



Oconee Rivers Greenway Commission (ORG) Meeting Minutes

Date: April 16, 2024, In-Person/WebEx Meeting

Commission Members Present in-Person: Charlie Barrow, Ross Hinkle, Susie Haggard, Ed Maiorillo, Lexy Doherty, Bryan Varin, Kristen Linthicum, John Schelhas.

On-line:

Commission Members Absent: Jennifer Gay, Alison McCullick.

Ex-officio Members and Visitors Attending: Rose West (ACC Leisure Services), Stephanie Greene (ACC Sustainability Office), Wick Prichard (ACC Planning Department), Daniel Sizemore (Transportation and Public Works), Scott Long, (Bike Athens), Tom Keene (Firefly Trail), Mark Beatty (Northeast Georgia Regional Commission).

Call to order: Meeting called to order at 3:02. A quorum was established.

Public Comments: No public comments to report.

Minutes: A motion to approve the minutes made by Haggard. The commission unanimously approved the minutes.

Chair Report – Barrow

Green Life Award Next Wednesday. Karen Porter will get Walt Cook Award.

Land Use Map—Charlie has draft letter. Motion approved to submit to planning department.

UOWN event this weekend. Requested funds for a pH meter. Motion to spend \$500 approved.

Carr's Hill ribbon cutting was this morning.

Vice Chair Report – Hinkle

Next class project for the Nature Guide will be in the fall semester. Will be loading data on to a computer system. Question is where to house. ACC? Get a server? Ed recommends not having our own server. First step is to chat with Emily at ACC.

Treasurer/Budget Report – Barrow

Account \$11,212.57 - \$75 that is still to be charged. “BoA account” still the same,
, Have to spend money by end of May which means next meeting.

Committee Reports

Planning – Haggard

Nothing to report.

Commission discussed meeting to look at the Greenway Plan together. Doherty, Schelhas, and Hinkle volunteered. Will also reach out to Keren Porter. Daniel Sizemore might be able to come. May 7 at 3:00.

Rose needs meeting date and time in advance.

Natural Resources – Doherty

Committee members: Doherty, Hinkle, and Schelhas. Tentatively meeting April 30.

Communication and Outreach –

Staff Reports

Leisure Services – West

Ribbon cutting for Carr’s Creek section this morning.

Large sign made for 20th anniversary of the Greenway at SCNC. Took down because was more than a year old.

SPLOST update almost a month ago. Oak-Oconee overpass stream buffer paperwork is being finished.

Greenway approaching SCNC—in process of receiving bids. Work will be August to January.

Cemetery—People are hopping over the bridge to get to cemetery. Will be some panels going up. Trees have taken out part of the fencing in a couple of places.

Greenway South— Soil collapsing under Greenway between Loop and North Oconee. Trying to figure out what is happening.

New member approval—trying to get it on the Mayor and Commissioner’s meeting agenda for May; June if that doesn’t work. City thinks that a partial term counts as a

full term, and that there has to be a break after a partial and full term. This is not the way it has been done in the past.

When someone departs from commission need an updated mailing address. City wants to send something, In the past chair writes a letter, goes to the county, then they send it.

MLK TSPLOST section. Got funded last round. On priority list but below government center. May be out for bid now for engineering.

Firefly trail gap in Winterville. May still be negotiating a few parcels. Seems like there are a few properties left. Could reach out to Derrick Doster at SPLOST office.

Sustainability Office – Greene

Put on your calendars. May 29 we will have a celebration at Dudley Park as far as the GOS grant. Time may be 11:30. Towers being painted. Bluebirds in one of the bluebird boxes. Also chickadee hatchlings in one box.

MLK to College Ave section. People are confused how to get to Dudley Park from there. She gets asked that question regularly when out on the Greenway.

Planning – Prichard

Nothing to report.

Charlie asked where to submit the comment on the land use map. Wick will send to Charlie.

Property buyers of a tract need to know if potentially a Greenway will come through. Daniel: Noticed that sewer easements were on the map, but not the Greenway. Need to make sure they are aware of that. Leisure Services is brought on for projects that impact the Greenway.

Stephanie: FYI. Will be activity on MLK, will resurvey property line and after that a fence will go up. From MLK to the Greenway to demarcate private property from city property.

Transportation and Public Works (TPW) – Sizemore

A few things are coming up, nothing specific for the Greenway. Conversations about data and access to GIS. Story map could be built on ACC account.

Crossing Willow and Broad. Crosswalk. To give pedestrian more visibility. Request near Nellie B that requires more design. Crosswalks now pedestrian generated, no

longer need to do counts. 20 crosswalk backlog. Got some extra funding. All the ones related to parks and leisure services are marked.

Public Utilities – Ogle

No report, no updates

Other Ex Officio Reports

Bike Athens – Long

Missing tool at East Campus connector fix it station. Replaced them. Rose: pump was pulled apart.

Friends of the Greenway: Current Friends board want information about new board, Finishing that up.

UOWN – Giri

No report

Firefly Trail – Keene

Ticket to ride very successful. 200 people, good weather. More sponsors than before; did well financially

Received grant to finish paving in Maxeys.

Didn't get Crawford grant from GOS. There is broader interest in having more of GOS money go to trails; Parks get most of the money. Would like to generate support for trails to become a bigger part of the GOS grants. This is an ambition for the future, since it is the one state fund that should continue to be there.

Working on a federal grant to do planning and engineering for all of Oglethorpe County. In meantime, hope to do more model miles with smaller amounts of money.

Greene: Just finished a GOS project for Dudley—all new improvements part of the Restore Rivers GOS gena. Just wrapped up. County has taken advantage of GOS Grants

Oconee Rivers Audubon Society (ORAS) – Maioriello

Bird walk Saturday morning at Greenway. Meting at UGA E23 lot.

27th Walk at Sandy Creek Park

28th will be out at the landfill.

Oconee Rivers Land Trust doing a walk Thursday at property in Jackson County.

Northeast Georgia Regional Commission – Mark Beatty

Going through voluntary update of regionally important natural resource management plan. ORGC already listed.

Ribbon cutting this morning was almost at his office. Leisure Services uses counters that don't show directionality. He has a few that do, Will put one out as a tester. Free lending of counters to local governments. Will put one on Carr's Creek section.

There is already a contract with Bike Athens to maintain these.

Interest in going south through Madison along the Athens Line. Goes Downtown from transit center, through Watkinsville, on down to Madison,

Working with Jackson County on master plan connecting trails from Athens to there.

New Business

Dpherty: Any updates about Beech Haven? Nothing since we submitted our recommendation. Hotel proposed on Atlanta Highway—adjacent to Beech Haven. 3 conditions attached to it. Hasn't come through planning process. Just a request for rezone.

Next ORGC meeting: May 21, 2024 at 3 pm at Memorial Park.

Adjourn