

Introduced by _____ Council Bill No. R 23-11

A RESOLUTION

declaring the necessity for construction of improvements at the Bonnie View Nature Area – Phase I; stating the nature of and the estimate of the cost of the improvement; providing for payment for the improvement; providing for compliance with the prevailing wage law; and setting a public hearing.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, MISSOURI, AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The City Council deems the construction of improvements at the Bonnie View Nature Area – Phase I, more specifically to include construction of a 40-car parking lot, midsized reservable shelter, restroom, hard surface connecting trails, a prairie and native flower restoration area and a series of natural surface trails, necessary to the welfare and improvement of the City.

SECTION 2. The nature and scope of the improvement shall consist of furnishing all labor, materials, transportation, insurance and all other items, accessories and incidentals thereto necessary for the complete construction of the improvements.

SECTION 3. The estimated cost of this improvement is \$300,000.00.

SECTION 4. Payment for this improvement shall be made from park sales tax funds and such other funds as may be lawfully appropriated.

SECTION 5. Any work done in connection with the construction of the improvement specified above shall be in compliance with the provisions of the prevailing wage laws of the State of Missouri.

SECTION 6. A public hearing in respect to this improvement will be held in the Council Chamber of the City Hall Building, 701 E. Broadway, Columbia, Missouri, at 7:00 p.m. on March 21, 2011. The City Clerk shall cause notice of this hearing to be published in a newspaper published in the City.

ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 2011.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor and Presiding Officer

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

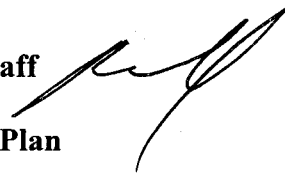
City Counselor

Source: Mike Hood
FISCAL and VISION NOTES:

| | |
|---|--|
| City Fiscal Impact Enter all that apply: | |
| \$0 | City's current net FY cost. |
| \$300,000 | Amount of Funds Already appropriated |
| \$0 | Amount of budget amendment needed |
| \$0 | Estimated 2 yr net costs: |
| \$10,000 | One-time |
| | Operating / On-going |
| Program Impact: | |
| N | New program/ agency (Y/N) |
| N | Duplicates/expands an existing program (Y/N) |
| N | Fiscal impact on any local political subdivision (Y/N) |
| Resources Required: | |
| N | Requires add'l FTE personnel? (Y/N) |
| N | Requires additional facilities? (Y/N) |
| N | Requires additional capital equipment? (Y/N) |
| Mandates: | |
| N | Federal or state mandated? (Y/N) |
| Vision Implementation Impact Enter Below All That Applies: Refer to Website: | |
| Y | Vision Impact? (Y/N or if N, go no further) |
| 12.1 | Primary Vision, Strategy and/or Goal Item# |
| 12.3 | Secondary Vision, Strategy and/or Goal Item# |
| 40/42 | FY10/FY11 Implementation Task# |

Agenda Item No. _____

TO: City Council
FROM: City Manager and Staff
DATE: February 25, 2011
RE: Bonnie View Master Plan



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Parks & Recreation Department is requesting authorization to proceed with improvements to the Bonnie View Nature Area. This 89.46 acre tract was donated by the F. Garland Russell family in 1999, and the department has been intermittently working on the master plan since 2002.

Attached for Council consideration is Attachment A: Bonnie View Master Plan (funded and unfunded), Attachment B: Bonnie View Master Plan Funded Amenities (Phase I), and Attachment C: Detailed description of the master plans. Staff believes that the master plan represents a consensus of the neighborhood, Columbia Audubon Society, Columbia Public School District and other special interest and user groups. At their February 17, 2011 meeting, the Parks & Recreation Commission conducted a public hearing and endorsed the master plan as proposed. The Commission further endorsed two management issues; prohibiting dogs from the Bonnie View property and restricting bicycles to the hard surface trails.

The first phase of development includes a 40-car parking lot, reservable mid-sized shelter, restroom, hard surface connecting trails, prairie and native flower restoration area, and a series of natural surface trails. A portion of the Scott's Branch Trail is located within the Bonnie View plan. The Scott's Branch Trail requires separate council action and staff has prepared documents for Council consideration following the approval of the Bonnie View plan.

The work will be bid through the City's Purchasing Department and be completed with a combination of contract and force account labor. Work is scheduled to begin during the 2011 construction season. Total phase I project cost is estimated at \$300,000 and is

funded by the 2005 Park Sales Tax. Staff also recommends that the name of the park be designated as "Bonnie View Nature Area."

DISCUSSION:

The Parks & Recreation Department is requesting authorization to proceed with improvements to the Bonnie View Nature Area. This 89.46 acre tract was donated by the F. Garland Russell family in 1999, and the department has been intermittently working on the master plan since 2002. A brief history of the planning process is outlined below.

Greater details including reports and previous plans are all listed on the P&R Department's

website and may be provided if requested.

1999: Acquired Garland Russell 89.46 acre farm property through donation

2002: P&R started planning process for Bonnie View.

