Garden

Mr. Morrow reported that City Council approved a policy on community gardens at the last meeting and Blue Zones Brevard gave us \$7500 to start our community garden. He said now that City Council has approved this concept, we need to create a sub-committee and asked if anyone would like to participate in that. There were no volunteers. Mr. Morrow noted that last summer when Intern Erick Mendez was working on the community garden, there was a whole group of folks interested and there was a lot of excitement out there.

He asked Mark Burrows to give an update on next steps. Mr. Burrows noted that a community garden was part of the discovery process that Blue Zones had with food and nutrition and is identified in their strategic plan. He noted that it is a specific strategy that was agreed upon by the Blue Zones Steering Committee and has been out there for some period of time. With that in mind, he has met with Mayor Copelof, Mr. Morrow and others to see how Blue Zones can support the City's effort on this. He said Blue Zones has been working with Gaia Herbs and they want to help with a community garden with volunteers and maybe some financial support. He said the real piece for him, and it seems a great deal of angst for some individuals, is where exactly is a community garden going to go?

Mr. Burrows noted that last summer when Erick Mendez was working on the community garden, he created a detailed report and there were 12 to 15 individuals who offered to volunteer and donate supplies, tools, a shed and a small greenhouse. There are those opportunities out there and he is here to support what this committee and City Council would like to do. He said he thinks there is other potential with Brevard College.

Mr. Baker said his thought is that a garden is really just the people that actually put the work into making it a garden. The piece of land is obviously important, but in thinking of the Skate Park or the Dog Park where there were a lot of people that were energized around making those things happen, once they were there, there is not a lot of hands-on effort needed from the community to make it go. A garden is basically all community hands-on to make it go. He thinks we need to make sure we have those people who are going to really push it forward to make it a reality.

Mr. Olson said it sounds like this will be a large community garden and would be the signature one for our community. It would be really cool if there was a network of these community gardens with maybe this being the energy that drives that network; that the City is getting behind this and putting its stamp on it, saying this is important to us too. He hopes placement doesn't become something of contention. He said I think down in this area would be wonderful, but I also think the right spot is the right spot.

Ms. DePippo said we have to know if this is something that excites the residents here. Maybe it doesn't, so don't put it there; I don't know how we come to that determination. Mr. Morrow said he thinks that's where we are on that site. There are other sites where people want one and I think we want to go where people want it and let people see how it works.

Mr. Burrows said Erick Mendez did do a survey last summer and reached out to the broad community and to some specifically in that area. There were 52 responses and almost every one of them was affirmative as to wanting to be engaged. He reiterated that Blue Zones is here to help with this and he will do whatever he can to support the effort.

Mr. Morrow asked if there were any concerns about community gardens and if everyone was on board with identifying leadership and getting them onboard. There being no objections, he noted that the next step would be to create the subcommittee to move it forward and make some recommendations.

Additional Comments:

Ms. DePippo asked about Phase 2 of the Skate Park and if the demand is there yet? Mr. Ray said he thinks there is definitely demand for it, but it would be up to City Council to discuss whether they want to put it in the budget.

Mr. Olson asked if there was any further progress on the additional acreage on the lower side of Bracken. Mr. Ray reported that we got another donation so we are getting closer to having the money we need. He thinks we should consider applying for PARTF funds, but Rebekah Robinson of Conserving Carolina is waiting to hear from some donors that she is waiting on commitments from. She thinks they may donate a considerable amount and we might not need to do a PARTF. Mr. Granat suggested that when we figure out what the gap is, we could reach out to cycling organizations and individuals to work on a private campaign for that.

G. Set Date for Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Parks, Trails & Recreation Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, February 16, 2022 at 3:30 PM.

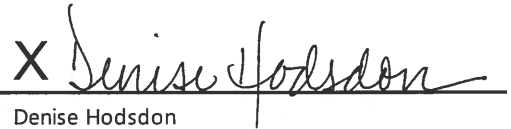
H. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:56 pm.

