



DURHAM OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS COMMISSION

MINUTES

January 18, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

ONLINE VIA ZOOM -

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87515862913?pwd=U3JVS3lVS3hJYUt5V1dxOWI1YnpOZz09>

I. Call to Order: 7:03 p.m.

Present: Carl Kolosna, Tonia McRae, Harrison Gilbert, Fred Myatt, Dave Connelly, Lindsey Smart, Jane Korest, Qais Badsha, Karthik Sundarmoorthy, Shakira Campbell, Bryan Luukinen, Celeste Burns, Erin Convery (Transportation Dept), Nida Allam,

New Members: Deborah Luecken, Lois Ballen, Melissa Southern, Steve Cohn, Mauren Quinlan, Peter Whitehead,

II. Approval of Minutes

a. Approval of November Minutes

Motion to approve: Harrison Gilbert

2nd by: Fred Myatt

Unanimously approved

III. Excused Absences **None**

IV. Adjustments to the Agenda, and Welcome to new DOST commissioners

V. Presentations

a. Matching Grants – Brendan Moore(Lead Staff person)

- **32nd year of funding \$6M dollars. Matching Grants program is for new recreation and open space projects. Can also fund new amenities or for the purchase of new land. This year there were 3 applicants. Recommendation for all three applicants to be approved. (Ellerbee Creek Watershed, Christus Victor Lutheran Church, UCAN) Total contribution is \$100,000.**
- **Fred asked how the numbers were developed and what the plans are for. Will the contribution fully fund or partially fund.
Answer: The applicants provide the budget break down and most are only a small portion of the total project cost. It is a 50/50 match. The applicants only apply for what they can realistically match. Some projects are fully funded.**
- **Dave stated that Christus Victor Lutheran church is a playground project open to the public.**

- **Jane stated the belief of the program that many of the non profits produce valuable recreation amenities for the Durham communities and many are open to the public. This is a way for the county to support those private efforts. They may be able to improve something because of the funding that Durham County provides, but in exchange a sign must be posted that it is open to the public. Parks and Recs does a great job but can't achieve the mission alone. This is a partnership grant program. The recipients are monitored for 10 years to ensure that they are open to the public.**
- **Brendan Moore requested that DOST make a motion.**
- **Motion to move to the board of county commissioners by: Peter Whitehead. 2nd by Fred Myatt. Unanimously approved.**

VI. New Business

a. Resolution of Support for Triangle Bikeway – Dave

Discussed the Triangle Bikeway Project. It's a project that has been in the works for several years. Deluxe greenway that would parallel I-40 and NC54 from Raleigh, RTP, South Durham, Chapel Hill and later with an option to add Durham. Dale McKeel is the principal staff person for the Durham Chapel Hill Carrboro Planning Organization (EMPO). Dale is requesting DOST for resolution of support for the Triable Bikeway Project. Raleigh has already began building one greenway project that can be a segment of this bikeway project. In Durham it is on the plan but there are no known funds available at this time.

Fred Myatt asked: If the group presented in November 2022. Asked if most of the expense was going to fall on Durham?

Harrison Gilbert stated: Wake County has already funded their portion.

Tonia McRae: attended the BPAC meeting on Jan 17, 2023. Transit plan hearing set for January 9, 2023. Provided the hearing site. www.engagedurham.com

Dave requested a motion: Entertain a motion to endorse a resolution support for the Triangle Bikeway to be drafted by the chair and sent to the city council.

Carl stated: Wanted to clarify there was a previous motion that Dave sent out draft language for the motion. Generally we want to be in the position where DOST members have the ability to review it prior to approving with the idea that this would be the language in support of the resolution.

Dave stated: This was a draft supplied by Dave McKeel a few hours prior. We can decide whether to use the draft of modify it. Would be good for everyone to review it first.

Carl stated: We generally want to attach the document to the agenda and put it on the website. Recommended putting on the agenda for the next meeting.

Deborah asked: This is a big project does this mean if we support this this does this mean that we endorse funding for this project versus other projects and how does this impact the funding of other projects that might be more beneficial to more people in Durham?

Carl: recommended providing more information to the new members prior to requesting a vote from the new members. www.trianglebikeway.com

Dave: He doesn't see it as taking away from currently funded projects.