2002-2003: Department develops several options and presents them to the public and the Planning & Zoning and P&R Commissions.

March 2004: Council held a work session to discuss the Bonnie View Park Master Plan. Council tables planning process until funding is available.

Nov 2005: Park Sales Tax ballot issue includes \$300,000 for Phase I development.

November 2008: Council approved an ordinance removing Cunningham Road from the Major Roadway Plan.

Fall 2009: \$300,000 is budgeted in the Capital Improvement Program for the development of Bonnie View property for the City's Fiscal Year 2010.

September 2009: Parks and Recreation Department presents report to Council on Bonnie View property master planning process. Council cites several changes that occurred since last plan:

- Rollins Road constructed at lower than anticipated elevation.
- Cunningham Road removed from City's road master plan.
- Input from PW/Columbia Public School District on ways to alleviate traffic and/or create "walking school bus" around Fairview Elementary.
- Desire to plan Bonnie View, Fairview, and with permission, property owned by Audubon.
- Council instructs department to start master planning process anew.

October 7, 2009: Parks and Recreation Department conducts first public hearing on the Bonnie View Master Plan.

Following the initial October 7, 2009 meeting, park planners conducted 13 more public and special interest group meetings. These meetings included organizations and clubs such as the Columbia Audubon Society, PedNet, Fairview Community of Christ Church, Fairview Elem School (and related PTA), Columbia Soccer Club, Diamond Council, Columbia Youth Football League, Lakeshore Estates Neighborhood Association, and the Sierra Club. The department also met with users of the Fairview garden plots and tennis courts. Park planners also worked with representatives from the Missouri Department of Conservation, Columbia Public Works and the Water & Light Department. Following these meetings staff prepared a draft master plan for public review.

On January 26, 2011, staff presented to the public a draft master plan that included the Bonnie View, Fairview Park and the Audubon Society properties. The plan received positive reviews and specific planning related comments are noted in Attachment C.

During this meeting, public discussion brought up two issues regarding the management of the Bonnie View property: bikes and dogs. Park planners were asked whether the decision to allow dogs on the property or if bikes were allowed on the nature trails had been determined. These questions were referred to the Parks & Recreation Commission and public comment was solicited as part of the Commission's February 17, 2011 public hearing. Commissioners voted to recommend restricting all bikes to the hard surface trails in order to protect the natural surface trails from damage caused by bike use during non-ideal conditions. The most controversial issue was the question on whether to allow dogs on the property. Dogs are currently allowed in all parks while on a four foot leash and in some nature areas (Grindstone, Garth and Bear Creek-Cosmo Park) dogs are allowed off-leash. The Commissioners considered the advantages that prohibiting dogs provides including, but not limited to, protecting the flora and fauna of a nature area; protecting the water quality by reducing the amount of dog feces that may enter through storm water runoff; and providing an alternative park for those that are uncomfortable around

dogs, the Commissioners voted to recommend prohibiting dogs on the Bonnie View property. The Commissioners recognized that enforcement may be difficult and as public comment noted, felt that peer pressure will provide enforcement assistance.

At their June 7, 2010 meeting, City Council approved the name “Bonnie View Park.” However, considering the final natural theme of the park, staff is recommending that the official name of the property be renamed to “Bonnie View Nature Area.” This fits within the current names of similar properties within the park system and still recognizes the historic reference of the Bonnie View farm.

The work will be bid through the City’s Purchasing Department and be completed with a combination of contract and force account labor. Staff estimates that contract work will be used for the construction of the parking lot, hard surface trails, and restroom. Park staff will be used for the shelter construction, landscaping and native plant/flower restoration. Work is scheduled to begin during the 2011 construction season. Total phase I project cost is estimated at \$300,000 and is funded by the 2005 Park Sales Tax.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The \$300,000 capital project is identified in the City’s FY-2010 budget and funded by the 2005 Park Sales Tax. The Parks & Recreation Department will be responsible for the maintenance of the Bonnie View Nature Area and the Columbia Audubon Society will be responsible for maintenance on their property. Fairview Park improvements are scheduled for FY-2014 and are not included as part of this report. The annual operating expenses for the Bonnie View Nature Area will be in the \$5,000-\$10,000 per year. It is likely that Bonnie View will be under construction for most of the 2011 year so the department will be able to evaluate detailed operating costs based on the actual construction for the FY-12 or FY-13 budget. The \$5,000-\$10,000 estimate may be offset somewhat with the use of organized volunteer organizations. At this time, the department is not requesting any permanent employees based on the addition of this park, but as other parks are added or developed, the conversion of temporary salaries to permanent may be requested. If the department’s operations budget does not increase, additional measures such as deferred maintenance, reduced levels of care, or other cost saving measures may need to be implemented to meet ongoing maintenance needs of the park system.

VISION IMPACT:

12.1 Goal: A variety of attractive, well-maintained parks throughout Columbia-including neighborhood parks, regional parks, nature parks, and urban parks-will ensure all residents have access to a full range of outdoor and indoor recreational opportunities.

