

New Hope Creek Corridor Advisory Committee

Minutes of Meeting of March 13, 2014

(Present: Welch, Healy, Kent, Brandon Moore, Helen Youngblood)

- (1) Sandy Creek Park. Healy said that great progress continues to be made. The wildlife observation platform is virtually complete, lacking only some final paint. Several volunteer crews have been spreading large quantities of mulch on the slope near the entrance and scores of butterfly and bird attractant plants have been planted. Use by birders is increasing as spring comes. The Sierra Club sponsored a “frog event” with an expert leader from Duke explaining frog and salamander activity.
- (2) In response to the “penny for parks” issue being discussed by the Durham City Council, Healy submitted testimony to a Coffee With Council event extolling the large accomplishments for modest cost made to several parks under the county-funded DOST Matching Grant program and suggesting that the city start a similar program so as to involve volunteers and (especially) neighbors in park maintenance and improvement. This is not a substitute for additional budget for parks, particularly maintenance, but could somewhat reduce the overall cost. Youngblood added that volunteers can be useful but there are things that only staff can do. Ideally staff and volunteers should work cooperatively, aided in some cases by organizations like Keep Durham Beautiful.

Youngblood said that Parks and Recreation department would submit a report to the Council and Commission at an April 2 meeting. She said that parks, trails and open space areas should be linked to health of Durham residents and making the city and county attractive for economic development.

- (3) Healy said work on interpretive signage for Sandy Creek Park was proceeding, though slowly. Kent suggested “seasonal signs” as well as permanent ones, pointing out seasonally occurring natural phenomena. He expressed concern about colors in signs fading over time. Healy said that the signs we are looking at are quite durable, and that we may add a sheet of ultraviolet blocking Plexi-glas to both prevent fading and reduce the impact of vandalism.
- (4) Old Chapel Hill Road Park—Moore said that very severe flooding during the winter had done significant damage to the boardwalk trail.

- (5) Hollow Rock Park. Moore said that the federal grant for the Erwin Rd. parking lot and trail bridges was being implemented, with perhaps a year needed to complete the work. Youngblood said there is dumping along Pickett Rd. that should be addressed. Healy said that the federal grant would not cover interpretive signs. Rich Shaw of Orange County Parks said that while standard county signs would be used for regulations, etc. there should be no problem with interpretive signs of the same style as contemplated for Sandy Creek. Moore suggested that signs be coordinated with school lesson plans. Healy said we should start thinking about these so that they would be ready for park opening in a year or so. Moore said that there were many informal trails on the Durham side that need to be closed off, including three entrances from Solterra and that volunteers could help with this. Kent said he saw some mountain bike damage. Kent also said that the Metropolitan Planning Organization has asked for sidewalks and bike lanes along Erwin Rd.
- (6) Funtasia project (Garrett Rd.). Youngblood said that Funtasia redevelopment (for a dog boarding facility) requires permits but not rezoning. Moore said that they are removing the go-kart track as perhaps the castle. Youngblood said that a [trail?] easement had already been acquired when the project was first built. Concern was expressed about possible land contamination at the now closed paintball range. It was agreed that our Committee should keep an eye out for possible development at the golf driving range across Garrett Rd.