Karthik Sundarmoothy: A project like this would get funded from a capital investment budget item. How much of capital investment do we do right now for projects right now. How does city and county get capital improvement funding.

Javiera Callabera: Provided a link for the MPO <https://www.dhcmpo.org/what-we-do/programs-plans/bicycle-pedestrian-programs/triangle-bikeway-study>. Wake already has their money and Durham does not. There is a desire to fund it, but Durham has infinitely less resources than Wake County. How does it line up with the other priorities and other identified

projects. Wake County has a lot funding for the commuter rail project and Durham does not. Durham has limited resources. There is a triangle bikeway study group. Can share the link for when they meet if it's helpful so people can get a better idea of where they are in the progress.

b. County Resolution of Support for Year of the Trail – Brendan

Brendan Moore: Year of the trail. June 3, 2023 in conjunction with national trail day. Events planned all over the state. Draft resolution for year of the trail City of Durham is also doing a proclamation. This is separate from the city. Highlights the good work that DOST and city of Durham is doing. People were getting outside and using the trails during COVID. This has been the hardest 3 years of maintenance on the trails due to the increased use.

Jane stated: There was a meeting with the county commissioners and suggested that county staff bring a resolution to adopt. The desire on the part of the board was that there be a ceremonial item before them in February 2023. City Council adopted a similar resolution on behalf of the city.

Dave: The Great Trails coalition. DOST has taken the lead on publishing year of the trails for the entire state. <https://greattrailsnc.com>

Javiera Caballero: The city has dedicated CIP, but there is never enough. Infrastructure bond discussion pending. It's a broad bucket because road improvement, sidewalks, transit connectivity, trails, dedicated open space. The city will be talking about what that looks like during the budget retreat. There is a budget retreat planned for February and March 2023. Open to the public via Youtube. CIP was increased by approximately \$6M due to low interest rates. It was identified for green and infrastructure projects. It was reorganized, so some things moved in prioritization based on where there had been historic disinvestment in certain neighborhoods. What's currently funded? What has a plan but no funding? 2011 master trail plan. There's funding for 3 trails. Those are the trails that are currently being funded. There is no identified funding for anything else. That's a good example of what bond money could potentially be used for.

Motion for proclamation for Durham County Year of the Trail:

Moved by: Peter Whitehead

2nd: Bryan Luukinen

Unanimously approved

Jane Korest asked: If DOST wants to present to the county of Commissioner? If anyone would like to express your leadership capabilities? There are often citizen groups presenting the proclamation it's not always staff. 2nd Monday in February 2023.

Comm Allam: stated she thought it would be good if DOST presented the proclamation and can have the commissioner read the resolution and provides comments as to why its being presented to the council. Shows the engagement and importance of the different boards and commissions to have citizens come and present.

Gets more attention.

Dave: agrees to present the proclamation to the city commissioner. Since 2016 we had quite a turn over of mayors as well as city manager and county managers as well as elected officials. We would have a new audience if bonds were to be presented.

c. Resolution of Support for a trail-to-trail connector – Erin Convery

Trail to trail connection between ATT (Blackhead/Morehead) Southern Terminus of the Rail Trail/Pettigrew St. Late breaking opportunity the Transportation Dept has identified. Private grant program called The Bloomberg Initiative for Cycling Infrastructure. The grant program is aimed at:

- Funding cycling infrastructure and awarding grants to 10 cities globally.
- Providing safe cycling infrastructure.
- Providing connections within existing cycling networks
- Overall improving the safety of cyclists and pedestrians
- Provide a connection between ATC and the Durham Rail Trail through downtown Durham reaching Pettigrew Street near Durham station.
- There is a gap between ATT and ATC. Spoke to Capital Broadcasting who owns American Tobacco Campus and within the transportation department, and opportunity to repurpose some on street parking spaces on Blackwell to create a separated facility. Potentially using the firelane to go around the back of the old Bulls building and continuing with a separated facility along Pettigrew to reach the southern terminus of the Rail Trail.
- As part of the grant application there is an opportunity to present letters of support. Supporting the city in applying for the grant. The grant is due on Feb 3, 2023. In the process of developing materials aiming to have a draft of template with draft language ready by the end of the week. The understanding from Karl is that the ask could be for DOST to approve for the Chair to sign a letter of support before the Feb 3, 2023 deadline.
- Length of the grant program is 3 years.
- Asking for a letter of support from DOST prior to Feb 3, 2023. Template language will be provided.

