



DURHAM OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS COMMISSION

MINUTES

March 15, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

IN PERSON AT 101 CITY HALL PLAZA – SECOND FLOOR COMMITTEE ROOM

I. Call to Order

Steve Cohn, Carl Kolosna, Dave Connelly, Peter Whitehead, Lois Ballen, Deborah Luecken, Mellissa Southern, Maureen Quinlan, Qais Badsha, Jane Korest, Shakira Campbell, Tom Dawson, Fred Myatt, Celeste Burns, Tonia McRae, Taylor Shaw, Jeffrey Bakalchuck, Harrison Gilbert, Karthik Sundaramoorthy, Chris Dreps, Tom Dawson

II. Approval of Minutes **Motion to approve-Fred, seconded by Steve Cohn**

a. Approval of February Minutes- **The word error typo should be area.**

III. Excused Absences **(1 absence- Bryan Luuckinen) new member (Taylor Shaw)**

IV. Adjustments to the Agenda **(None)**

V. Presentations:

a. Waterbird Colony Update-

- **Chris Dreps-Ellerbee Creek Watershed Association**, dedicated nature preserve.
- Early 2022 DOST Open Space proposed as 284 acres all owned by the city. The Preserve is approximately 240 acres. Local support for the area is the Ellerbee Creek Watershed Association.
- 11-acre property that interconnects was officially purchased on 3/15/2023. A lot of activity in terms of conversation.
- Made aware in 2020 and conducted a study of the entire valley. Made a recommendation to the city in Jan 2020.
- 2021 Dost Resolution of Support.
- 2022 staff review. April 20th City Council work session.
- **Request:** Asking DOST to draft a letter that updates its support attaching their existing resolution of support and share the letter language so it can be shared with other commissions. **Asking council to vote yes by May 2023.** Recommended email language is available. Heron tour April 2023, DOST, Staff and elected liaison.
- Current 300-meter buffer.
- **Question** (Maureen)-who opposes this and when/why? Answer: Chris: If anyone opposes, he is not aware. It is city owned land and various departments made it aware that any time city owned land is involved requests are necessary. The devil is in the details."
- **Question:** Extensive staff comments? Was anything brought up that may change the previous recommendations? **Answer: Chris Dreps:** Not as far as I

know of. There was some simplification of the language. i.e., primary area, secondary area, restoration area. \$50,000 to do a land survey.

Durham Parks and Recreation Update - Tom Dawson, DPR- May 10th trail walk.

- Buses available for the tour.
- Lindsay Smart just presented the trail status and may be a good presentation for DOST.
- More important to kick off the open space segment. Audrey (planner for open space) is combing through open space plans. What is happening then vs now? How has the land been purchased?
- **Question: Fred**-what area is she working in? **Answer:** Urban and downtown space is her focus right now.
- **Dave Comment:** There are several open space plans, but there has been this hole in the donut for urban space. Did not allocate staff or funds, End of 2022 they are now staffing in the city.
- The county has done county implementation. Those plans have been adopted by the city of Durham and the county. Half city and half county recommendations. Little river 2/3 city recommendations and 1/3 county recommendations.
- From a planning context county is looking at Urban Growth protection. Land value seems higher in the urban area.
 - The plans helped develop a criteria which is made to be actionable and utilized the JAS resources. He can hunt down properties and look at options to buy the properties. Keystone space, large tracts are hard to come by (50 acres or more) Nate and Audrey are working on public open space mosaic, director is working with the school superintendent to see what's available. A lot of city property through out Durham. Audrey's focus right now is to find acquire, contract land. ½ penny funds to fix things that are broken. Make the areas investible. Audrey will be looking at adjacent city property from parks. i.e., Carrol street park. Pauley Murray house, and Pauley Murray homeowners' association. Seeking city owned property next to the park not suitable for affordable housing.
 - Lindsay presented to RAC. Projects are sometimes really slow moving. 2 trails trying to sneak into city CIP. R. Kelly Bryant Bridge, planning stage for Lyon park to ATT trail, also park in Forest Hills.
 - CIP-\$5 million dollar overage Third Fork Creek Trail. The reason is because a decision was made based on city preference. City community did not want trails on each side. Trying to expand for further money through congressman Foushee office. "Try to make decision rational and plan irresistible so that people will throw money at us."
- **Comprehensive Plan Update - Carl Kolosna, Durham City-County Planning**
 - 250-page draft document. Done a lot of engagement.
 - (Plan gives guidance). The plan is NOT.
 - Legally binding document.
 - The city of County budget
 - A crystal ball or a magic wand.
 - Just because the plan says something does not mean that is what is going to happen.

