GREENWAY COMMISSION MEETING

ASHEVILLE GREENWAYS

July 12, 2012
3:30-5:00 pm
First Floor Conference Room City Hall

Members Present: Marcia Bromberg, Glen Locascio, Stephen Jones, Ally Donlan Wilson
Staff Present: , Mariate Echeverry, Staff Liaison, Martha McGlohon, Legal Liaison, Jannice Ashley, Legal Department., Al Kopf, Parks & Recreation, Dan Baechtold, Transportation Planner, Janet Georgemurr, Transportation Department
Community Present: Deborah Gurriere, James Nick Peterson, Dabney Sue Peterson, Ray Gurriere, Lauren Butcher, Rich Owings, Roger Hartley, Bob Roepnack, Liz McLamb, Steven Brady.
Marcia called the meeting to order at 3:30.
Introduction of the Greenway Commission, City Staff, and Community as stated above.

Review and approval of 7-12-12 agenda: Marcia stated to move the Staff Updates before New Business in order to discuss the issue that the community would like to speak to which is the Beaucatcher Greenway and Al Kopf plans to give a report. The GC agreed unanimously.

Review and approval of 6-14-12: Marcia stated that the GC minutes of 6/14/12 had minor changes which were corrected prior to the 7/12/12 GC meeting. Stephen moved to approve the minutes as written, Ally seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

- **STAFF UPDATES:**

PRCA Staff Update: Al Kopf reported on three of the projects that are currently under development:

- New Belgium Project: There was a meeting this past month to look at the preliminary designs of the Asheville Brewery and how it interfaces with the French Broad River Greenway.
  1. The Greenway will be along the river following the sanitation sewer line.
  2. There is the possibility of 2 connections on the northern and southern end for trailheads. The northern end is fairly level and easy for ample parking, which approaches the Haywood Rd. Bridge; the consultant is looking at switch backs coming to the surface parking at the top for an ample trailhead at the southern end.
  3. Al is working with the consultant who is doing more of the master planning level at this stage.
  4. Al will keep GC updated as this project becomes more refined.

- Clingman Forest Greenway and Town Branch Greenway: Al stated the DBE was reviewed for all of the consultant firms that applied. The top three firms have been selected for interviews. Interviews will be scheduled in the next couple of weeks. Al will report next month as to the firm selected.

- Beaucatcher Greenway: The RFQ Review Committee reviewed the written proposals and conducted interviews. Stewart Engineering was selected as the most qualified firm.

Equinox Environmental of Asheville is part of the team that will design the greenway. Over the next few weeks staff will develop a contract after negotiating a price. The project is anticipated to last one year. A step that was taken to shorten the timeframe by having surveyors (Josh Holmes) survey the public right-a-way of Ardmion Park that goes along the mountain face, to verify the exact location of the Right of Way to save planning time. A public meeting will be scheduled in a few months regarding the greenway.

Marcia stated that there are community members that have concerns about the Beaucatcher Greenway and the GC will take 10 minutes to hear the concerns:

Ray Gurriere, property owner on the proposed greenway for Beaucatcher asked: What criteria does the Greenway Commission use when they chose a private driveway as part of a public greenway? Martha McGlohon, legal liaison, interposed to say that it is not a private driveway and that the City has an actual deed.

1. Mr. Gurriere stated he has gathered information and a map that shows that Ardmion Road is not a public road.
2. Martha McGlohon stated that that the City has a deed which deeds the property to the City of Asheville. Martha offered a copy of the deed to Mr. Gurriere.
3. Mr. Gurriere asked if GC has walked the Beaucatcher Greenway and if they think that it is safe greenway. Marcia stated that is an absolutely a safe area. Mr. Gurriere stated that this topic will be discussed further once it is determined if Ardmion Road is a private or a public road.
4. Mr. Guerriere stated that the City Manager's Office confirmed to him in two different directions that Ardmion is a private road.
5. Marcia stated that ownership is a legal issue and that the Committee will defer to legal counsel.

Debbie Gurriere lives in the old Sky Club and represents the Sky Club Association.

