



MECKLENBURG COUNTY
A Joint Meeting of the Greenway Advisory Council
and the South Park Region Advisory Council

MINUTES

September 26, 2011

6:30 P.M. at William R. Davie Park Conference Center
4635 Pineville-Matthews Road Charlotte, NC

GREENWAY ADVISORY COUNCIL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ed Barnhart, Chair
Dough Barnhart
Ron Gentry
Mark Loflin
Brian Malec
Dick Winters

ADVISORY COUNCIL

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Bob Carter
Owen Sutkowski
Kevin Walsh

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

W. Lee Jones, Division Director, Capital Planning
Chris Matthews, Manager, Natural Resources
Gwen Cook, Planner

SOUTH PARK REGION

ADVISORY COUNCIL

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Thomas Bagger	Robert Busbee	Dorothea Dawkins	Henk-Jan Van Etteke
Vernon Frost	Michael Jones	David Jones	Michelle McDonald
Betty H. McGill	Rodger Nolden	Alicia McKenzie	Roger Raymer
Carolyn Millen	Gary Rhinehart		

SOUTH PARK REGION

ADVISORY COUNCIL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ed Barnhart, Chair
Doug Burnette, Vice Chair
Paula Fickle
Hermes Goudes
Mark Loflin
Michael Mulder
Sarah Waterrose
Kim Weissinger
Charlie Williams
Classie Worthy

GUESTS & OTHERS PRESENT

Elaine Powell, Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Commissioner
50+ citizens

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

WELCOME

Ed Barnhart welcomed guests and staff present including Elaine Powell, Lee Jones, Patricia Poteat, Gwen Cook, Chris Matthews, Preston Buckman, Jay Higginbotham, Karen Weston-Chien.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

1. Proclamations and Awards – None.
2. Impact and Opportunities presented by the proposed McAlpine Relief Sewer Project on Upper McAlpine Creek Greenway and McAlpine Creek Park

(Post card invitations to this meeting had been sent to over 1,300 citizens who own property within a minimum of 200-300 feet of the County property line for the three mile length of the project.)

Gwen Cook, Planner with Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation (MCPR), provided a PowerPoint presentation about existing McAlpine Creek Greenway and the need to address both environmental and maintenance concerns. Phase 4 of the relief sewer project, proposed to be constructed in approximately 2013, will have a significant impact on the greenway and park, even with efforts to minimize those impacts; however the relief sewer must be installed. Park and Recreation staff are working with CMU, runners, coaches and citizens who use the greenway and 5K Trail to keep the reputation of the area for natural surface trails, even improve it, yet curb the on-going maintenance demands of the current greenway and weirs. The issues continue to be:

- a) The granular trail is damaged by storm waters. This sediment is a pollutant that is carried into South Carolina. Sediment is our number one pollutant in Mecklenburg County.
- b) The granular trail requires an enormous on-going maintenance effort by MCPR staff to meet the expectations of the citizens using it. [The additional cost, over and above what an asphalt trail would cost to maintain, ranges from \$30,000 to \$140,000 annually. The range reflects the amount of flooding that may occur in a given year.] Park and Recreation can no longer afford this expense.
- c) The granular trail is not accessible for all greenway users. This is one of the reasons that asphalt trails are the minimum standard for the greenway system.
- d) Park and Recreation is planning to follow behind CMU and provide a paved asphalt trail for the approximate 3 miles from Sardis Road up to Margaret Wallace Road on Campbell Creek Greenway. The

open utility corridor beside the creek experiences violent flooding, often a few feet deep. Staff is aware of the stories of an earlier asphalt surface that was severely damaged by storm waters, which resulted in the granular surface to replace it. The design of the pavement must take this into account to prevent the storm water from getting under the asphalt.

e) Staff has preliminarily located a proposed natural surface trail in the woods east of McAlpine Creek. A map was shown. The location of the trail was determined by locating higher ground and maintaining a reasonable buffer of woods to the private properties further east.

f) MCPR held a Focus Group Meeting in July with the coaches and runners engaged in this greenway to plan a natural trail route using the James Boyce Park trails and connecting them to a new natural surface trail that uses the former equestrian trail. Park and Rec believes it is an achievable goal and could provide at least a 2.5 mile run. Minimizing impact on the 5K trail was also a major focus. If possible, it would be desirable to provide a natural surface connecting trail from the new natural surface trails to McAlpine Creek Park where the 5K granular areas begin. If this can be accomplished, the total run of granular trails would be over 6 miles.

Public Discussion:

Several questions and comments were posed by the citizens in attendance:

- Several citizens (as many as five) commented that the beauty and character of the McAlpine Creek Greenway is defined by the natural surface trails and the feeling of the greenway would be permanently altered (negatively) by replacing or adding asphalt paved trails to the trail network.
- One citizen suggested that the improvements occur in stages as opposed to all at once.
- One citizen requested that the Dept. investigate rubberized trail surfaces such as is found at Morris Creek Battlegrounds.
- One citizen suggested that a tall, physical barrier, such as concrete, be built between the creek and the greenway to keep water off the trails and out of the park.
- One citizen requested that sediment/gravel traps be installed to trap the gravel during flood events.
- One citizen suggested that the greenway be kept as is because there are other greenways nearby that provide paved surfaces. She indicated that just because the policy is to provide a paved surface on greenways that not ALL greenways need to be treated in this manner. She questioned why the paving has to be done at McAlpine when the Dept. provides accessibility to paved trails at other nearby facilities
- One citizen was concerned that the new trail through the woods would create general safety issues due to low light levels, limited site distances and user conflicts.
- One citizen expressed concerns regarding impacts to wildlife and birds from the new trail in the woods construction.
- One citizen suggested that the main greenway trail be paved ONLY in the four-five major areas that erode during flood events and the rest remain as a natural trail surface. One citizen pointed out that 90% of the trail does not wash away.
- One citizen indicated that he was willing to pay more in taxes if that meant keeping the greenway surface natural.

