

APPROVED

Minutes of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting

November 8, 2012 Regular Meeting

The November 8, 2012 Regular Meeting of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board was convened at 7:00pm in the Social Room of the Recreation Center with Gerry Palau, Board Chair presiding.

Roll Call

Members present included: Frank Chmielewicz, Sherith Colverson, Bob Cushman, Bridgette Ellis, Gerry Palau, Laurel Patrick, Dan Robbins and Cathy Toth. Absent was Allen Eubanks.

Approval of the October 11, 2012 Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the October 11, 2012 minutes was made by Cathy Toth and seconded by Sherith Colverson. The minutes were approved by a 6-0 vote.

Appearance and Citizen Comments

No one addressed the Board.

Smoking in the Parks

Chairman Palau moved the "Smoking in the Parks" New Business item up in the agenda to allow Kris Light to address the Board on the topic. Josh Collins reviewed a memo from Ken Krushenski, City Attorney and an Attorney General's opinion regarding "Local Government Regulation of Smoking in Parks"(see attached). Current legislation preempts the ability of local governments to enact ordinances that would restrict smoking in local parks. Kris Light related an incident that took place at Cedar Hill Park involving her granddaughter. Another park visitor was smoking within the playground area while supervising other children. Due to her concern for second hand smoke and the health of her granddaughter, Ms. Light asked the visitor to move away from the area of the playground where her granddaughter was playing. The visitor moved to another section of the playground and continued to smoke. Ms. Light expressed concern to the Board over the fact that there were no signs restricting smoking in the park or the playground area. She had contacted the City regarding the incident and was told the State Legislature restricts what local government can do about smoking in open areas. Ms. Light has spoken to City Council members, has sent letters to the City Manager and Governor Haslam regarding this topic. The Board asked about establishing an administrative policy on smoking in the playground area. Based on the State legislation, such a policy could not be enforced. Dan Robbins made a motion to request City Council action to include "Smoking in a Playground Area" as an item in their Legislative Agenda. Cathy Toth seconded the motion. The motion was approved by an 8-0 vote.

Committee Reports

Bike/Ped Committee- Sherith Colverson

Sherith Colverson briefly discussed the Bike/Ped Committee's Top Project/Funding Priorities that included corridor/spot location recommendations and the "Top 10" list of Potential Funding Sources (see attached). Since the item had been discussed in September and October, Sherith focused on how the Committee's recommendation is conveyed to City Council following Park Board approval. The Park Board was established to advise City Council and the City Manager on Recreation and Park issues. The normal process would involve a letter from the Board Chairman to either City Council, the City Manager, or both, outlining the Board's recommendation and the process that the Board followed to develop its recommendation. If the letter were directed to City Council, it could then refer the matter to staff, the Planning Commission, Traffic Safety Advisory Board or another Council advisory boards for review. If the letter were directed to City Manager, the Manager could consider how best to accommodate the recommendations within the existing City business framework and City priorities prior to either the Board or the Manager making final recommendations to City Council.

Bob Cushman stated that the Committee's recommendations are based on a desire to promote Oak Ridge as a bike and pedestrian friendly community. Although most of the discussion focused on the recommendation process, some Board members questioned whether the Board should be asking the Planning Commission to change its development regulations to require bike racks for commercial areas.

Gerry Palau expressed concern that the recommendations had not yet been vetted with other key City Boards and Commissions – particularly the Planning Commission, EQAB, and the Traffic Safety Advisory Board as a whole. He noted that many other Boards in the City struggle to see their recommendations implemented because they do not invest enough effort in 'socializing' the ideas with other key Boards that are direct stakeholders in the outcome of any recommendations – and he was concerned that the Parks Board could fall into the same pattern that will ultimately make it a less effective voice in the community. He agreed to pursue opportunities to share the current BPWC suggestions with other Boards in an effort to build a broader city-wide consensus on the Parks Board recommendations.

Sherith volunteered to draft a letter to the City Manager communicating the Board's current thinking on Bike/Ped improvement recommendations for Oak Ridge. Sherith also agreed to consolidate the five page document for Board review at the December meeting. Laurel Patrick made a motion to approve communicating the Bike/Ped Committee recommendations to the Manager, to prepare a cover letter signed by Chairman Palau and to convey the recommendations to the City Manager. The motion was seconded by Bob Cushman and approved by the Board by an 8-0 vote.