1. Mrs. Gurriere took GC down memory lane since it is important to the question of the private or public status of the road. She was surprised to receive a packet at her home a few weeks ago to include a letter from Josh Holmes, Surveyor, requesting permission to come on to her property to survey it. There was also a plat map from 1961.
2. The Sky Club Association discussed hiring legal counsel and retained Albert Sneed, a local attorney
3. Mrs. Gurriere was even more surprised and frightened two days ago when she found the surveyors on the property and she asked them to leave.
4. Mrs. Gurriere gave a brief history of the Sky club and distributed information to GC and staff. Mrs. Gurriere expressed concern about safety and liability issues due to the swimming pool and other water features.
5. Thousands of dollars were paid to pave, lights, landscape and maintain the driveway and a privacy gate that cost in excess of $25,000.
6. Marcia stated that the Greenway plan was in progress for a number of years. Marcia stated that greenways enhance safety and most likely this one will not have people wandering on private property.
7. Martha stated that she believes the City made attempts to contact Attorney Sneed.

Nick Peterson - property owner for 38 years stated:

1. There are constant blind spots and a lot of curves along the drive impacting emergency access.
2. We would not have been allowed to put a private gate if it was not a private drive.
4. Stephen Jones asked Al how long there has been public discussion regarding the Beaucatcher Greenway? Al stated about 5 to 6 years there were public meetings which were well advertised. Marcia stated that since being on GC for the past 5 years and prior to being on GC there, the Beaucather GW was discussed at a couple of public meetings in connection with the Parks and Recreation Department Master Plan and prior to the Greenway Master Plan.

5. Glen stated that the Greenway Master Plan was completed in 2008 and approved by Council in 2009.
6. Marcia stated that perhaps the GC is not the right venue to discuss this issue and suggested that the legal means would be the first way to go; and the second way is to address the Council directly.

Transportation Update: Mariate stated that she will be speaking about greenways that are not on the Greenway Master Plan.

1. Mariate had a discussion with Ken Putnam and Martha McGlohon to look at all of the options that we have.
2. That the best approach, if the GC is agreeable, is to create an integrated multi-modal plan that will address the different infrastructures in one single plan, in order to see where the gaps are when creating greenways and when introducing new greenways and how to resolve the gaps.
3. Marcia asked if this would still allow for the new projects that were at the bottom of the Master Plan Greenway Development Priority List. Mariate stated that the list will not be incorporated and that will need to follow the process that is in place.
4.. Mariate stated the process that is followed is for all the plans: that we produce documents in hiring a consultant; the consultant reports on the existing conditions and there are public meetings, etc.
5. Marcia stated in understanding the plan at work session in September that GC would lay out the process for this integration of the three existing plans portions of the Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Master Plan to include the timing for the integration process, of public input; and then hire a consultant to lead through the process? Mariate affirmed Marcia's explanation, since Transportation does not have the capacity to do the process, a consultant is necessary. Marcia asked about funding sources for this process. Mariate stated that the first item is to have an idea; and come up with an action plan which is also part of the funding. Marcia asked if this process would be completed in the next year. Mariate stated that she will need to look at the time lines and look at the effort involved. When looking for funding whick will take longer due to involving the plan; going to Council to request the money; or in brainstorming to identify other funding sources, i.e. federal with a local match.
6. Marcia stated that while GC appreciates the idea of integrated planning for all of the elements of transportation, including bicycles and greenways that the GC would like to see a fast-track option for adding projects to the greenway list.
7. Glen proposed a resolution as follows: "In the long term to look an integrated multi-modal system planning approach or system-wide greenway. In the short term, develop a more immediate City-wide greenway system with priorities." Glen moved to approve, Stephen seconded and carried unanimously.
8. Martha asked "where do we go from here?" Because at the last meeting GC was asking staff how can City staff promote GC's list of priorities. Marcia stated the answer is what Mariate proposed. At the planning session in September, Mariate can provide direction on how the plan would play out and perhaps funding identified; and when some parts could be moved forward more quickly than others. Marcia thinks that it will be a good forum in laying out a process.

