

**Carrboro Greenways Commission
Minutes
April 15th, 2013**

Members Present

*Ranee Haven-O'Donnell – Board of Aldermen
*Charlie Hileman – At-Large (Vice-chair)
*Gary Junker (Chair)
*Robert Kirschner
*Johnny Randall
*Mary Parker Sonis

Absent

*Mark Chilton – Mayor/Board of Aldermen
Marabeth Carr – Orange Co. Department of
Environment, Agriculture, Parks and Recreation
Ray Magyar – UNC
Nick Parker – OWASA
Bill Webster – Town of Chapel Hill

Staff Present

Jeff Brubaker – Town of Carrboro Planning
Department
Randy Dodd – Town of Carrboro Planning
Department
Wendell Rogers-Town of Carrboro Recreation
and Parks Department

* indicates voting member

Note: one vacant seat

Guests

Dave Otto

- I. **Call to Order:** Gary Junker, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM.
- II. **Minutes:** MOTION (Johnny, Bob second): The Greenways Commission unanimously approved the January 14, 2013, meeting minutes. Gary reviewed the meeting agenda.
- III. **Public comments:** Dave Otto said he was delighted to see the opening of Phase 1A (Wilson Park Multi-use Path). He asked what the width of the path was and if signage was planned at the Estes Dr. end. He said some cyclists were still using Estes Dr. Jeff B. described signage installation along the path. Several commission members offered ideas on signage improvements.
- IV. **Meeting agenda:** The UNC agenda item was postponed because UNC staff were not able to give an update. Randy said Triangle Land Conservancy was selected as conservation area monitor for Carolina North.
- V. **Electronic communications:** Gary and Charlie described the potential for electronic communications to be used for open dialogue in between meetings. Charlie suggested putting together a public Google group. Commission members debated the pros and cons of electronic communications.

The following is a summary of comments made by members: Electronic communications would provide an opportunity to discuss some issues in advance of meetings. It is difficult to access information about meetings. The Town web site should be more up-to-date with meeting information. The agenda should be posted weeks in advance of the meeting. Town staff capacity to post meeting information is limited, but with the upcoming web site overhaul, more staff will have write privileges. Some electronic communications and policy deliberations might rise to the level of a formal meeting under the Open Meetings Law. The Commission discussed what questions might be asked of the Town Attorney on the Open Meetings Law and Commission communications? Controversial issues should be made more accessible to the public. The Commission discussed whether the minutes could be reviewed and approved electronically, with several members stating that was not permitted. The Town needs to have

a policy on email and Google groups. Audio recordings of meetings can be made available to anyone who requests them.

VI. **Project updates**

- a. **Morgan Creek Greenway:** Jeff provided the staff update. A contract amendment with CJT will be executed after finalizing details about the additional work scope. CJT is proceeding with activities under their existing contract. Additional STP-DA funding [\$22,516] has been allocated to the project. Staff has not heard back from NCDOT on the on-bridge bike facility concept. Gary said the Smith Level Road project is ramping up.
- b. **Phase 1A (Wilson Park Multi-use Path):** Jeff provided the staff update. The path is open and the ribbon cutting was held in March. Some work, such as the repair of Estes Dr. curb and gutter, still needs to occur. Rande said Public Works installed a wayfinding sign on N. Greensboro St.
- c. **Phase 1B (Homestead-CHHS Multi-use Path):** Jeff provided the staff update. KHA has submitted 100 percent plans. OWASA has granted a permit to construct. The Town has sent letters to the property owners (Claremont and Parker Louis) west of the creek asking for easement donations. The other step is getting a right-of-entry agreement from UNC and the State Property Office for the eastern section.

Bob asked about progress on Phase 2. Jeff said the issue is lack of a local match. He reported Phase 2 STP-DA funding was reallocated by the MPO to Phase 1B and Morgan Creek, but CMAQ funding (with local match) will allow for the Twin Creeks Greenway to be extended southward.

Rande said if conservation funding could be identified to purchase land on Claremont South. After some Commission discussion, Randy said that, historically, conservation funding has come from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund, Natural Heritage Land Trust, county Lands Legacy program, and Triangle Land Conservancy. The Town has no land conservation fund and would need to form a partnership. Also, it would require cooperation from the developer, who has an approved permit.

The Commission discussed the background of the rezoning of the Claremont South land and potential for conservation. The following is a summary of comments: If the Board of Aldermen did not let the developer do whatever they want, they may be more encouraged to sell the land. The rezoning should be revisited. Since the Town and CWMTF do not have money, conservation funding is very limited and it may require a private buyer.

VII. **Senate Bill 653:** Jeff described the bill, which would require NCDOT to develop design and construction standards for greenways. The Commission discussed that NCDOT did already have some standards and that there was no room for diversity of the design of trails; this bill could give flexibility.

VIII. **Letter on the Transportation Alternatives Program:** Jeff gave the update and the Commission discussed. A summary of comments is as follows: The legislature is reallocating more revenues to the general fund. Funding is to be used to buy land but not build greenways. If there is no Transportation Alternatives Program funding, then there is no funding for any greenways.

MOTION (Hileman, Kirschner second): The Greenways Commission endorsed the letter. Vote: All in favor.

IX. **Funding subcommittee:** Gary said he communicated with the TAB and Rec and Parks Commission about a subcommittee but did not hear back. He said one of the obstacles was not having a pool of local matching funds. He asked who would participate on the committee.

The Commission discussed funding and greenways in general. The following is a summary of comments: Funding is needed as the existing bond program nears its end. The Town should set up a reserve fund to receive funding. There needs to be a master plan for the development between downtown and residential areas. The Town needs to identify buffers that can be part of open space for greenway system. Transportation is not the only focus of the Greenways Commission. The Town should not be paving near creeks or removing trees; paving next to a creek destroys an ecosystem. The Commission should not exclude recognition of transportation to destinations. Segmentation of greenway projects is due to limited funding. The Town is not punching holes through mature forest but modifying utility corridors to support a paved surface. The funding committee discussion is tabled for future discussion. The Commission should build partnerships with other boards. The Town has sold all the bonds under the Sidewalks and Greenways program. Staff will report back on when the bonds are expected to be paid off.

Randy recommended that the Commission should define the goals and create a strategy for funding future greenways. Bob suggested that a dedicated fund for greenways be created. Mary said it would be difficult to get consensus on the type of project. Johnny said there needs to be a clearly-defined project. He said Chapel Hill has systematically purchased property along the creek for the Morgan Creek Greenway. Randy said Carrboro asked for easement donations as land was being developed. Randy described the Town's interest in a water quality trust fund. Bob suggested ways in which the fund could be funded. Randy said Town staff does not have the capacity to work like a land conservation organization; it would be more efficient to work with existing organizations. Charlie suggested at the next meeting discussing funding goals. Johnny suggested a Friends of Carrboro Greenways group, and the Commission discussed.

X. **Announcements:** Jeff reported the Chapel Hill Greenways Commission will meet tomorrow night.

XI. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 pm.