12.3 Goal: An extensive network of greenways will play a significant role in providing transportation options, protecting wildlife corridors, watersheds and floodplains, and increasing public access to natural open spaces.

Implementation task #40: Fund and complete capital improvement program projects (parks).
Secondary Implementation task #42: Evaluate use of city land for community gardens, develop policies and procedures for the same.

SUGGESTED COUNCIL ACTIONS:

If the Council concurs that the project should proceed, the resolution calling for the public hearing should be approved, and following the public hearing, the ordinance approving the master plan, authorizing phase I of construction, and approving the renaming of the site as a nature area should be adopted. In addition, if the Council concurs with the P&R Commission recommendations regarding the two management issues of prohibiting dogs and restricting bikes to the hard surface trails, a motion directing staff to implement such use regulations would be appropriate.

Source: Parks and Recreation Commission

FISCAL and VISION NOTES:

Agenda Item No. _____

| | |
|---|---|
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| 12.2, 12.3, 12.4 | Secondary Vision, Strategy and/or Goal Item# |
| | FY10/FY11 Implementation Task# |

TO: City Council
FROM: City Manager and Staff
DATE: February 25, 2011
RE: Recommendation on Bonnie View Master Plan

SUMMARY:

At their February 17, 2011 meeting, the Parks and Recreation Commission had a public hearing on the proposed master plan for Bonnie View Park. A recommendation on the proposed project is hereby submitted to the Council.

DISCUSSION:

The Commission heard a staff presentation from Director Mike Hood before inviting the public to comment on the proposed Master Plan. Nine residents made comment before the Commission. A copy of the draft minutes from the public hearing, including public comment and Commission discussion, is attached to this memo

Pauls made a motion, seconded by Davis, that the Commission recommends approval of the Bonnie View Park Master Plan and recommends the adoption of policies of allowing bicycles on hard-surface trails only and prohibiting dogs in the park.

Voting in favor of the motion: Blevins, Davis, Kloeppel, Pauls, Devine, Donaldson, Hutton
Motion passed 7-0.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact is anticipated as a result of this report.

VISION IMPACT:

This proposed master plan helps meet vision goals 12.1, 12.2, 12.3 and 12.4 which identify the need to plan and develop a variety of well-maintained parks, exciting and diverse recreation facilities and an extensive network of greenways and trails.

SUGGESTED COUNCIL ACTIONS:

Consider the recommendation of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

DRAFT

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Thursday, February 17, 2011, 7 p.m.
ARC, 1701 W. Ash

MINUTES

Commission Present: Marin Blevins, Sue Davis, Dan Devine, Terry Kloeppel, Bill Pauls, Meredith Donaldson, Linda Hutton

Staff Present: Mike Hood, Mike Griggs, Erika Coffman, Tammy Miller

Blevins called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

Agenda: The agenda was approved on a motion by Pauls, seconded by Devine.

Minutes: The January minutes were approved on a motion by Devine, seconded by Davis.

Monthly Report: The January monthly report was approved on a motion by Hutton, seconded by Pauls.

Public Hearing: Bonnie View Park / Scott's Branch Trail

Blevins asked Hood to make a staff presentation.

Hood shared the history of the planning process with the Commission and the public. The Russell family donated the 90-acre property in 1999. A draft master plan was originally developed in 2004 but was tabled by City Council. The master plan process began again in October 2009. Since then, Parks and Recreation has conducted 14 public input and special interest group meetings. The new proposed master plan includes Bonnie View Park, Fairview Park and Scott's Branch Trail.

Hood showed maps of the master plan with access points to the park, as well as some photos of the property, as well as Fairview Park. The photos of Fairview showed the shelter which is in need of repair as well as other park features.

The Bonnie View master plan features include a natural open space north of Rollins Road. Parking would be located off of Rollins Road. That area of the park would feature a shelter and outdoor classroom, small restroom, natural playground, natural surface trails, prairie and native flower restoration areas surrounded by a concrete trail and interpretive signs, and connecting trails to Fairview Elementary. Some portions of the park, including some of the restoration areas, are unfunded at this time.

The Fairview Park plan includes a new shelter and playground, a parking lot by Fairview Elementary, and improvements to the garden plots with seasonal parking lot off of Plymouth. The park's natural areas will also be improved, such as the pond, and nature trail.

Scott's Branch Trail will be built in two phases; the first will connect Bonnie View to Scott Boulevard and the second will link Scott to the future Perche Creek Trail. In addition to the concrete trail at Bonnie View, the route will use sidewalks on Bray and Dublin to link to Scott. In addition to sharing the plans, Hood asked for input on two management issues that arose during the planning process for Bonnie View. Staff would like to know if the Commission and public feel that bicycles should be allowed, but limited only to hard surfaces to avoid damage to natural areas. Also, should dogs be allowed or prohibited at the park?

At the conclusion of the staff presentation, Blevins asked the public to come forward and offer their input, after stating name and address. He asked speakers to limit their comments to three minutes.

Daryl Dudley, 2401 Highland Drive, City Council – I think it's a great plan from the point of view from the City Council and as citizen of the area, I think it's a great plan. I have a couple of questions for you Mike. What's the output on the spring?

