

Oconee River Greenway Authority
MINUTES
26 August 2014

Members Present: Peter Boylan, Chairman; Richard Bentley, Bo Edwards, Sammy Hall, Eric Mosley, Marion Nelson

Others Present: Dr. Heather Langston, Executive Director
Dr. Jim Lidstone - GCSU
Duane Clayton – GMC
Chief James Hodnett - GMC
Major John Davis- Milledgeville MPD
Colin Moore - ORGF
Sherrill Jones – Recorder

Not Present: Bill Caldwell, Daniel Schay

Location: Conference Room – Sibley-Cone Library – Georgia Military College

I. Call to Order – At approximately 1:33 PM, Chairman Boylan called the 26 August 2014 meeting of the Oconee River Greenway Authority to order.

II. Approval of 6 May 2014 Minutes – Prior to the meeting, board members were provided minutes for the 6 May 2014 meeting to review. Mr. Edwards made a motion to accept the minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mosley and unanimously approved.

III. Treasurer’s Report – April & May

A. Report – Director Langston presented a printed treasurer’s report for 30 April 2014 as well as a report ending 26 August 2014, noting that due to an incorrect entry the April report was not approved during the May meeting. The April report now reflects a total checking/savings balance of \$38,395.97 and a total liabilities & equity balance of \$3,274,797.19. The report ending 26 August 2014 reflects a total checking/savings balance of \$62,251.72 which does not reflect the most recent GDOT pay request, and a total liabilities & equity balance of \$3,485,625.19. Mr. Nelson made a motion to accept both reports. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hall and unanimously approved.

IV. Chairman’s Report – Chairman Boylan reported that Dr. Pillay has submitted his resignation from the Board; consequently a new board member will need to be identified. He asked board members to submit names for consideration and suggested that someone from GCSU be named. Mr. Nelson and Mr. Edwards recommended Dr. Jim Lidstone. Chairman Boylan indicated he will contact Dr. Lidstone. Director Langston will also submit names for consideration.

V. Old Business

A. Phase II Construction Status – Director Langston reported that she has been working to get Phillips Brothers to close out the project; however, there are still several incomplete items on the second punch list. Of major concern is the western most safety plate on the Tanyard Creek Bridge. It has warped and bolts have pulled away. Jim Hardin with WAA determined it was not installed correctly. Director Langston has submitted a request to correct

the installation and has been assured it is okay to retain funds until the problems are corrected. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has directed GDOT to assist Director Langston in working with Phillips Brothers to resolve these issues as well as several record keeping reports that are required from PBC. Due to numerous other problems Director Langston has been encouraged not to do lump sum bidding in the future.

There is also concern about the bank stabilization at overlook #4, for which Phillips Brothers may be responsible in that they should have advised against the location change which was made based on the recommendation of ORGA board members. The recommended solution is the installation of a revetment.

B. Operating Budget Request –

1. City – Chairman Boylan expressed concern that the city declined to support a budget increase of \$9,000 even though the size of the Greenway has doubled. He pointed out that the city has invested \$40,000,000 on a \$20,000,000 budget. \$6,000,000 of the investment is from the 2000 SPLOST, which was designated for capital projects, but has instead been invested. Even though SPLOST funds cannot be used for operational expenses, he suggested that the interest accrued from SPLOST could be. Mayor Bentley pledged to ask the city to review the budget and consider an amendment. Director Langston asked that the city council be informed that the park is now double in size and that last year’s budget was inadequate.

2. County – Director Langston reported it is now time to turn in a budget request to the county. Last year the county did not increase ORGA’s budget; therefore, she asked for guidance in communicating to the county that the Greenway is much more than a recreation park. Chairman Boylan noted that the Greenway not only provides a recreational area for the community, but it also attracts visitors and is an asset to the community. He once again cautioned moving ahead with Phase III without a maintenance agreement. Mr. Edwards spoke to deeding Greenway property to the city/county. Mr. Hall indicated a need to do a better job of showing a return on the investment. Director Langston stated that a study is needed; however, this would be an additional operating expense. The Foundation (ORGF) invested in counters and has collected data, however, it has not been analyzed.

Chairman Boylan and Director Langston will work to ascertain how to obtain an economic analysis of the benefits of the Greenway and to address the issue of the city/county taking ownership of some of the property. At this point ORGA leases 90% of the Phase I property from by GMC. All of the Fishing Creek Trail is leased from GMC.

C. Security

1. Closure of Park Due to Flooding – Chairman Boylan reported that ORGA currently calls the city’s Public Works Department when the Greenway needs to be closed; however, recently this procedure has been questioned in that the Greenway is not city property. City Police Chief Swicord has indicated a willingness to close the park; however, he is concerned about liability and is checking with the City Attorney on the issue.