New Business: None

Old Business:

- Beaverdam Update: Glen stated that he wanted to present what is going on in the Beaverdam Community. Glen presented a map to show the general area of important features and wanted to point out that in the GMP of 2009, there were some interesting parts in the service analysis and it was basically determined in a good number of categories that North Asheville was under-served for most with parks and recreation facilities and greenways which is an area of great need. Glen listed areas of improvement:

1. The bus runs along Beaverdam and turns around at the Golden Living Center and Beaverdam Road does not have a shoulder or sidewalks and is very dangerous for bicyclists and pedestrians, especially with the curves and lack of shoulder and'
2 The bus route was the 5th highest ridership out of 23 bus lines in the City.
3. The issue of getting to the bus stops is difficult.
4. Al and Seth did some preliminary field work which was greatly appreciated for an assessment and Al could comment if there are questions.
5. Glen stated that this is ground breaking or precedent of type of greenway for the City in that this is not predominantly City-owned land. There are approximately 360 land owners within 200 feet of Beaverdam Creek for these 2 or so miles of potential greenway. We are basically starting from a ground up approach to get community support to donate easements.
6. Key features to be linked up: the YMCA, Country Club of Asheville, Jones Elementary School (which would help to get more students and people to be able to walk to Jones School where the baseball field is located); the playgrounds.
7. There is a portion of the Thom's Estate that legal was able to verify that the City holds an easement for 750 feet of length.
8. A Facebook page was developed and named: Friends of Beaverdam Valley and also a petition that is developed to get signatures in the community to show support for the greenway

- Community members spoke in support of the Beaverdam Greenway:

Bob Roepnack, resident in the Beaverdam thanked Glen for his presentation of the whole greenway aspect and connectivity that community members are trying to accomplish in having a safe connectivity between all of the different communities.
1. For instance, from Wild Cherry and Faircrest and Pinecroft there is no way to get from one community to another without going to Beaverdam Road which is very dangerous.
2. Bob is a member of the P&R Greenways Foundation and on the fund raising committee where he has had an opportunity to speak with business owners and individuals who are willing to put money up and support greenways more than anything else.
3. Bob talked with businesses and they ask what greenways are in the works because the foundation is trying to raise funds for both parks and greenways, but right now, individuals and businesses are really focused on helping out with transportation and greenways. This would be an opportunity to gather up community funds that would help put together a whole new greenway program that would go with the bicycles and multi-modal transportation needs.
4. Bob feels that the people that he is speaking with are looking for direction to having a totally integrated plan that would include all neighbourhoods and communities; and not be limited to what is on the GMP.
The Beaverdam Greenway has been well received and people on both sides of the road are in support of this and he has just started to obtain signatures on a petition.
5. Bob requested to have this in the Greenway Master Plan as a higher priority in having the community, the connectivity to Merrimon Avenue; and the greenways where they add safety and help communication.

Rich Owings - lives off of Wild Cherry Road and had a conversation with workers who were testing on the Wild Cherry Bridge for replacing the bridge.
1. Rich encourages the GC to pursue the connection to cross the creek.
2. Martha stated that the Wild Cherry Bridge replacement is imminent. Rich suggested that would be important if the bridge was wide enough to accommodate the greenway.
3. Martha stated that the easements have been acquired from the Thom's Estate, which is owned by the gated community and also acquired fee-simple property interest for the replacement of the bridge.
4. Public Works Engineering Department and Brian Estes is handling that project.
5. Marcia asked if there is a way to encourage them to accommodate a greenway as well as a road on the Wild Cherry Bridge. Martha and Mariate could obtain the information regarding the design of the bridge and that if the design has not gone out for bids, the information could be changed.