Hood: It's pretty low. I don't know it exactly. (referred to Bill Mees in audience).

Mees: It's very small. It's usually wet. Right now there is water running but it's usually a swampy area. It has not frozen this winter. An amount of creatures do use it.

Dudley then asked about the streams and wetlands in the area?

Hood: Those wetlands areas would be adjacent to but separate from the creek. They would be small ponds.

Griggs: It would be similar to what we have at Flat Branch, with those holding areas.

Dudley: Deer control, do you have any plans for that?

Hood: Not at this time. The primary technique we would consider from a management standpoint would be –and this would be up to Council—to open this area up as one of the hunting areas. We do open some of the other natural areas for hunting.

Dudley: Going back to your trail plan to connect to the Dublin Park area. With the Audubon area, I would personally like to see a trail that comes in from the south side and keep people off of Bray and Dublin and bring them right across the Audubon property and then down. If you walk along the side (referring to map) where the trees are, it would be beneficial to keep walkers and kids off the streets. I would also vote for no dogs at all, not even on a leash. We're trying to do this as a nature area.

Janet Godon, 3061 Maple Bluff – I'm here representing the PedNet Coalition and the Fairview PTA Wellness Committee. I first want to convey our sincere appreciation and admiration for Columbia Parks and Recreation and the planning process for Bonnie View Park. Opportunity to voice concerns and varying opinion about the park's development have been very generous. With one more opportunity tonight, I'd like to share our concern with the proposal on the table for Scott's Branch Trail and its lack of connectivity to Dublin Park with future plans to connect further south to Scott Boulevard and eventually to Columbia's backyard gem, the MKT. As we just heard in Mr. Hood's opening remarks, this was included in the 2002 Trails Master Plan. As you also just heard, it was abandoned in 2010. According to the National Highway Safety Administration, a majority of bicycle accidents happen at intersections and residential driveways. The proposal that currently stands will make it necessary for children to cross 33 driveways and five intersections when riding from Weaver and Bray to Dublin Park. That distance is approximately less than one mile. If parents were to allow their children to bike from Bonnie View Park to the intersection of Chapel Hill and Scott Boulevard, they would also cross exactly 33 driveways approximately five to six intersections. Safe routes to school movements—those that encourage kids to walk or bike to school—are very strong across the nation. And Columbia is a leader in this movement. Trail connectivity as it was originally planned and agreed upon in 2002 opens up transportation and recreation to thousands of families living in southwest Columbia with children who attend Fairview and Paxton Keeley Elementary schools and also Smithton Middle School. Our hope is that all property owners continue to be collaborative in meeting the needs and requests of potential parks and trail users of all ages. If agreed, a young generation of X-BOX crazed youth might just stop and smell the flora and fauna along the way.

Howard Hinkle, 405 Edgewood – I'm currently the president of the Columbia Audubon Society. As did the previous speaker, I want to begin my remarks by complimenting the Parks and Recreation staff, their dedication to this project, their willingness to meet with and especially to listen to all the voices of these so-called interested parties. Reading the Bonnie View web site or

witnessing it this evening, we can see how diverse and at times conflicting that people's interests have been over the past couple of years. And this makes me appreciate even more how lucky Columbia is to have this department getting the plan to this stage is certainly a praise-worthy achievement. Columbia Audubon met twice last night. At the Board of Directors meeting, we voted unanimously 10-0 to strongly endorse this revised plan for the Bonnie View-Fairview area. We'd like to have them as neighbors. Then at the subsequent general membership meeting, we voted 24-0 to endorse the plan. Here's why. Columbia Audubon has at the center of its mission a responsibility to care for and to help restore the natural habitat and be stewards, not just of the habitat but of the wildlife it supports. We see in this plan a great opportunity to preserve and restore a very high-quality wildlife habitat in an urban area. Many of you are no doubt familiar with the Springfield Nature Conservation Area, a wonderful nature area amidst a large urban population. The Springfield Nature Area is approximately 85 plus acres. The current Bonnie View-Fairview-Audubon Nature Sanctuary would be well over 100 acres. We have something pretty special. Columbia Audubon believes the implementation of this plan and subsequent development of its stages will give the City of Columbia an absolute gem of a park for the ages—and I mean ages in the sense of generations into the future but also the variety of ages of people who will be using this park. Thank you.

