

MINUTES BANNER ELK BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN COMMITTEE 7/7/2011

The Chairman Ted Silver called the meeting to order. Present were, Doug Owens, Craig MacPhail Athletic Director of Lees-McRae; Luke Winger, coach of the Lees-McRae cycling team; Gene Ormond, Citizen Representative; and Shane Cooper, President and Founder of Defect and member of the Cycling Advisory Board of Lees-McRae.

The Chairman in his report discussed:

1. The pending creation of a 7 county Regional Bike Plan being formed by the High Country Council of Governments and the North Carolina Department of Transportation. The Avery County Commission has been requested to appoint Ted Silver and one of the Avery County members of the Steering Committee.

2. The Committee is exploring the placement of the white lines along 184 from 105 to Town and north on 194 to the Town limits following the planned milling and resurfacing. Hopefully we the lines can be moved inwards where road width allows.

3. The Committee is also exploring the painting of a share the road marker on the pavement, in an attempt to alert motorist to be aware of possible cyclists. This will require the cooperation of Sugar Mountain, the County and Banner Elk.

Doug Owen discussed:

1. Planning to approach the Blood, Sweat and Gears organizers to re-route thru Banner Elk after the 194 construction is completed.

Craig MacPhail and Luke Winger open up discussions about the team training and upcoming collegiate competition. The SE Collegiate Cycling Conference Championships will be held October 15-16, 2011. They recognized that this coincides with the Woolly Worm Festival and are making arrangements to reduce and conflicts.

There then followed an open discussion regarding sharing the road with cyclists and how to improve the safety for the team, some items discussed included:

On team time trial days or days with large team training rides,(a) temporary signs could be placed to alert motorists; (b) a team car could follow the rides and alert motorists that our national championship team is training; c. the team may have to allow passing motorists to go by when there is room.

Shane Cooper opened discussion on trying to get funding from the Safe Route to Schools program to our local area. He is currently working in the Hickory area on this project and offered to help in anyway he can to get the program funding in our area. He also expressed the importance that cycling and pedestrian facilities are to our area.

Gene Ormond, who has been instrumental in helping the Committee in the areas of pedestrian and Greenway issues discussed the current state of our Greenways. As a result of our discussions several points were made and as such are part of our minutes and form part of our requests for Action to the Town.

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(Continued)

1. **Greenway Upkeep**--Sections of the Greenway are in need of maintenance. Hopefully there will be a Third Annual Artists day along the Greenway. The section between the Trailhead in front of the Banner House Museum along the stream toward the Art Cellar is in need of immediate mowing. The overall goal for the Greenway should be for the trail to be wide enough to allow two hikers to walk abreast.

Greenway Signage--Since the Greenway is used by many out of town visitors, the signage along the trail should be more user friendly.

2. **Greenway Crossings**--At several points along the Greenway, it crosses well-traveled roadways. The most critical is the crossing between the red caboose and the stairway leading to the upper trail along State Highway 184. The state DOT should be approached about painting a crosswalk at the location.

Greenway-Lees McRae Walkways--The Banner Elk Pedestrian Plan should be modified to include the walkways winding through the Lees McRae campus, including the network of bridges overlooking the Mill Pond dam.

Greenway Expansion--For the Greenway to realize its full potential, efforts should be made to expand the trail toward the Best Western motel, the site of the new Banner Elk school, and the Sugar Mountain area. This would require the acquisition of property between the terminus of the present trail behind Hardin Jewelry building and the Bear Run development

REQUESTS FOR ACTION:

1. The Town should seek co-operation with the TDA and Lees-McRae for joint funding to place two signs, one upon entering Banner Elk on 184 and one upon entering Banner Elk on 194 (Elk River), showing that we are the home of the Lees-McRae national championship team and indicate the years. This has the combined effect of publicity and notice.
2. The Town should continue in its efforts to secure Greenway easements or right of way along 184 and behind the Arts Cellar.
3. The Town should explore the creation of signs at the trailheads showing the complete greenway, along with visitor sites, and indication of where someone is on the trail.
4. Authorize the Committee to contact Lees-McRae regarding cooperation and expansion of the greenways from Sugar Mountain, thru Banner Elk and Lees-McRae and up Beech Mountain.