6. Marcia suggests a resolution - Glen makes a resolution "That the replacement of Wild Cherry Bridge be wide enough to accommodate pedestrian and/or bicycles facilities." Stephen seconded and carried unanimously.
7. Marcia encourages Rich that the petition is written towards encouraging the City to return the Beaverdam Greenway project to the greenway list and; that the citizens want this to happen and are willing to work in many ways, including raising funds to make it happen.
8. Ally asked that with the Beaverdam Greenway project off of the GMP list, will this be a part of the discussion in the September planning session, of ways to incorporate new priorities?
9. Marcia stated that to the extent that Mariate told us either it be a new plan that is an integrated plan or if we found some other way to do it in a facilitative way and how it could take place quickly would be GC priority.
10. Glen stated that the public meetings from last August, this subject came up and; and the Beaverdam Greenway was in the unfunded category on the list, and was trying to move ahead on the list.
11. Stephen asked Glen if Buncombe County is considering a project on Beaverdam Road. Glen stated that it is not on the Buncombe County Master Plan at this point.
12. Glen has seen this on older mapping projects that has been done that would basically start at the end of the City limits and connect up and is actually on the petition that says to connect up from the City limits to the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Mountain to Sea Trail.
13. Marcia stated that Beaverdam was not one of the Buncombe County's priority areas of the 6 directions. Directions up to the parkway were along Reems Creek towards Weaverville. Marcia stated that there are a great number of people who would travel that corridor even to the City limits.

- Dan Baechtold - River Arts District (RAD) Update: Dan distributed a handout on the RAD and suggested to the GC that they could distribute the handout to others outside of the GC.
  1. Dan stated that GC has been supportive of RAD and there is also support from the Asheville Riverfront Redevelopment Commission.
  2. They have a planning retreat coming up this week and this will be one of their focus topics on how to implement the RAD TIP (River Arts District Transportation Improvement Project). In terms of keeping everyone straight of the terminology it is still a portion of the Wilma Dykeman Riverway, which includes greenway, also roadway improvements, sidewalks, bike lanes and is 2.2 miles in length from Hill Street to Amboy Rd.
  3. Dan has a schedule in mind, but of course it is up to City Council and other people to decide on funding priorities and he is not basing this on anything except for his own need to have an end goal in mind of 2017, as follows:
     - There will be a ribbon cutting which means construction in 2016 and 2017
     - Obtaining the ROW and easements in 2014 and 2015;
     - The full construction plan in 2013.
     - The rest of 2012 will be finishing up the preliminary design and federally approved environmental assessment so we are on track to finish in the next few months.
     - In the next few months they will be going to the Riverfront Redevelopment Commission and the Planning and Economic Development Committee of City Council and then to the full City Council to present the preferred alternative and basically let Council know that we are submitting the Environmental Assessment for federal approval.
     - At this time Dan and staff are going through the formal process to analyze the historic impacts with the National Register Historical District and other properties that are potentially eligible for listing in the National Register.
     - In going through the process of formally identifying which properties are eligible, what the possible impacts are and how to avoid or minimize those impacts – they are going through extra steps of coordinating with all of the agencies and State Historic Preservation Office and moving through as quickly as possible.
     - The big picture is that in the September timeframe staff hopes to have that approval and draft environmental assessment ready to submit and to Council.
     - There was a public meeting on the environmental assessment.

- There were 2 large public meetings as well as a number of stake holder meetings, advisory committee meetings, but the public hearing will be the next big full meeting on the project.
- Dan has a set of plans available after the meeting or contact Dan for the specifics.
- Dan explained the alternative map and the identifying colours. The yellow is the improved existing alignment. The green alternative appears to be preferred alternative which is straightening out curb with a round-a-bout at Lyman Street near 12 Bones B-B-Q.
- Stephen asked if there was a consensus from the professionals and the public. Dan stated that he believes that the consensus is around the yellow and green alternatives.
- Dan stated if the consensus was to keep everything on the existing alignment with yellow there is not much that could done in that space.
- Marcia stated that as a commission that they were not opposed to any of the alternatives, but preferred to the extent possible that greenways be separated from the road.
- Marcia asked what type of funding is available.
- Dan stated that once the approved environmental assessment is complete on the 2.2 mile section, implementation could happen in smaller pieces of the project.
- If there is a major re-alignment, they would have to look at where that made sense to divide it up. But, that will be the big focus looking for funding and probably be a combination of federal and local funds in the project. But there will be some significant local funding source. Dan does not have a cost estimate but that is one of the next items to look into.
- Stephen asked about what is happening on Amboy Bridge and remembers that the bridge was not part of the planning. Dan stated that the round-a-bout at Amboy is an outdated feature and the state has a potential project to improve Amboy and Meadow Road. Also building a round-a-bout there would require a lot of ROW from Norfolk Southern. Therefore, they are looking at keeping it a "T" intersection as part of RAD project and terminating the sidewalk. In terms of getting across the river, Dan and staff are still looking for funding for bicycles and pedestrian crossing.
- Marcia stated that GC was looking at another bridge for bikes and peds, but she does not see that it is part of the map. Dan stated that it is marked with a possible location for the bridge. Again, with the right amount of funding, the possibility of looking somewhere along Lyman Street having some mid-block crossings across the road in the location and tie into where the bridge and the dog park. That is something to have more of a discussion about is which parts should be a priority for implementing which would be an expensive piece.
- Marcia asked about the New Belgium project that just by it being across the river would impact this project. Dan stated that this does not change the recommendation but would love to build a railroad bridge so that it was not such a tight squeeze under the bays of the existing railroad bridge, but this is not feasible.
- At the 5-point intersection of Clingman and Depot Streets there will be some improvements in the interim to accommodate New Belgium. Marcia is pleased that the redevelopment commission is getting together to discuss what is next is the priorities and addressing possible funding sources.

