

Bicycle/Trails Advisory Committee Minutes of January 26, 2009

Voting Members Present:

Christina Teeuwen – Chair
Richard Fisher – Vice Chair
Debbie Hanson
Connie Smith
Steve Guiliani
Susan Harris
Beth Reitz

Staff Present:

Mark Shea, Planning
Donna Hill, Parks and Recreation

Council Members Present:

Council Member Ritter
Council Member West

Ms. Smith made a motion to approve the October minutes. Ms. Hanson seconded the motion and the motion was approved. Mr. Shea informed that Mr. Walton was out sick but would respond to the committee if there are any questions for Public Works. Mr. Shea distributed the pages of the Comprehensive Plan that deal with Bicycle/Trails Planning. He stated that his department is getting ready to update the Plan and asked for ideas regarding the bike/trails section. The Committee mentioned that they would like to see more off road trails and they then discussed the following examples:

- along the north side of the Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal;
- along the soon to be abandoned rail line in Western Branch;
- the northern extension of the Dismal Swamp Canal Trail;
- There was some discussion regarding the southern connection of the Dismal Swamp Trail with Camden County's trail in North Carolina. Council Member Ritter stated that she had a concern with this connection at this time.
- Ms. Teeuwen asked if staff could check into the ownership of the old abandoned rail line adjacent to Washington Drive.

Mr. Shea stated that there has also been talk of showing the highest priority bicycle/trail facilities on the future map with text addressing the need to evaluate bicycle facilities on the remainder of road facilities.

The Committee expressed their support for the construction of the new Jordan Bridge with the bicycle/pedestrian accommodations shown on the rendering in the newspaper. Ms. Teeuwen will submit a letter of support to the City. Ms. Teeuwen asked if staff could look at the Battlefield Boulevard interchange striping to provide a wide outside lane. She also asked if staff could research safety issues with bicycles crossing interstate highway ramps as she was not sure what the safest design would be. Some Committee members suggested looking at what was provided over the Greenbrier overpass with the TIF improvements. The Committee then discussed design issues with the Dismal Swamp Canal Trail. Mr. Guiliani stated that the gate bypasses are very difficult. Mr. Shea stated that the improvements project underway would improve this situation. Mr. Guiliani also asked if the City could contact the Navy about allowing bicyclists to use the gated roadway at Fentress airfield that connects Whittamore Road to Long Ridge Road. Ms. Hanson briefly discussed a National Park Service grant for equestrians and provided some information brochures to Ms. Teeuwen. Ms. Ritter suggested that the trails within the Culpepper Landing subdivision were also a good place for horseback riding.

Council Member Ritter noted that it was critical to look at the designation section of the Comprehensive Plan. She asked the Committee if Blueway trails were something it would be interested in and the possibility of inviting Chip Worth to discuss plans – canoe put-ins, etc. She mentioned the possibility of enhancement grants for the WB trail. She also mentioned the Watershed Action Plan and the swamp program.

A discussion started concerning having a really good connective trail system with several entry sites and the possibility of connecting our parks. They inquired about whether Deep Creek Park would have a back entrance from the neighborhood behind the park. A member asked if the Great Bridge Intercoastal Waterway trail would connect with Virginia Beach. It was mentioned that if so, the trail would cross over a piece of property on Centerville that is used/owned by the Boy Scouts. Ms Ritter mentioned that there were two wetland bank applications being considered and there may be some opportunity for trails there.

The meeting was adjourned at 6 p.m.