Bill Mees, 2746 Willowbark Court – I am a Columbia Audubon Society member and I'm helping to coordinate development of the Columbia Audubon Nature Sanctuary, your 22-acre neighbor. Since last spring, we have cleared a hiking trail, we've added four park benches along the trail and two bridges. There is also a new large sign at our front gate. These enhancements have resulted in an exponential increase in the use of this property. Not just by Audubon members, but by the public at large. I have talked to many of these people as I have been there hiking the trail and birding, and one response from these people is unanimous. They all support the development of the nature trail. Based upon this experience, I would assure you that if you build it, they will come. We want to support the plan before you because it is very closely aligned with the plan that we have for our property. As Howard indicated, what that means to Columbia is that effectively, you don't have a 90-acre park in Bonnie View. You have a 110-acre park, us plus you. That is how closely these two are aligned. And if you're familiar with the Runge Conservation Nature Center in Jefferson City, where so many kids go for field trips, that park is 97 acres. If you add Fairview to this, you're talking even more. As Howard said, we have a gem here. The interest in and need for an education, nature-oriented park has been demonstrated by the response to Audubon's Nature Sanctuary. It will be a destination for field trips, not just for people in Columbia but from surrounding communities. It will also be the recipient of volunteers donating their expertise. Here in Columbia, we have the Columbia Audubon Society, a Native Plant Society, Master Naturalists, and just plain citizens of Columbia that are potential volunteers. Only two weeks ago, we were approached by a family that wants to start a Stream Team to clean up and monitor Scott's Branch that goes through Bonnie View and us. That's a volunteer. I would like to say that when you have volunteers, you are making every public dollar go a lot farther. I would like to make a couple of suggestions. One is there needs to be at Bonnie View, an all-weather Nature Center building for meetings and education. That is the kind of place that this is going to be. I would also say that the size and responsibilities of the park department warrant the addition of a trained naturalist.

In terms of dogs, we do allow dogs on-leash. You mentioned it would be difficult to enforce no dogs. I would submit to you it is more difficult to enforce dog on leash. What I am finding on our property, and I am out there a lot, is that as soon as people see you with their dog, they put them on leash. Otherwise, they're off-leash and I don't care what the sign says. I think the concern of the people is that they're on-leash because we don't want their dogs biting people. Our concern is not that dogs are going to bite people, it's just that they are going to chase the birds and the rabbits and the deer and quail. It's really easier to keep them out completely than it is to do a halfway measure.

Hutton asked if Mees was for it or against?

Mees said they would be against dogs. They have tried dogs on leash but it isn't working.

Mees: In conclusion, I would want to reiterate Columbia Audubon Society's support for the plan that is before you tonight. I sincerely--we've had our differences with Parks and Recreation—but I sincerely compliment Parks and Recreation for their recognition of the need in our community for a park like this.

Devine asked about first two speakers referring to the trail on the south edge, as opposed to going through the Audubon property.

Mees: It's interesting you mention that because initially—Mike would corroborate—there was a 10-foot concrete trail going through the Audubon property and extending down to Dublin. And the concession was offered that it could be stained a natural color. We are absolutely opposed to a concrete trail through our property. Our concern is that even an 8-foot wide concrete trail results in a lot of traffic. You're talking bikers, hikers and dog walkers. That's incompatible with a nature sanctuary. It just is. And so I understand the desire for that sort of thing but we just oppose that. We very much appreciate the Parks and Recreation Department acquiescing on that point.

Donaldson asked about bicycles on hard trails?

Mees: We've had one bicyclist out on our property already. If the ground is moist at all, they are a disaster on a dirt trail. They cause erosion. Hard surface would be our preference. I suspect we will be having a restriction of bicycles on our property, regardless of what you all do. It's a real problem in terms of erosion and in terms of upkeep, so now you're talking staff for Parks and Recreation and for us, volunteer hours.

Harold Anderson, 2900 Northland – I am an Audubon Club member. I want to congratulate the Commission on having the forethought to do some of the things we talked about. Number one, getting rid of Cunningham and moving the trail over to Weaver where it runs along the east side of the project. That is a nice change to move the trail from one place to another. I also look forward to the reforestation to the southeast corner. This will result in more birds in the area. So that is all I have to say, thank you.

Marge Meredith, 203 Orleans Court – As I watched your presentation Mr. Hood, I was so impressed with all the work that has gone into this and all the thought. I do want to say we owe everyone who had a hand in it. I think we all agree upon the need for fields and areas for play and sports and athletics. However, we also need the woods, open landscape and natural, undisturbed areas. And therefore I think we need to support this master plan at this time. And I have a little different approach. I'm also an Audubon member and as the previous speakers have mentioned a lot of the specifics. I think we can learn from some writers of the past. Many of us are suffering from what one author calls nature deficit disorder. Because you are evolved to spend time in nature and when you can't get enough of it, we get tense, stressed and depressed. Henry David Thoreau wrote, "I go and come with a strange liberty in nature. As I walk along I see nothing special to attract me. All the elements are unusually congenial to me." And Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Adopt the pace of nature. Her secret is patience." And William Wordsworth wrote so much about nature and a few of his words as he looked out over the countryside and landscape near Tintern Abbey: "And I have felt a presence, a sense sublime of something far more deeply interfused with the light of setting sun, blue sky and living air." Those are all the quotes.

As far as dogs are concerned, after hearing different comments, I think we should prohibit them from natural areas and, bikes, I think only on hard surfaces. I haven't thought about this a lot, but that's what I'm thinking now. To quote Mr. Hinkel who spoke earlier, we have something very special here. Thank you.

