

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MINUTES

November 7, 2017

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in a Study Session at 5:30 p.m. in the Municipal Building Conference Room on the 7th day of November, 2017, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray, and the Norman Public Library at 225 North Webster 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT: Councilmembers Allison, Bierman, Clark, Hickman, Holman, Karjala, Wilson, Mayor Miller

ABSENT: Councilmember Castleberry

Item 1, being:

PRESENTATION BY MARK NANNY, CHAIRMAN OF THE GREENBELT COMMISSION, OF THE REVISED GREENBELT PRIORITY TRAIL PROPOSAL.

Ms. Susan Connors, Director of Planning and Community Development, said the Community Planning and Transportation Committee (CPTC) reviewed the Greenbelt Priority Trail (GPT) proposal in 2015, and a resolution accepting the proposal was reviewed by City Council on September 13, 2016, that included a public hearing. The intent was to add the GPT as an addendum to the Greenway and Park Master Plans. Based on comments and concerns during the public hearing, Council requested the Greenbelt Commission make revisions to the proposal due to concerns expressed from property owners along the proposed Little River Trail. The Greenbelt Commission revised the proposed GPT in response to those concerns, which was presented to the CPTC on October 26, 2017.

Mr. Nanny said the purpose of the Greenbelt Commission is to provide a conceptual plan for the development of essential greenbelt trails that will establish the foundation for a more extensive trail system throughout urban and rural Norman. The Greenbelt Commission identified trails that will form multiple distance loops throughout Norman connecting important points of interest such as neighborhoods; parks; greenways; schools; natural features; and shopping areas. The proposed trails will integrate with current transportation projects as well as the City's Comprehensive Plan and allow pedestrians to travel from Downtown Norman to Lake Thunderbird as well as to southeast Norman, south of Highway 9, and north along Tecumseh Road, which are both locations experiencing new residential growth. He said the priority trails will be a fundamental backbone network of trails that developers and other projects can build off of so eventually there will be more and more trails.

Mr. Nanny said the trail proposed to replace the Little River Trail will be the North Norman Tecumseh Trail that will begin at Ruby Grant Park forming an approximate six-mile loop roughly defined by 36th Avenue N.W., Indian Hills Road, Little River riverbed, and Tecumseh Road. The trail will also extend eastward along Tecumseh Road all the way to the northwest corner of Lake Thunderbird State Park where it connects with the Scissortail Trail that travels southeast to Dave Blue Creek towards the west shore of Lake Thunderbird. He summarized other trails as South Legacy Trail that will connect with Legacy Trail at its southern terminus just southeast of Downtown Norman continuing southward linking the Duck Pond and apartments along Classen Boulevard with south OU campus and the southeast area of Norman which then connects to Scissortail Trail. The

East Norman Trail is comprised of a network of trails through east rural Norman providing multiple connections between urban Norman and Lake Thunderbird as well as links between North Norman Tecumseh Trail and Scissortail Trail. The West Lindsey Extension Trail/36th Avenue S.W. Trail connects west Lindsey Street and 36th Avenue S.W. providing a link between west Norman and Lindsey Street. The West Lindsey Extension Trail will connect with the future Canadian River Park, a NORMAN FORWARD Project.

Councilmember Hickman asked what was envisioned for the trail that seems to run along the railroad tracks and Mr. Nanny said that trail will actually run along Classen Boulevard to Lindsey Street through neighborhood areas linking Brandt Park (OU Duck Pond), apartments, and high density developments along Classen Boulevard with OU south campus. He said there is not enough space to create a trail along the railroad tracks plus there are safety issues in doing that.

Councilmember Wilson said Saxon Park trails are not depicted on the map and asked if priority trails will connect with Saxon Park and Mr. Nanny said yes, on the north side of 36th Avenue. Councilmember Wilson said she appreciated the Greenbelt Commission's hard work on revising the priority trails.

Councilmember Wilson asked Mr. Nanny to clarify that priority trails are not currently funded and there are currently no plans for eminent domain situations and Mr. Nanny said that is correct.

Councilmember Wilson said the portion of trail along East State Highway 9 is already planned and funded and asked if there is a timeline for that. Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works, said construction of the section between 24th Avenue and 36th Avenue will begin any day.

Councilmember Allison asked if the bicycle lanes along the 36th Avenue Project going north will stop at Ruby Grant Park and Mr. O'Leary said yes, but there will be sidewalks on both sides of the road up to Indian Hills Road; however, Legacy Park's ten foot path will end at Ruby Grant Park. Councilmember Allison asked if enough money and space is available, could the sidewalks be extended to Indian Hills Road and Mr. O'Leary said possibly, but the City has not acquired all of the right-of-way needed. Mr. O'Leary said it would be easy to extend the sidewalk from Franklin Road to Indian Hills Road if that is Council's desire. Councilmember Allison asked if that project is scheduled to begin in 2019, and Mr. O'Leary said yes and if Council wants to extend the sidewalk, the City needs to start acquiring any additional easements/right-of-way as soon as possible. Councilmembers concurred they wanted to extend the sidewalk on both sides on Indian Hills Road.

Councilmember Holman asked if bicycle lanes on 36th Avenue N.W. end at Franklin Road and Mr. O'Leary said no, there will be on-street bicycle lanes all the way to Indian Hills Road, but Legacy Trail will end at Ruby Grant Park.

Councilmember Holman said an earlier trail version had Legacy Trail extending south to Jenkins Avenue and Mr. Nanny said that was the original plan, but some type of bridge structure would be needed so that was taken out of the plans. Mr. Nanny said the current proposal for priority trails is simply a way to get the trail system started, but an extension to Jenkins Avenue could be considered in the future. Mr. Nanny said the priority trail proposal is supposed to spur additional trail ideas and that is happening.

Mayor Miller said the Scissortail Trail extends to 72nd Avenue S.E., and asked if the Greenbelt Commission has discussed extending that further to 84th Avenue S.E., and Mr. Nanny said that could be discussed, but that trail stops at 72nd Avenue S.E., because it was his understanding that 72nd Avenue S.E. was as far as ODOT was providing the multi-modal trail and Mr. O’Leary said ODOT is proposing to eventually extend the multi-modal all the way to the City limit.

Councilmember Clark said she loves the proposal and would like to see an Ironman Competition at Lake Thunderbird. Mr. Nanny agreed the trails could host interesting and exciting events ranging from athletic events to family events to nature events.

Councilmember Wilson said she receives a lot of concerned comments regarding bicyclists on the roads in Ward Five so it would be nice to have a multi-modal loop that could be utilized instead of the roadway. Mayor Miller agreed and said it is dangerous for bicyclists in east Norman to ride on two lane roads with a lot of traffic because most of those roads have no shoulders plus the roads are hilly making it difficult for vehicles to see around bicyclists in order to pass.

Mayor Miller said asked Staff to schedule the proposal on a Council agenda for consideration.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, “Green Priority Trail Proposal Revision,” dated November 2017

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

City Clerk

Mayor