

**Carrboro Greenways Commission
Minutes
May 17th, 2010**

At –Large Members Present

*Robert Kirschner (Chair) – At Large
*Dave Otto (Vice-chair) – At Large
*Gary Junker (Vice-chair elect) – At Large
*Salli Benedict – At Large
*George Daniel – At Large

Representatives Present

*Eric Allman – Recreation and Parks Commission
*Matthew Arnsberger– Environmental Advisory Board
*Mark Chilton-Mayor/Board of Alderman
*Ranee Haven-O’Donnell – Board of Alderman
* Robin Michler – Transportation Advisory Board
*Amber Wagner – Planning Board

Staff Present

Marabeth Carr – Orange County Environmental Resources and Conservation Department
Ray Magyar – UNC Department of Public Safety – Transportation Division
Randy Dodd – Town of Carrboro Planning Department
Brendan Moore – Town of Carrboro Recreation and Parks Department
Jeff Brubaker – Town of Carrboro Planning Department

Absent

*Johnny Randall – Morgan Creek Valley Alliance/NC Botanical Garden
Nick Parker – OWASA
Bill Webster – Town of Chapel Hill

Guests

Mike Birenbach
Dennis Carmody
Julie McClintock

Bruce Sinclair
Joan Widdifield

* indicates voting member

- I. **Call to Order:** Bob Kirschner, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.
- II. **Approval of minutes:** MOTION (Dave, Eric second) to approve the April 19, 2010, meeting minutes (unanimously approved).
- III. **Agenda review:** Bob recommended that Item VI on the agenda (Bolin Creek Greenway) be amended to be a discussion of Commission procedure for taking public comment. MOTION (Ranee, Dave second) on this recommendation (unanimously approved). Bob emphasized that this meeting would be devoted to process and administrative matters.
- IV. **Election of Vice-chair:** Bob opened the floor to nominations. Dave nominated Gary Junker. Ranee seconded. MOTION (Dave, Ranee second) that Gary Junker be elected Vice-chair of the Commission (unanimously approved).

V. **Words from the Chair:** Bob said the Commission was getting polarized over the Bolin Creek issue. He said that everyone was here for the common good. The Commission should look at the big picture – the greenway system in its entirety – where there is common ground.

The Commission discussed the need to establish a process for taking public comments at meetings. There were questions as to whether sending emails to all members is consistent with the Open Meetings law. Robin reported that the TAB has created a public Google group. Any emails sent to the group are accessible and searchable by the general public. Randee said that was discussed in the EAB as well.

Bob said there was a need for a comprehensive greenway system plan for all of Carrboro. He said that Bolin Forest is the last refuge of urban forest in Carrboro. He stressed preservation of the forest while finding a way to make it accessible to all users. Bob said there were greenways workshops going back to the 1980s.

VI. **Advisory board training video:** Bob asked how many members had viewed the video. He said the biggest point is understanding what is expected of someone as an advisory board member. Members should act for the overall good of the community even if it doesn't align with their personal positions.

The Commission discussed public record communication, group signature letters, and talking with the press. Bob said members are allowed to voice personal opinions as long as it is clear they are from the individual and not construed as being from the Commission. Adopted commission recommendations would be written down and on public record. Salli said that it's Bob's job as Chair to communicate with the press. Randee said it is incumbent on members to reaffirm that they are speaking to the press as an individual. Bob said that if a quorum of members is included in a communication, then it is a public record, while Dave said that contacting more than three members made it a public record. Robin said that coming up with some way to continue communication with the whole board in between meetings should be pursued. Mark suggested it would be appropriate to ask the Town attorney to draft a page of guidelines to follow for open meetings. MOTION (Mark, Randee second) that the Board of Aldermen ask the Town attorney to develop a set of guidelines for email communications within advisory boards (unanimously approved).

Bob asked staff to follow up about having a listserv. Randee said a Google group could facilitate the emailing of resources for informational purposes. Mark said the Town attorney discussed the distinction between email and online chat, which takes into account the instantaneity of the discussion. He suggested copying all members on every email, and several members concurred.

VII. **Update on Greenways Implementation:** Jeff gave an update on implementation of Phase 1A of the Bolin Creek Greenway and the Safe Routes to School Action Plan. There was a discussion of Estes Park Apartments: students are assigned to Carrboro Elementary but the apartments are not in the walk zone. Gary suggested looking at safe walk zones for all areas of the proposed greenway. Bob asked staff to draft an update on Safe Routes to School for the next meeting. Gary asked staff to draft a timeline projecting up to one year out the estimated benchmarks for implementation. Jeff gave an update on the Jones Creek-to-Twin Creeks connector trail (CMAQ project). Marabeth gave an update on Twin Creeks Greenway construction, which is scheduled to be finished by mid-August. Jeff gave an update on the 2009 rescission of federal transportation funds, which itself has now been rescinded.

VIII. **Process for taking public comment at meetings:** Bob proposed that a certain amount of time at the beginning of meetings be slated for three-minute public comment opportunities. Dave asked how other boards and commissions deal with the issue. Randee suggested using the Planning Board as a model. George agreed with the three-minute time slots as long as the comments were balanced. Robin said that if there are a lot of people presenting the same view, the Commission could assign a spokesperson. Bob said that if there were additional comments, the Commission could vote to extend the comment period. Salli said presentations set in the agenda ahead of time were different than a section at the beginning of the meeting for spur-of-the-moment comments. The Commission discussed the process for requesting time for meetings. Mark outlined the Board of Aldermen's procedure, which allows a three-minute petition time at the beginning of a meeting in order to get on the formal agenda for a future meeting. Randee suggested posting a clipboard for people wishing to speak 15 minutes before Commission meetings. Gary said his understanding of the advisory board training is that the Chair has latitude to govern the amount of public comment during discussion of agenda items. Mark said that once you establish a time for an item on the agenda, it is mostly for the board or commission to discuss that item.

Gary summarized the discussion as focusing on three procedural matters: 1. the opportunity at the beginning of the meeting to make a three-minute comment (using a sign-in board); 2. more formal presentations approved by the Commission a month in advance eligible for a larger segment of time; and 3. the flexibility to extend public comment, governed by the Chair. Mark said that if someone wanted to add an agenda item for a meeting that had not been discussed by the Commission in a while, there should at least be unanimous consent by the Commission before it could be considered at that same meeting. Randee said the Board of Aldermen has the flexibility to change the order of agenda items. Eric clarified that three-minute comments at the beginning of a meeting didn't have to be related to the agenda items at that meeting. Mark requested that a one-page summary of the procedural matters be on the next meeting agenda for ratification by the Commission. Salli asked if the Commission could approve Gary's summary. Mark said it would be good to have it written down so there are no future disagreements on what the Commission ratified.

MOTION (Mark, Gary second) that this document be drafted and ratified at the next meeting. Vote – Ayes (10): Bob, Gary, George, Amber, Eric, Matthew, Mark, Randee, Robin, Dave. Nays (1): Salli. Abstain (0). Absent (1): Johnny.

IX. **Announcements:** Julie McClintock and Mike Birenbach of Save Bolin Creek requested to be on the agenda for the next meeting for a 10-minute presentation. MOTION (Mark, Amber second) that the request be granted (unanimously approved).

X. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.