Hank Ottinger, 511 Westwood – Up until last month, I was chairman of the Sierra Club so I think I can still speak for them. But, first, as a private citizen, dogs—no. I haven't conferred with my constituents in the Sierra Club. However, possibly there is a way you can work dogs into the park, more along the Rollins connection there. I don't know, something to think about. Bicycles, hard trails only. That's as a private citizen. As a member of the Sierra Club, we're four-square behind this plan. We've been following it since its inception, actually since Mr. Russell made his bequest. If he's listening to us, thanks. It's just a wonderful treasure that we have the opportunity to develop here. And as I said, the Sierra Club is behind it and as others have said, I want to thank Mike, your staff, members of the Parks and Recreation Commission, for taking this process and working it through as openly as you have. It's really a delight to be able to come in as I have at several meetings and for everybody, to voice their concerns. So, thanks very much, we hope this gets through the Council and we can get started on it. Thank you.

Sharon Ford, 3205 Bray – My backyard backs up to the property. My husband and I have been very interested in watching what is going to happen with this. Two things I would ask you to keep in mind. Number one is there are some remnants of fence left out throughout the property that makes it very difficult to move through it. You have to go through barbed wire to get from area to the next. Those of us who like to hike and roam around out there now—even though it's undeveloped—with our grandchildren, it's very unsafe. So if that could be something that could be thought about and those fences moved now, that would be wonderful so that we could enjoy it while you're working. The other thing is there is a run-off drainage that comes off of this property into our backyard. There is a little shallow space for it to run off. Most of the time, it is no problem. But when we get a heavy rain, we have had water up into our garage. And it's a big concern to us what might be happening to that run-off if you start working and putting a trail in there. If it's not banked well, if you don't plan for what's going to happen in my backyard, I might not be very happy.

Hood: Where are you located?

Ford: 3205 Bray.

Hood asked Ford to show her location on the overhead map.

Ford: I'm closer to Longwell.

Griggs: We'll take a look. Now that we have your address, we'll look at that.

Ford: There is a storm drain there but I think it really needs some work on it. It is a huge, huge concern for us. And I would prefer not to have dogs in that area. There are several people in the neighborhood who do have dogs. We like the peace and quiet and the birds. When there are strange dogs in the neighborhood, the dogs who live there bark. It really takes away from the wonderfulness we have of this nature preserve in our backyard. Bicycles, I think on hard surfaces because if we have a really nice place for people to come and visit, we want to make sure it stays nice in all kinds of weather. There are some of us who really like to take a walk in the rain still. If we can do that without tearing up the area, that would be great. Thank you very much.

Hutton: Do you think there is a possibility that dogs in the neighborhood would want to go there?

Ford: If you drive down Bray, the yards that back up there, I think that our house is the only one that does not have a fence. So they keep their dogs and kids in the fence.

David Bedan, 2001 Chapel Wood - My wife and I spend a lot of time walking the trails in Columbia's parks. It's one of the reasons we moved here in fact because of the quality of the parks and trails. We are primarily interested in bicycling and enjoying nature. On this piece of property, these two come into conflict. So I would suggest that...I support the staff's plan. I thank them for their hard work on it. I think you should keep the bicycles to the hard paved path. If you have bikes on these dirt trails, which would intersect with the Audubon property, you are

going to have lots of problems with erosion and conflicts with other users. You can't really bird on a trail with people riding bikes. You're standing here like this looking up in the trees and bicycles are coming both ways. Everyone is unhappy. Bicyclists are unhappy, birders are unhappy. So we don't bird on the MKT Trail. We go over into the Forum Nature Area. Well, it's called a nature area but it's not really a nature area because of the dogs. I would say about one out of every three dogs is off leash. Most people know that they are supposed to be on-leash. They are brazenly ignoring it. I've talked to people and they say oh yes I know, then they put the leash on the dog. So it's almost impossible to enforce. Possibly you can keep the dogs with the bikes on hard-paved trails. It's really incompatible with Bonnie View and the Audubon Nature Sanctuary because whether the dogs are on-leash or off-leash, just their scent and sounds...I've seen dogs over at Forum Nature Area chasing waterfowl, deer, way off-leash, totally out of control. I think most dog owners behave properly. It's that maybe 25 or 30 percent that take their dogs off leash and ruin it for everybody. I don't see how you can enforce on-leash. I hope the Audubon Society also bans dogs on their property. And the concrete trail...a lot of us who were aware of the original route going through the Audubon property, that would totally change the character of that property. I was very much opposed to that. So I thank the parks staff for all the thought that's gone into this and hope it goes forward.

Blevins asked Audubon members about dogs on leashes?

Mees: Yes, we have.

Blevins: Is there any discussion about changing that?

Mees: Yes, there has been discussion. Basically, we had two thoughts. We wanted to make the place user-friendly and available to the public. We know some people have dogs. There was a strong contingent that wanted no dogs. Others said dogs on-leash so we thought we'd try dogs on-leash to see what would happen. If people would keep their dogs on leash, could we live with that? Quite frankly, people don't keep their dogs on a leash. When he (Bedan) said 30 percent, I think he's being kind. People are out walking their dogs and we understand. Particularly since the land has been left fallow for so long, a lot of people have just let their dogs run out there. Now that there is a rule, that makes it even more difficult. But it would be easier if did not have any dogs at all, because anyone there, you could say you are in violation.