□ **Greenway Commission Updates:**

1. Community Outreach Committee Report: the date for the Ribbon Cutting for the Reed Creek is Saturday 9/8. Marcia will not be able to attend but hoping that everyone from GC will be able to make it. Sue is working with Barb on the event. Stephen mentioned that Riverlink and Asheville Greenworks have been contacted and will support and publicize it. A copy of the $12,000 check will be blown up to present it at the ribbon cutting and Stephen will found out the purpose of the check.

2. Asheville Parks and Greenway Foundation Report - Glen reported the new chairman of the foundation is Dana Davis who works for the YMCA and has a lot energy and thinks that she will be a great chair for the foundation. October 20th is the date set for a fund raising event, "Dancing with the Stars," which is a local Asheville celebrities fund raiser.

3. Buncombe County Greenway Commission Update - Marcia reported on last month's meeting: There is a final draft of the BCMP and Don Kostelec will give a report to the GC next month. It was decided to keep up the PR campaign in getting greenways in people's minds and is using Suzanne Hackett who does the PR campaign. The next project is to get the BCGC to write the commissioners asking to fund greenways and to place this as a funding priority. There will be a master plan wrap-up event and Marcia will keep everyone updated.

5. Friends of Hominy Creek Greenway - Marcia reported that FOHCG are still meeting and talking about becoming incorporated; and working out an agreement with City. They have been in touch with Marshal Stickford, COA Neighbourhood Coordinator. Mariate stated there is an upcoming meeting regarding this issue. The big issue is how to handle dog messes and dogs running loose and threatening people. There was a big work day this past Saturday to install stations with dog bags; and figuring out the perfect message so that pet owners would not allow dogs to run loose. Marcia stated that the property owners are not objecting to using the property; and hopefully it will work its way out. Al stated that Nikki is trying to contact the church. Nikki will have Janet Dack work on this issue.

Announcements:

1. Marcia stated that she is up for re-appointment to the Buncombe County Greenway Commission if GC would reappoint her. This item will be on August agenda.

2. Laura Butcher - she and her husband own the Green Machines ATM and would like to get involved in fundraising as part of their business plan and set aside a portion of proceeds to make an annual donation. She would like to continue the donations until the greenway plan is complete. Marcia suggested that the Foundation could be helpful and Glen recommends that Laura speak with Bob who is the chairman of the Foundation's Fund raising. Marcia stated Laura could designate the greenway that would be her priority. Laura would like to know the plans and updated information. Glen suggested looking at the master plan online on the City's website.

3. Stephen stated that citizens send messages to the County Commissioners and that they encourage them to fund the greenways to make sure that the commissioners understand who will be doing the funding. I am a citizen and I believe in this and I believe that we should invest in this.

Ally noted to correct the next GC meeting is 8/9 rather than 8/12 noted on the agenda.

Marcia adjourned the meeting at 5:02 p.m.