Questions:

Melissa Southern asked: if you could elaborate on the use of the phrase “separated facility” and what that would look like.

Answer: there are two options 1). The potential for a multi use type facility similar to a shared use path or greenway. Space for cyclists and pedestrians. 2). Doing some work to see if there is enough space to accommodate both the existing sidewalk and a two way cycle track. Two-way dedicated facility for cyclist and then a existing sidewalk for pedestrians. Looking at some feasibility on both options. Part of the grant would be to help further that design. Either way the goal would be for a user to have a full trail like experience between the ATT and the Durham Rail Trail versus the way it is now where pedestrians and cyclist use the roadway.

Dave stated: an example in Durham of a protected bike lane on E. Main St. there’s a bike lane on each side of the street.

Fred asked: is there sufficient room on the sidewalk on Pettigrew?

Answer: the current concept would be to stay on the southside of the street. Potentially looking at bumping the curblin out to get more width. Also, the closer to the railroad the more they have a say in the design which is notoriously difficult. East bound lane is wide.

Peter Whitehead asked: Do you want to go around the apartments on Blackwell to Pettigrew. On the southside and not through the intersection? Is that a definite part of the plan or just a consideration right now?

Answer: They have run into some issues because the old Bull building is an national historic landmark and run into some issues to maintain turn lanes, etc. As a result this is one of the options that may be more feasible than some of the constraints at the corner of Blackwell and Pettigrew.

Maureen asked: Could you talk about the implementation timeline?

Answer: The rail trail is a project that's creating a new greenway along an old rail line from downtown heads north and then east to Avondale Drive. Currently in design at the 25 percent design mark.

Lindsay added: expecting to begin construction late 2024-early 2025. Lindsay has some talking points and fact sheets that she can send out for anyone who is interested.

Steve asked: Do you have a plan for getting people who would be coming from the right, making a right turn, looking left and not looking right.

Answer: Yes. That is something they have talked about. Hoping the grant will allow to take a deeper dive. Driveway conflicts, how the proposed connector would interfere with freight loading, etc. Next level of detail they would like to take a closer look into.

**Motion to authorize the chair to sign on behalf of DOST commissioners. Moved by Lois Ballen. 2nd by Harrison Gilbert
Unanimously approved**

VII. Updates

a. Updates from staff

Nida Allam: Grant for community organizations. Durham County Library 1 for \$15K, 3 for \$5K each. Projects for people want to tell their story about health equity, medical trust, health mis information, impacts of COVID or mental health. Will send out the information to Carl to send to members.

Javiera Caballero: Thanks to everyone who promoted the DOST open positions. Excited about the tour in May.

Lindsay Smart: Excited to welcome the new planner. Starting Jan 30, 2023. Will attend February or March DOST Meeting. DPR CIP budget memo for what DPR presented recreation advisory commission. Sent to Carl and Dave so that DOST can see what is being considered for trail projects. Asking for (\$20M) for trial projects. Priorities are to fully fund projects that are already moving forward and are already in design. Additional trail repair maintenance. Transformative for the 8 or 9 miles have been repaved and repaired.

VIII. Old Business

a. Open Space Committee, with description of all DOST committees

Open space committee has existed for quite a long time. Reynolds Smith recently cycled off during the pandemic. Bolstering the roster back up and getting the Open Space committee reestablished and establishing a chair.

Jane stated: The trails committee focuses on trails. Open space committee provided guidance the with a broader focus that doesn't specifically include trails. They took the lead on behalf of DOST to the comprehensive plan on the environmental policies. They have been involved in some of the major development requests which may or may not have a trail impact, but definitely may be going into natural heritage areas, may have a water quality sensitive area, things that may have a broader open space impact. Would bring their overall recommendations. Provided guidance in past years how our priority on how we rank acquisitions. Several adopted city and county open space plans New Hope Creek, Little River corridor, East Durham, Urban Open Space. Most recently there

been a lot of time spent on Urban Open Space. Instrumental in helping advocate for the city counsel specialized staff person city open space issues. There hasn't been a city staff person for expertise has been available. City has hired an open space implementer.

Dave Connelly stated: He heard a rumor that Steve was interested in being part of the newly reconstituted open space committee.

Steve Cohn: Acknowledged that he would be interested in being part of the Open Space Committee.