Blevins asked for the next speaker. There were none. He thanked everyone for their comments and opened the floor for Commission discussion.

Kloeppel: I think personally there are plenty of other places where people take their dogs and I see an issue here. That part of it, I'm definitely in favor of. Also, I agree with the speakers on the bikes on hard surfaces. I think there is no need to allow bikes there.

The one issue tonight is some folks not wanting the Scott's Branch Trail to go along the edge of the neighborhood. They want it to go through the Audubon property. For clarification, the Audubon property is privately owned and as far as the City asking them to do something with their property, that would have to be approved by Audubon or how is that relationship?

Hood: To build a trail on non City-owned property, we have to have the right. If the trail was proposed to cross Audubon and link into Dublin Park, we would have to acquire a right-of-way or an easement from the Audubon Society. The City's policy, if we were told to do that, we would attempt to negotiate that with the Audubon Society. And we would have it appraised and determine the value of the right of way taking. We would basically enter into acquisition negotiations. However, the Audubon Society has indicated to us very adamant opposition to that. I think it was staff's judgment it was highly unlikely and probably completely unlikely we could negotiate an easement across there. The City would have always have the option if it was determined that the trail needed to go across the property to implement the right of eminent domain or condemn the easement across their property. Obviously, as staff, we were in a pretty delicate situation because we try to avoid condemnation, we don't think that is the best solution.

I would tell you on almost all our other trail projects, including the MKT Trail, we did have to use right of eminent domain to get the entire corridor. When you are crossing multiple properties in a linear project, whether it's a trail, a street, an electric line, a sewer line, you have got to get from Point A to B, and if someone is not willing to grant an easement, the option the City has is condemnation.

We were looking for a possible solution to avoid that and we're proposing this plan. I think the trail proponents, and the City staff initially favored running the trail this way (across Audubon) for the very reasons that were cited tonight, because of crossing the right-of-ways. That is not the safest route for a trail. The decision has to be do you follow the sidewalk for that portion of the trail or do you cross the Audubon?

Kloeppel: I wasn't actually sure what the relationship was there.

Pauls: Is there any possibility at all of going around on the west side? (showing it on map)

Hood: That property is being developed as a subdivision, it was platted and this property is still owned by the Russell family. We haven't discussed that option, I don't know that we thought it was likely.

Pauls: Sometimes a developer will donate less valuable property that may be in a floodplain...I thought this would be avoiding a conflict.

Hood: Most of this is out of the floodplain. It is very developable.

Donaldson: I support this. As everyone said, I am very pleased with the plan and particularly am interested in the education aspects. I'm a dog owner, my dog and I enjoy many parks on leash and we enjoy Twin Lakes, but I also work as a volunteer at Rock Bridge State Park and I will tell you that is a problem there. Dogs are very rarely on leash, even though that's a rule. So I think no dogs, and I think bicycles on hard surfaces make all the sense in the world.

I would defer that access trail to a later time, as we don't have funds for it right now anyway. I think those issues could be discussed in the future. I don't see a change in the plan to address that issue of avoiding Bray at this point. I think we may explore that in the future.

Hutton: When you say Bray, isn't that similar to an option this Commission took when they—in the Bluffdale neighborhood in the Sixth Ward instead of going through property using the sidewalk? There is precedent is what I'm trying to say for using a street or sidewalk.

Donaldson: The issue there was that people would access that trail. I know some of the neighbors there bicycle through, but that is a much more confined area.

Hutton: But there is a precedent. To me, the Audubon Society does not want us to use their property. This would be like getting off on a bad foot with a neighbor. You should try to get along with each other.

A couple of things, what about parking lot lights?

Hood: We believe there should be at least minimal lighting from a safety standpoint. I don't think you want a parking lot in that neighborhood that is totally unlit at night. That may invite activities that are totally undesirable. I think we would look at low cut-off, low level, minimal lighting from a safety standpoint.

Hutton: The other thing I want to say, and I'm probably the only member on the Commission to say this....You're right, people do not take care of their dogs. If they did, they would probably spay them. However, I do think with 100 acres, we could find an area maybe in the northern part for a dog area. We could also include signage in the rest of the park saying absolutely no dogs. And of course, they will ignore that. But I really do think that to say that well they can take them somewhere else...100 acres and you're saying not in my backyard. The other thing I want to say, it's just incredible how hard the staff worked with all the public meetings. But as a former civics teacher, I think this is just incredible that good citizens came out, stepped up to the plate, worked with their government and came to this agreement. Thanks to all of you for your input. It's just awesome.

Blevins: As the Fourth Ward representative, I've attended most of the meetings that we've had and the notes I have, and I reviewed them before I came here...far and away, the consensus was hard-surface only for bikes and no dogs. I agree with you Linda, perhaps in that north area, there could perhaps be an area for dogs.