Dog Park Committee- Bridgette Ellis

Bridgette Ellis presented a revised concept design for a Dog Park at Big Turtle Park located between the softball outfield fence and East Fork Popular Creek, at the rear of the site. Bridgette discussed the planned features and revisions that have been made since the October meeting. City staff estimated annual costs for the area would be less than \$5,000 per year and could include maintenance of fences, water fountains and over seeding of the grass. The dog park visitor would be separated from other park users by a large parking lot.

Work Plan Deliverables

Chairman Palau delayed the discussion on Board goals and assignments until after the first of the year. He mentioned the work that had been accomplished by Sherith and the Bike/Ped Committee and by Bridgette and her Dog Park Committee over the last year. He encouraged Board members to begin thinking about priorities for 2013.

Unfinished Business

No unfinished Business.

New Business

Dogs in the Playground Area

Josh Collins briefly discussed the issue regarding park visitors bringing leashed dogs into the playground area where small children are playing. Josh related a couple of incidents where either the dogs were tied to play equipment or allowed to walk around where children were playing. Although no serious injuries occurred, children were “nipped” by an unfamiliar dog. The wood mulch areas around the equipment have been soiled by the dogs thus creating an unsanitary play area for the children. The Board will discuss this item in more detail in December.

Director’s Report

Pavilion Update

Josh Collins provided an overview of the pavilion construction at Melton Lake Park. Support foundations were poured in mid- October and the structure arrived on site on October 29. Steel supports were installed later that same week. Decking was started the first week in November. The Recreation and Parks Department and Electric Department are installing an underground electrical service.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 pm.

Oak Ridge Recreation & Parks Advisory Board (RPAB) - Bike & Pedestrian Working Committee
(BPWC)
November 2012

The Oak Ridge Bicycle and Pedestrian Working Committee has met on the third Thursday of every month for the past eight months to discuss ways to promote their mission: *To improve the quality of life for the people in Oak Ridge through attaining recognition as a bike and pedestrian friendly community.* The committee has shared in the past the importance of focusing on projects in or near the “Heart of Oak Ridge,” and the top project priorities reflect that sentiment. The committee sees that through these prioritized projects, our Oak Ridge

Community can indeed become recognized as a bike and pedestrian friendly place to live, work and play.

Depending upon the action that the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board would like to take in making a recommendation to the City of Oak Ridge City Council for bike and pedestrian priority project(s), it will directly impact the recommendation for potential sources of funding for the projects.

Top Project/Funding Priorities

Project Prioritization:

The committee worked to prioritize projects using a similar process to the one employed in the Oak Ridge Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (ORBPP), however, the committee did not use the ranking criteria identified in the ORBPP, as the relative location to schools, parks, employers, etc. did not seem the optimal metric for ranking prioritized projects for the current demand for Oak Ridge bicycle and pedestrian experiences.

Instead, the committee ranked each project priority based on where resources are most urgently needed near the "heart of Oak Ridge" (highly visible and easily accessed locations) and where improvements would have the greatest impact on improving the bicycle and pedestrian experience. The committee strongly felt that the Melton Lake to Y-12 rail line, currently held by CSX, is the top priority for project funding and execution in the near term. The priority projects listed below are based on the premise that a "phased" implementation of an Oak Ridge Rails to Trails line (from north of Elza Gate Park to the intersection of Scarboro Road and Bear Creek Road) is the main priority for recommendation and current funding efforts (aside from any imminent safety concerns).

Project Priorities for Bike Lanes/Sidewalks

1. Connecting Emory Valley to S. Illinois Ave.
 - Through the former CSX line – establishing a Rails to Trails Corridor
2. Emory Valley Road
 - *Providing better signage for the connection of the nearby greenway, behind Donner Rd to the north/front facing edge of the Food Lion shopping center*
3. Administration Road(s) at ORTP to Laboratory Road – add connecting sidewalks
4. Connect the current gaps of sidewalk along Oak Ridge Turnpike between Illinois Ave. and Florida Ave. (1st Corridor project priority in approved ORBP Plan)
5. Bike Lane connection along Scarboro Rd. to Bethel Valley Rd (just past Bear Creek Road)
6. Safe crossing for bikers on the Illinois & Lafayette intersection (potential over pass as part of long-term Rails to Trails Phasing)
7. Expand bike lanes on Bethel Valley Rd - west to existing bike lanes near ORNL gate
8. Continued maintenance/support for greenways, sidewalks and bike lanes as prioritized in the approved Oak Ridge Bike and Pedestrian Plan¹

Associated Costs & Funding Source Prioritization:

¹ http://www.knoxtrans.org/plans/OR_BikePed_2011.pdf

The committee worked to identify those funding streams that seemed reasonable and attainable, while focusing on the prudence of expending resources towards unsuccessful efforts. The list below focuses on those potential sources of funding that the committee believes are attainable, available and reasonable to anticipate receipt of through working with other stakeholders. The committee strongly believes that the best and most reliable source of funding is through the US DOT Surface Transportation Program.