X 

Mac Morrow,
Chair, Council Member

Minutes Approved: February 16, 2022

X 

Denise Hodsdon
Executive Assistant

OUR PARTNERSHIP PROPOSAL

OBJECTIVES

- Establish a partnership with TYSA and the City of Brevard (Parks, Trails, and Recreation Committee) to move projects forward that align with the mission and goals of both organizations.
- Initiate a proposal for additions to the Ecusta Field: lights, seating, fencing, and turf.
- Utilize TYSA resources to establish capital campaigns to raise money for future projects, with the support of the City of Brevard.

GOALS

- Develop and implement projects that improve and expand youth programs within the community, and increase the impact of TYSA's programs.
- Improve functionality and increase the accessibility and impact of the Ecusta Field and other existing spaces.



ECUSTA FIELD: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

SUMMARY. With a rural population of 33,000 people, Transylvania County has limited youth recreation opportunities in comparison to surrounding counties. With this and the importance of these opportunities in mind, the city has long-championed youth sports and recreation, which in turn contributes to the overall wellbeing and positive growth of the community. The Ecusta Field was developed to provide additional recreational opportunities for Transylvania County residents; although the field is officially a soccer field, it can be utilized for a variety of different sports/recreation activities.

GOALS. While TYSA is grateful for the county's facilities that allow us to run our programs, our reliance on these threatens our efficacy and growth as an organization. To jumpstart our strategic plan which emphasizes obtaining our own facilities and developing existing spaces to expand our programs, we are proposing additions to the Ecusta Field and its management to improve the field's functionality and increase the number of youth and residents served because of the field. TYSA is willing to utilize its resources with the support of the Parks, Trails, and Recreation Committee to initiate capital campaigns in the pursuit of this project and other joint efforts between TYSA and the City of Brevard.

DETAILS. The addition of lights to the field would expand usability, especially during winter months, for soccer, football, and other community events/programs. Fencing will improve function by increasing the safety of players and spectators and providing better ball containment. Outfitting the field with bleacher seating increases the field's capacity to be used for larger community events. Finally, sports turf improves overall function of the field substantially by allowing consistent usability despite weather conditions, keeping the field in optimal playing condition, and lowering field maintenance cost and environmental impact.

OUR MISSION

Transylvania Youth Soccer Association (TYSA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that seeks to foster the *physical, mental, and emotional growth* of youth and adults in Transylvania County, NC, regardless of race, gender, religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, ability, or any other factor, through the sport of soccer at all levels of age and competition by establishing programs and activities that focus on development, promotion, teaching and administration of the game of soccer.



RECREATION

This program "plants the seed" that inspires and excites youth at the beginner level by emphasizing fun and emotional/physical health, growth, and development through the sport of soccer.



ACADEMY

This program is designed to "water the seeds" - i.e. facilitate improvement of technical soccer skills to play at a higher level through high-quality instruction and age-appropriate activities in a fun learning environment. Academy teams compete with those from local youth soccer organizations to expose players to competitive play.



COMMUNITY, SERVICE, EQUITY, WELLNESS, GROWTH

- TYSA has been a staple in the Transylvania County community since 2000, and has served thousands of youth through its soccer programs at all levels.
- 300+ youth ages 3-15 were served during the Fall 2021 season through our Recreation and Academy programs, with 600+ additional youth and families impacted by our programs.
- During the Fall 2021 season, more than 50 volunteers offered their time and energy to serve youth who were part of our programs.
- TYSA is continuously working to improve on the equity and accessibility of its programs by developing partnerships with organizations serving youth in the county (Boys & Girls Club, El Centro), implementing scholarship funds and opportunities, and offering discounted registration rates, simplified registration processes, and additional services for members of the community who are economically disadvantaged and often marginalized from sports/recreation programs.
- Soccer supports physical health, emotional wellbeing and mental health, positive social interactions with peers and adults, and cognitive/problem-solving abilities, all of which are critical to youth wellness.
- Soccer supports the physical, emotional, and social growth of youth by giving them opportunities to improve their game, learn from hands-on experiences, practice emotion regulation/coping skills, and have interactions with peers that support the development of effective communication and teamwork skills.

OUR IMPACT