Donaldson: I'm attracted to the idea of a park without dogs for people who for some reason or another don't want them. I hadn't really thought about that. I bet if we checked parks and recreation literature, this could be kind of innovative.

Pauls: I like that too Meredith, because I think if you encourage dogs in any way, the way the plan is set up, they're going to have to park in that parking lot south of Rollins and take their dogs across the park up there (referring to map). I would be totally against dogs anywhere. I don't think Runge allows dogs anywhere.

This to me is our stereotypical chance to provide a nature area, a pure nature area for kids. Dogs are just not compatible with that flora you are talking about. I was a natural resources soil scientist and they are just not. I like dogs, I've had mine run along on the Bear Creek Trail. As a Park Patrol member, there is no way in the world to separate what you should do, what people want to do and what will be done. In this particular area, when the City has the chance to provide a pure nature area, I would be against dogs and I like them. They're great when they follow the rules, but unfortunately it's not the dogs' faults, it's their owners who don't follow the rules.

Donaldson: This is a nature area surrounded by residences. I see it as being similar to Grindstone, and there is an off leash area there. How big is Grindstone?

Hood: Grindstone is almost 200 acres.

Donaldson: There are people who objected to having dogs run free in that park. So we have 200 acres for them.

Hood: Except for on the trails where dogs are supposed to be on-leash, they are off.

Pauls: We have that same thing on Rhett's Run on the north side of Cosmo that creates...it's a great place for a gravel trail but that creates conflicts constantly. I know Rosanna is dealing with those situations and I read in the reports where she is finally starting to issue citations. She has tried for years to give warnings, but there are so many repeat offenders. I think the best way to avoid that in this area is just to not allow them.

Donaldson: Speaking of another issue...I would like in the educational area, it originally had an amphitheater but that is not how we teach today. I would like to look at that and not just put in a park shelter but be informed and I think we discussed this, to look at the use of that area as an educational purpose and constantly tweak the design to best meet those needs. For instance, the parking lot looks like it really needs to be designed to allow a bus to turn around. I think looking at it with that in mind, we can learn from other communities and other naturalists how it would all work.

Devine: I will agree on many of the same points everyone else has made. Keeping bikes on hard paths only and the dog issue—yes, I think this is our opportunity to create a special place so they should be kept out. But I think we've also heard--and we hear this a lot--there is just a really big need for dogs off the leash. Any opportunity we have, and I know that we've done this, but we need to continue to keep looking for places. We keep hearing how dogs are off-leash. That is a definite need. Maybe it's not in that north part, maybe it does cause problems as to how it's separated, but I think as a parks department, we need to keep looking for areas we can provide that.

I have that same concern about Scott's Branch Trail, that it's not the safest route with crossing a lot of driveways and intersections. So I think maybe we can just keep looking for that alternate path. I don't see one right now but I would like us to keep looking to see if there is another way to solve that problem. Right now, I'm in support of the plan the way it is.

Blevins: Our charge is to make a recommendation to the Council. Any additional discussion? If not, I'll entertain a motion.

Pauls made a motion, seconded by Davis, that the Commission recommends approval of the Bonnie View Park Master Plan and recommends the adoption of policies of allowing bicycles on hard-surface trails only and prohibiting dogs in the park.

Motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

Blevins then asked for a separate motion on Scott's Branch Trail.

Kloeppel asked for the type of motion needed.

Hood said it would be whether the Commission recommended passage of the plan or changes.

Kloeppel made a motion, seconded by Devine, that the Commission recommend approval of the plan for Scott's Branch Trail with the caveat that staff consider other alternatives at some point for the trail route along Bray.

Blevins asked Hood how long that area of the trail is?

Hood estimated it was close to one-quarter of a mile.

Hutton asked about the size of sidewalks?

Hood said they were about four feet. He pointed out some areas on the map around Dublin Park that show how difficult it would be to take any other alternate route between Dublin and Bonnie View.

The Commission discussed some of those areas. Hood pointed out one area on the map, where staff did negotiate with the property owner to acquire easements. This purchase was made because the City had to purchase easements for the widening of Scott Boulevard and the property owner requested that the City negotiate all easements at one time. This was accomplished.

Pauls asked about the trail on the west side of Scott where it crosses on the culvert, then run parallel to Scott to the MKT?

Hood answered yes, an 8-foot wide pedway is being built south down Scott as the road is being widened. The pedway along Chapel Hill is already built. It's either 6 or 8 feet wide.

Donaldson asked about Gillespie Bridge Road, where the access was?

Hood pointed out on the map how the route would go along to Perche Creek Trail and discussed how the bridge would be addressed at some point. Staff would work with Public Works when that happens.

Pauls commented it may be a possibility that bikes should not be encouraged to have easy access to the whole nature area. He said that he understood the PedNet Coalition would not be in agreement. But he said he did not want to battle the Audubon Society about the trail so this may be the best alternative.

Kloeppel commented that his motion was to recommend the trail but to leave open the option down the road to find a better solution than having to deal with the driveways along the trail route.

Blevins then asked for additional comments. He asked for the vote.

Motion passed 6-1, with Pauls casting the dissenting vote.