Additionally, the committee highly recommends referencing (as the approved ORBP Plan lists) the Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization list of funding sources printed in the ORBPP.

The total cost associated with a Rail to Trails Project that would replace the Oak Ridge CSX railroad line depends upon the many choices that end users of the trail will be hopefully be able to make with our local decision makers. To begin thinking about estimated costs, the Rails to Trails Conservancy recommends first considering the following:

- User acceptance and satisfaction
- Accessibility
- Cost to purchase and install materials
- Cost of maintaining the surface
- Life expectancy
- Availability of material

Before the City and its residents choose a specific trail surface, we should also consider the pros and cons of hard surfaces and soft surfaces.

Hard Surface

- More accommodating for multi-use trails
- More expensive but requires less maintenance and can withstand frequent use

Soft Surface

- Less expensive
- Often does not hold up well under heavy use or varying weather conditions

Below are estimated costs per mile of previously installed a Rails to Trails projects:

- Asphalt: \$200K - \$300K
- Concrete: \$300K - \$500K
- Crushed/granular stone: \$80K - \$120K
- Soil cement: \$60K - \$100K
- Resin-based stabilized material: varies
- Boardwalk: \$1.5 mil – \$2 mil²

The cost of installing a bike lane is approximately \$3,100 to \$31,000 per kilometer (\$5,000 to \$50,000 per mile), depending on the condition of the pavement, the need to remove and repaint the lane lines, the need to adjust signalization, and other factors.³ Based

² http://www.railstotrails.org/ourwork/trailbuilding/toolbox/informationsummaries/trail_surfaces.html

³ <http://www.walkinginfo.org/engineering/roadway-bicycle.cfm>

on our above current recommendations, estimates for priority projects run between \$ 36,000 to \$500,000.

The cost for concrete curbs and sidewalks is approximately \$49/linear meter (\$15/linear foot) for curbing and \$118/square meter (\$11/square foot) for walkways. Asphalt curbs and walkways are less costly, but require more maintenance, and are somewhat more difficult to walk and roll on for pedestrians with mobility impairments.⁴ Based on our above current recommendations, rough estimates for priority projects run between \$250,000 to \$600,000.

Potential Funding Sources

1. **DOT Surface Transportation Program** - \$ 222,621,794 Estimated FY 2013 Funding for Tennessee Under the Conference Report for the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21)* (<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/table2013.cfm>) – will most likely need to apply for 2014
2. **DOT - Transportation Alternatives Funding** - \$18,119,645 Estimated FY 2013 Funding for Tennessee Under the Conference Report for the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) – (http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_enhancements/legislation/map21.cfm)
3. **DOT - Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program CMAQ Funding** - \$ 35,570,454 Estimated FY 2013 Funding for Tennessee Under the Conference Report for the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) – (http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air_quality/cmaq/)
4. **Transportation Community and System Preservation** - <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/tcsp/index.html>
5. **Local Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) Partnerships** – potential partnership between the City of Oak Ridge CVB & private investors to ensure the Rails to Trails Corridor is designed in a fiscally feasible, phased approach until a bike and pedestrian connection (a “Rails to Trails”) is completed between Elza Gate and Scarboro Rd. Discussions have not yet begun with the CVB.
6. **Funds from salvaging materials from railroad line** – need to generate discussions with City of Oak Ridge and potential buyers of the materials and ensure that a percentage of any profits from the purchase of the old rail road materials go toward the remodeling of the line for a Rails to Trails Corridor.
7. **Volunteer help from local Boy & Girl Scouts** (as well as other local organizations interested in bike/pedestrian projects) – ex: building benches, clearing railroad trails, etc.

