

**Henderson County
RAIL-TRAIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Monthly Meeting
Wednesday, August 9, 2023**

The RTAC held a regularly called meeting on August 9, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. in the King Street Meeting Room and via Microsoft Teams. Voting members that were present virtually, online are denoted with the letter “O”.

Voting Member	Present	Not in Attendance
Chuck McGrady, Chair	√	
Chris Burns, Vice Chair	√	
Douglas Moon, at-large	√	
Selena Einwechter, at-large	√	
David Adams, at-large		√
Dr. Ken Shelton, at-large	√	
Brent Detwiler, City of Hendersonville	√	
Nancy McKinley, Town of Laurel Park		√
Mike Egan, Conserving Carolina	√	

Also present: Maureen Copelof, Mayor of Brevard; Chris Todd, Business & Community Development Director; Janna Bianculli, Senior Planner; Marcus Jones, County Engineer

Call to Order

Chairman Chuck McGrady called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Public Comment

None.

Approval Meeting Summary

The committee approved the July 12, 2023, meeting summary by majority.

Updates

Conserving Carolina

None.

Friends of Ecusta Trail (FOET)

Mark Tooley reported that the FOET has contracted with Destination by Design to develop branding for the trail. Chuck asked staff to coordinate this with the FOET for a presentation at a future RTAC meeting.

Phase I Construction Process Update

Marcus Jones reported that the County did not receive the required minimum of 3 bids at the bid opening. The two bids received were returned unopened. The rescheduled bid will take place on August 30th, and any number of bid submittals will be sufficient to satisfy the re-bid requirement. The County contacted those that had not submitted a bid and incorporated their feedback into the re-bid. The schedule has been adjusted, but the construction timeline for the new bid for Phase I is still under a year. Prefabricated bridges will be used to reduce maintenance costs in the future, as rehabilitating existing bridges was too costly. The procurement process is underway for the Ecusta West section for an engineer to do the design. Grant funding will not be available immediately until we are under contract, but the design process should be done now to not delay

construction for the second phase. Chris explained the unprecedented situation of having two federal grants in one fiscal year.

Draft MOU Discussion

Chris Todd gave an overview of the changes to the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and the incorporation of edits from others, including updated formatting. Chris noted that the termination clause was left in, but the timing of termination was elongated. The Committee discussed a law enforcement presence along the trail and that each municipality along the trail would provide law enforcement response to ensure safety. The Swamp Rabbit Trail, it was noted, is unique for providing a designated police presence on the trail, but it is in a much more urban context and the officer serves more as a first aid resource to hand out water. Local governance will be based on proportional mileage of the trail. Laurel Park raised a concern about rising costs for maintaining the trail year to year in addition to the up-front costs. Henderson County will take the lead on maintenance of the trail, using the cities as partners. Members discussed hours of operation for the trail, noting that as it is intended for transportation, it will not close at night as parks do. Members also discussed how the trail would be used for special events, as some could require trail closure that could hamper trail use for others. Committee asked if the portion of the trail outside of Henderson County would have an MOU as well, and Staff explained that it was likely a secondary MOU for the entire trail would eventually be in place, including FOET. FOET expressed their want to be the unified voice for the trail, taking on a larger role. The nonprofit group will organize fundraising for things such as amenities and run the Trail Ambassador Program comprised of volunteers that will monitor for safety hazards and orchestrate trash pick-up. Members asked if emergency response could be part of the MOU. Staff explained that 911 dispatch already determines the nearest emergency services tapped to respond to any incident. Staff stated that Henderson County is the lead lessee on the trail and will take responsibility for it but wants the support of other groups and jurisdictions.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:03 a.m.

This meeting was recorded and the MP4 file can be made available upon request. Please contact County staff.