- Several citizens (as many as 3) were concerned that the proposed trail in the woods was located too close to their house and back property line. Concerns included the wet areas of part of the trail route, and the close proximity to some of the houses on Kelford Lane.
- Several citizens (as many as 3) were concerned that the proposed trail in the woods was going to be adversely impacted by storm water runoff from the surrounding neighborhoods. Bass Lane was mentioned as a particular problem.
- One citizen suggested creating a network of parallel paved and natural surface trails within the same corridor.
- A few citizens proposed that the new trail is not needed and would erode too.
- Several citizens requested that permeable path materials should be used
- A citizen pointed out that permeable path materials as well as rubberized surfaces are easily damaged and won't withstand the flood waters.
- A few citizens pointed out that previous boardwalk and gazebo in the woodland area east of McAlpine Creek were washed away.
- Concern was expressed about the stream restoration project south of Sardis Road requiring large tree removal and creation of "mosquito pools".
- A few citizens expressed concern about cyclists and skaters on paved greenways riding too fast. use asphalt only on problem areas
- preference to spend money fixing bridges
- Several citizens stated that the existing weirs are clogged/should be removed and preferred spending funding on new bridges.
- A few citizens remembered that twenty years ago the trails were asphalt and were changed to gravel.

Staff responded that all comments/public input will be considered and every effort was being made to accommodate greenway users and the 5K events during the 18 month+ installation of the relief sewer. No disruption of the 5K course will be allowed between August 1 and December 15 during any year of construction. Environmental considerations as well as maintenance, needed amenities, accessibility, and a system of active transportation (people using the greenway to reach destinations beyond Sardis Road and Independence Road) will all be considered in any solution undertaken.

BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Approval of Minutes- Minutes from the August 22, 2011 South Park Region Advisory meeting and the August 8, 2011 Greenway Advisory Council minutes were approved by the respective councils.
2. Approval of Consent Items- Consent Items for both councils were approved.
3. Members of both councils are invited to the Greenway Advisory Council Bicycle Tour on Saturday October 22, 2011 beginning at 9 am at the Little Sugar Creek Greenway construction parking lot. Please let Gwen Cook know you will be attending and details will be sent. The greenways and plans for new greenways in the south will be featured.
(Gwen.Cook@MecklenburgCountyNC.gov or 704.432.1570)

PARK CHAMPIONS REPORT

1. Mason Wallace Park - Erosion problems continue.

2. Elon Park - Muddy conditions and lack of grass are a problem around the playing fields.
3. William R. Davie Park – Playground and conference center picnic tables and benches need repair or replacement.
4. System-wide – Ed Barnhart noted that Park and Recreation is reviewing the entire system for replacement of tables and benches.

STAFF REPORTS AND REQUESTS

1. Gwen Cook reported that a collaborative application is being prepared for a Tiger III federal stimulus grant. The effort is being led by the City of Charlotte and the Carolina Thread Trail. The project would connect Davidson to uptown Charlotte passing through Concord Mills and the speedway in Cabarrus County. It was suggested that abundant bike racks be provided usage during events.
2. CMAQ project applications will be submitted by October 7, 2011.
3. Lee reported that the Romare Bearden groundbreaking went well with good publicity. Demolition of buildings was expected to begin within a week.
4. Matthews Sportsplex construction documents were being finalized but no activity is expected until next year. No sponsors or users are in place yet.
5. Gwen Cook said that we are working on a contract with NCDOT for \$495,000 in discretionary funds for Little Sugar Creek. No matching funds are required for this grant. Funds would be used to design approximately 5 miles of the greenway from Briar Creek down to Park and Recreation facility on Cadillac Street in Pineville.
6. A celebration is set for completion of the urban sections of Little Sugar Creek Greenway on April 20, 2012 at 10:00 am. Please plan to attend. Details will follow. Actual construction is expected to be complete by the end of 2011.
7. Chris Matthews addressed a question about the potential trail connection on County property behind South Mecklenburg High School. City Storm Water Services are not particularly interested in doing work there. It would be difficult with the narrow property and would probably be more doable if additional property was purchased for construction. They do not seem to be very interested in proceeding.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **October 2011** – No Meeting, Annual Bike Tour Month on October 8 or 15.
- **Monday, November 7, 2011 at 6:00 PM** – Mahlon Adams Pavilion at Freedom Park – 2435 Cumberland Avenue (Tuesday after the election)
- **Monday, December 12, 2011 at 6:00 PM** – Mahlon Adams Pavilion at Freedom Park – 2435 Cumberland Avenue

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:45 P.M.