2. City Police Jurisdiction – During a recent incident of vandalism (teenage miscreants drove a pick-up truck around a bollard and mauled a grassy area) at the Greenway, Director Langston requested that city police document the vandalism by way of an incident report. This led to the realization that city police cannot enforce park rules as the park is not owned by the city. Major Davis explained that city police can make arrests only if there is a violation of the law or of a city ordinance. He further explained

the use of a trespass order. Chairman Boylan and Director Langston agreed to create a document that defines trespassing at the Greenway and Director Langston will write a letter authorizing the use of a pre-signed trespass form. The park is currently patrolled by both GMC security and city police. Mr. Hall suggested asking the sheriff's office to patrol as well.

3. Revise Park Regulations and Hours – Chairman Boylan asked board members to review park rules for Central City & Huley Parks and to be prepared to discuss rules for the Greenway at the next board meeting. Discussion regarding whether to close the Greenway from dusk to dawn ensued. Mr. Nelson noted there may be issues relative to federal aid used to build the boat ramp and he volunteered to investigate. Chairman Boylan noted there would be no power bill savings if lights were turned off. Both Mayor Bentley and Mr. Nelson voiced the opinion that closing access to the boat ramp would evoke a negative public response. The discussion concluded with Director Langston expressing the need to establish protocol for closing the park when gates are opened at the dam.

VI. New Business

A. Election of ORGA Board of Directors Officers – Chairman Boylan expressed concern about obtaining a quorum for meetings. He asked if the date/time/place needed to be changed. He also asked if the Bylaws and Georgia Code should be changed to allow the President of GMC to appoint a designee. Those present agreed this should be done. In the meantime, Mr. Edwards made a motion to allow the President of GMC to appoint a proxy until the law (GA Code 12-3-400) can be amended. Mr. Nelson seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Mr. Nelson volunteered to contact the DNR chairman to seek a DNR designee from the surrounding area, as it is extremely difficult for Mr. Schay to attend meetings.

Mr. Hall made a motion for the following offices:

Chairman - General Peter Boylan

Vice-Chairman – Mayor Richard Bentley

The motion was seconded by Mr. Nelson and unanimously approved.

A Secretary/Treasurer will need to be selected to replace Dr. Pillay.

B. Executive Director Review (next meeting: executive session) – Chairman Boylan provided an evaluation form to be used when reviewing the performance of the Executive Director during an executive session of the next regularly scheduled meeting of the board.

C. Phase III Options - Fishing Creek Bridge, Trail on Tomlin, Pave Existing FCCT – Director Langston noted that funds for Phase III are quickly becoming unavailable. If a concept report is submitted within a reasonable amount of time, this phase can move forward. She also noted that if she serves as the project consultant, her time can be considered as a match for TE-Grant funds.

Discussion regarding whether to move forward with Phase III included the following:

- Chairman Boylan noted that ORGA has secured funds to build Phase III, but has no money to maintain it.
- Mr. Edwards commented he'd "rather build the trail and then challenge the community to maintain it."
- Mr. Mosley pointed out the community indicated support for the Greenway by voting SPLOST funds designated for ORGA.

- Dr. Lidstone addressed the ‘adopt a trail’ program noting at some point some government agency must assume ownership.
- Chairman Boylan again noted there is no money to maintain this trail from Elbert Street to Central City Park.
- Mr. Hall suggested getting a commitment from civic groups (garden clubs, etc.) before building more trails.
- Director Langston again stated that the concept report is due now. She also pointed out that the city recently signed an MOU with Live Healthy Baldwin to conduct a topographical survey and to partner in the grant application for construction of the FCCT, which is included in the city’s complete streets blueprint.
- Chairman Boylan pointed out that GMC has assisted with the maintenance of the first two phases of the Greenway and he asked if GCSU might assist with maintenance of next phase.
- Mr. Mosley suggested that GCSU might be in a position to use “green fees” to fund trail maintenance.
- Mr. Nelson asked if there would be any advantage in asking that the ORGA board be on the Agenda for a City Council planning session to make a direct appeal for assistance with park maintenance.
- The discussion concluded with Chairman Boylan asking Dr. Lidstone to meet with GCSU President Dr. Steve Dorman to request that GCSU provide financial support for trail maintenance.

D. ORGF Update – Mr. Moore announced that the 2014 Oconee River Rat Race, organized by the Milledgeville Kiwanis Club, is scheduled for 20 September 2014. The race will commence from the Greenway Boat Landing and end at the Central State Hospital Landing. Dr. Matt Roessing, GCSU accounting professor and event coordinator, secured a \$2,500 grant from GCSU to support the Race.

VII. Schedule Next Meeting: September, 30 2014 – The next meeting of the Oconee River Greenway Authority is scheduled for 1:30 PM on 30 September 2014 in the Sibley Cone Library at Georgia Military College.

VIII. Adjournment - The meeting adjourned at 3:25 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sherrill Jones, Recorder