Carl Kolosna: Per the DOST bi laws, DOST has the ability to create standing or ad hoc committees. The main requirement that the committee has two members who are also members of the commission. A chair and a vice chair, two members. We would do a motion to do that and then work out the logistics of setting up meeting times.

Deborah Luecken: stated she would be interested in being on the Open Space Committee

Dave Connelly: would be interested in sitting in on the Open Space Committee meetings.

Frey Myatt: interested in being on the committee, not interested in being a chair or co-chair.

Carl Kolosna: stated we could do a batched motion to reestablish to the open space committee and establish chair and vice chair and one other member. Chair Steve Cohn, Co-Chair Deborah Lueken, Fred as a member.

Moved by: Fred Myatt

2nd by: Lois Ballen

Unanimously approved

Carl stated: he would need to notify the clerk of the meeting times and dates set up. He would create the zoom links.

Dave stated: the meetings would be virtual meetings

Steve stated: once they meet if people decide they want to meet in person it can be discussed.

b. Trails Tour: May 10 at 6pm – Dave

5 stop bus tour of places highlighted around Durham. To show both what's already been achieved by city and count in the way of trails and also what opportunities are at hand. May 10, 2023, 6 p.m.-8 p.m. in front of City Hall. Not limited to trails may include parks and recreation as well. Received confirmation that the time should be a favorable time for participants. Sunset is late in May and June we will still have full day light and can see what we are looking at.

Carl: Tour will replace the regular DOST meeting. Will send out a full schedule to the members.

Dave: We are having 2 (in person) meetings (May and September) The other meetings will be virtual.

c. DOST 2023 Priorities

Carl: every year DOST has priorities for the year. The current priorities affective for all of 2023 are listed at the bottom of the agenda. We didn't have a chance to redo the priorities. Take a look at the priorities and decide if there is anything we want to change or remove and can be an item for the next agenda.

Dave: deferred the priorities to the next meeting.

d. Updates from liaisons – Karthik, Splash & Play project

Karthik Sundarmoorthy: The project is funded. Long Meadow plan is to have a swimming pool. Currently below the flood plain. Plans to move it. The trail is already funded is the trail that is going to run to R. Kelly Bryant trail. The idea is to get funding to these parks.

Right now there is no funding. Has a high equity score. The last bond that was passed was passed in 2005.

e. DOST Bylaws –

Carl: Dost bylaws haven't been updated in a long time. A refresh of the bi laws would be a could idea. 1st Thursday of the Monday, February 2, 2023. Once approved then will go through formal process.

f. Updates from committees(None)

g. Announcements (None)

Adjournment 9:06 p.m.

DOST Priorities

1. Advocate for increased funding to build out and maintain priority trails and open space
2. Support the implementation of the Durham Beltline Master Plan with a specific focus on equitable community engagement for the components of the plan that can still be addressed
3. Examine the Matching Grants process to encourage applications that reflect the racial and economic diversity of Durham
4. Support implementation of the Trails and Greenways Master Plan with a specific focus on equity.
5. Encourage implementation of the Urban Open Space Plan
6. Pursue ongoing professional development on trends in equitable development of trails and open spaces.
7. Proactively research and implement open space and trails acquisition best practices for ordinances and policy.

DOST Committees

Committee	Chair	Meeting Date/Location
Matching Grants	Annette Montgomery	As needed
Open Space	TBD	TBD
Trails	Dave Connelly	Second Wednesday at 6:30 pm
Equity	Shakira Campbell	First Thursday at 6:30 pm

<https://www.dconc.gov/county-departments/departments-a-e/engineering-and-environmental-services/durham-county-open-space-matching-grants-program>

<https://globaldesigningcities.org/bici/>

<https://www.dconc.gov/county-departments/departments-a-e/engineering-and-environmental-services/open-space-and-real-estate-division/durham-county-open-space-program>

<https://www.readyforrailnc.com/feasibility/>

<https://trianglebikeway.com/>

Grant <https://www.dcopublichealth.org/services/health-education/bull-city-strong/say-something-strong>

<https://www.engagedurham.com/101/Durham-Transit-Plan>

MPO <https://www.dchcmpo.org/what-we-do/programs-plans/bicycle-pedestrian-programs/triangle-bikeway-study>

GREAT TRAILS <https://greattrailsnc.com/>