

**Henderson County
RAIL-TRAIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Monthly Meeting
Wednesday, November 13, 2024**

The RTAC held a regularly called meeting on November 13, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. in the King Street Meeting Room and via Microsoft Teams. Voting members present online are denoted with the letter “O”.

Voting Member	Present	Not in Attendance
Chris Burns, Chair	X	
Selena Einwechter, Vice Chair	O	
Douglas Moon, at-large	X	
Patrick Kennedy, at-large	X	
Bart Salvaggio, at-large	X	
Ken Shelton, at-large	X	
Brent Detwiler, City of Hendersonville		X
Nancy McKinley, Town of Laurel Park	X	
Mike Egan, Conserving Carolina	X	

Also present: Christopher Todd, Assistant County Manager; Autumn Radcliff, Planning Director; Janna Bianculli, Senior Planner; Marcus Jones, County Engineer; Jason Kilgore, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director; Paul Ray, City of Brevard Planning Director; and Mayor Maureen Copelof, City of Brevard.

Call to Order

Chairman Chris Burns called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Adjustment of Agenda

Chairman Burns requested to move public comment to the end of the agenda. There were no objections.

Meeting Summary Approval

No changes were noted.

Updates

Friends of Ecusta Trail (FOET)

Mr. Mark Tooley, FOET President, stated that the FOET will present the brand this weekend at an event they are sponsoring. He also stated that the FOET is working with Conserving Carolina on the naming of six bridges for donors. Mr. Chris Todd stated that the RTAC will need to review the naming as well.

City of Brevard

Mayor Copelof and Paul Ray, with the City of Brevard, stated that they have experienced delays due to Helene. It was noted that one of the bridges on the Transylvania County side that was going to be rehabbed was destroyed during Helen.

Helene Update and Project Status

Mr. Marcus Jones stated that the trail did receive some damage during Helene and the County estimated damage repair was approximately \$406K. Since the trail is being built to a higher DOT standard, the damage was minimized. The construction is impacted, and the County is waiting to hear form the contractor on the estimated completion date. Mr. Jones also noted that JMT is evaluating the design of the 2nd phase due to damage from Helene.

Mr. Hunter Marks with Watermark and Ms. Sarah Schafer provided the RTAC with an updated on the amenity design. Mr. Marks stated that the amenity design for the first phase should be complete in December. They have worked to identify parking areas in the ROW, markers that could be used for donor plaques, bike rack locations, and other item locations such as trashcans, bench options, bike repair stations, buffering, and viewing platforms.

Mr. Matt Manley with the City of Hendersonville stated that the city had received an AARP grant for benches and bike racks and wanted to make sure it matched the County's design. Chairman Burns suggested that the FOET naming efforts could be incorporated into this project.

Trail Etiquette/Rules:

Ms. Autumn Radcliff stated that RTAC discussed the trail etiquette/rules several meetings ago, and a list of suggested trail rules and etiquette was sent to the Recreation Advisory Board (RAB) for their review. The RAB created a subcommittee that met and discussed the list and was generally in agreement with the direction that RTAC was taking. Staff also received information from FOET concerning trail rules and etiquette they recommended based on other trails. A list of the trail etiquette/rules was distributed. It was noted that the trail can not be closed as it is a transportation corridor. One member suggested that fishing should not be allowed on any bridge for safety reasons. The Chairman asked the committee to review and continue this discussion to the December meeting.

Ecusta Trail Overlay and LDC Text Amendment

Ms. Radcliff stated that the Board of Commissioners had requested that the Planning Board and RTAC consider if there should be an overlay district for certain uses related to the trail use and if commercial parking, along with any other items, should be allowed. The Chairman asked staff to provide a map for the next meeting showing where parking as been identified by Watermark and by staff through the trail partners program so that the RTAC could evaluate the need for commercial parking. He also asked the RTAC to think of other uses that should be identified and be prepared to discuss at the next meeting.

Use of Trail for Events

The Chairman stated that he has been contacted about the 2025 Apple Festival 5K run for next September and if some or all could be on the Ecusta Trail. He stated that the trail can not close for any events, but wanted the committee to consider how these events would be allowed and the process. Mr. Chris Todd stated that the County has a process with other events that is approved through the TRC which includes fire, sheriff, etc. The City of Brevard noted that it would need to include their approval if an event was held on trail in Transylvania County, although the trail is not going to be constructed for some time. Mr. Todd stated that county staff will work with the various departments to review a process and policy and will look at what other trail like the Swamp Rabbit do.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:08 a.m.

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