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⁴ <http://www.walkinginfo.org/engineering/roadway-sidewalks.cfm>

The City of Oak Ridge Council approved their Bicycle and Pedestrian Planⁱ in April of 2011 and it included a specific vision and mission for the City to work towards. Its vision was to have the City become an easy and safe place to travel by foot and bicycle while its mission was focused on the following three priorities:

- *Identification and prioritization of needed pedestrian and bicycle facilities;*
- *Ensure that bicycle and pedestrian facilities are included in all new projects;*
- *Develop programs to promote walking and bicycling through education and enforcement.*

Since 2011 many efforts on behalf of the City have been made to work toward implementation of this plan's mission, including the formation of an ad hoc, Bicycle and Pedestrian Working Committee (BPWC) that directly reports to the newly formed City of Oak Ridge Recreation and Parks Advisory Board. The BPWC has provided the RPAB the ability to implement the first mission of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan through its identification of eight (8) priority projects in September of 2012, including a potential Rails-to-Trails project for the soon to be abandoned CSX railroad line running from east Oak Ridge at Elza Gate Park to Scarboro Road by the Y-12 New Hope Center. This paper seeks to provide further clarification, education and promotion for the Plan's second mission.

Currently there are no City regulations that help to promote and encourage safe, connected, alternative transportation specifically for biking or walking. Below are three suggested ordinance additions for Oak Ridge's Zoning and Development Ordinanceⁱⁱ as well as two suggested long-term approaches for City policy that promotes biking and walking.

Immediate Considerations

Consistent with the recommendations of the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan all future development shall:

- *" Provide appropriate bicycle amenities to encourage cyclists and also include connections to existing pedestrian sidewalks, walkways and greenways. Signage indicating the presence and location of such amenities shall be scaled for easy reading by bicyclists and pedestrians as well as motorists."*
 - *Amenities include one or multiple of the following:*
 1. Bike Racks
 2. Bike Lockers
 3. Bike Repair Station
 4. Accessible Water Fountain
 - *Signage needs to be appropriately sized and scaled for reading if a person entering the property is either operating a vehicle or a bike.*
- *" Provide secure bicycle parking as part of all high density residential, commercial, retail, office, industrial, and mixed use development where appropriate. The bicycle parking be is recommended at a rate of one bicycle rack space for every fifty (50) vehicle parking spaces with all parking and storage located in safe, visible areas that do not impede pedestrian or vehicle traffic flow, and shall be well lit for nighttime use."*
- *" Submit site plans for development that clearly show how the site's internal pedestrian and bicycle facilities connect with external existing or planned facilities or systems."*

Long-term Consideration

Complete Streets Policy

According to Smart Growth America, the concept of “complete streets” is to design and operate transportation in a City to “enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities.”ⁱⁱⁱ Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Working Committee recommend that the City Council consider its own unique Complete Streets Policy and begin working on its implementation for 2014. A suggested model for Oak Ridge can be found with the City of Hendersonville, Tennessee, adopted as a part of their 2009 Land Use and Transportation Plan.^{iv}

Maintenance Policy

When shoulders, bike lanes, and paths are filled with sanding materials, broken glass, and other debris, bicyclists will avoid them and use travel lanes. To reduce conflict with motorized vehicles throughout Oak Ridge, to provide safer travel for all users, and to protect the investment of public funds in bikeways and walkways, an overall maintenance policy should be set by the City to provide accommodation for bicycle travel to include scheduled inspection and maintenance of state and federal facilities.

The maintenance plan that will execute the policy needs to be realistic and agreed upon by both Council and City staff with priority given to high-use areas and to facilities where potential conflicts with other users are greatest, and where a time and efficient response to maintenance can be accomplished. The City must continue to support activities and programs that preserve, maintain, and prevent deterioration of the existing transportation system and a maintenance policy would ensure this.

ⁱ Oak Ridge Bike and Pedestrian Plan, 2011. http://www.knoxtrans.org/plans/OR_BikePed_2011.pdf.

ⁱⁱ Oak Ridge Zoning Ordinance, 1959/2010.

http://www.oakridgetenn.org/images/uploads/Documents/City%20Codes/Zoning%20Ordinance/Zoning%20Ordinance_Secured.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ Smart Growth America's Complete Streets, 2012. <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/tag/complete-streets/>

^{iv} City of Hendersonville, TN, Complete Streets, 2009. <http://www.hvilletn.org/getdoc/2b093dae-4045-4af2-bddf-940497e90371/Chapter6-CompleteStreets>

Dog Park Layout: DRAFT

- ▢ Dog Wash
- ▢ Bench
- ▾ Water Fountain
- ▢ Shelter
- ▾ Gates
- ⤵ Arch
- ⚡ Electric
- ▢ Brick Pavers