HOW The plan IS USED...

 - New development proposals
 - City and county department work
 - The guide updates to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO)
 - Focuses more growth within the existing City footprint.

- Identifies areas where future growth may be desired.
- Improves resident's access to daily needs.
- Focuses on transportation improvements that are not car centric.
- Coordinates existing and planned transit investments and housing placement.
- Released on January 20, 2023. What is on your mind? First part is big picture. How do we start moving towards this vision? Plan includes actions and recommendations. As is relates to DOST "Protecting Sensitive Land" Denotes policies that specifically apply to the development process like rezoning.
- Contingent Growth Area instead of Future Growth Area
- 15 minute Community-incrementally change the distribution of land usage so that small daily needs are more accessible. Moving away from car only transportation and thinking about walking, biking, etc. Within 15 minutes of where you live you will be able to access park, bank, school, shopping.

Implementation Section: talks about which departments are going to do what. Between 18-24 months the goal is to have a meeting to determine what has been done. An attempt at how to keep the document a "live document."

- **March 20th deadline for comments**-If DOST is interested in writing a letter it needs to happen before the joint session in August 2023.
- DOST should look at the environmental policy and actions.
- **Question:** Fred-permanently conserved at 30 percent. Where do we sit?
Answer: there needs to be an in-department analysis.
- **Tom Dawson commented:** He will add this question.
- **Jane Commented:** As you start getting into it, it is complicated. What should count and not count? **Answer:** it is one of the signature policies that DOST should be looking at.
- **Question:** Jeff: How large does the parcel have to be before you count it? Does a median in the street, does that count? Do you have a feel for what percentage we are at? **Answer:** I really doubt we are close to the 30 percent. Approximately 300K acres in the county. 3800 protected in the county.
- **Question: Dave:** DOST can make individual comments?
- **Question: Maureen:** At our last meeting we talked about how to review the document as a group. Some have had an opportunity to go into the tool and start putting in comments. What is the best way to move forward and respond directly or what is most helpful for you.
- **Melissa:** Suggested eliminating sections of the document from the punch list. Trim document down to be a little more manageable. Let's give ourselves a month (May) then have Karl review it. Answer any remaining questions and decide what we want to have in our letter.
- **Public comment:** there is an opportunity to speak in public regarding Arrowhead.

II. Old Business:

- **Trails Tour - Dave Connelly**
 - May 10th, 6 p.m. Will send out an invite for anyone wants to come for a preview to make sure we have it done in a 2-hour window. Fine tune our ask of why we are showing specific places to council and commissioners.

III. New Business (None)

IV. Updates

- **Updates from staff**
 - **Celeste-(None)**

- **Jane**-did a great job of sending that out with the DOST agenda. DPR, Keep Durham beautiful (Creek week), Durham County sponsoring a clean up initiative March 25 New Hope Bottom Land Trail.
- **Updates from liaisons**
 - Harrison Gilbert- Durham Parks foundation April 27th pups and pints, the biggest fundraiser of the year. North Gate Park.
 - Social Media presence please follow the Durham Parks Foundation
 - No BPAC update. Jeffrey volunteered to be a BPAC liaison.
- **Updates from committee**
 - **Steve**-Open Space had a meeting. 11 in attendance.
 - **Shakira**-Equity had a meeting this month. Discussed having an outreach in the summer months to build more trust in the community still in the process of planning. Reviewed updates on the bylaws. Carl: it's been more than a decade since it's been reviewed. Comment: Tom- Equity score comes from the equity and inclusion dept. He will provide the information.
 - **Dave**-Trails Committee-Reviewed Lindsay's presentation. Updates on 3 trails, Durham Rail trail, third fork extension, R. Kelly Bryant Trail. And discussed trails tour.

Adjournment 8:50 p.m.