

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ITEM NO. D(2)

AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT
MEETING DATE: February 14, 2006

TITLE: Appointments to the Morgan Creek Trail Planning Committee

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING	PUBLIC HEARING: YES ___NO__X__
ATTACHMENTS A. Resolution B. 4-20-04 Resolution C. Neighborhood Representative Applicants D. E-Mail from the Morgan Creek Valley Alliance	FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Dale McKeel – 918-7329

PURPOSE

On April 20, 2004, the Board of Aldermen authorized the creation of a Morgan Creek Trail Planning Committee. The Board is asked to appoint the neighborhood representatives and the Board of Aldermen representative(s) to serve on the committee.

INFORMATION

Attachment B provides the resolution adopted by the Board of Aldermen on April 20, 2004. The resolution lists members from a number of different groups and indicates that Town staff would recruit applicants for the committee. Appointments to the committee have been delayed while the Town awaited revised FEMA floodplain information.

Neighborhood Representatives

Attachment C consists of eight applications from citizens who have applied to be neighborhood representatives on the committee. The Board resolution indicated that three neighborhood representatives would be appointed. The applicants are listed below. The neighborhood of the applicant is shown in parentheses.

- Madeline Blobe (Berryhill Subdivision)
- Michael Flynn (Canterbury Townhomes)
- Greg Junker (Berryhill Subdivision)
- Chloe Karsten (Colonial Village at Highland Hills Apartment Homes)
- Robert Kirshner (Canterbury Townhomes)
- William A. Mackin (Canterbury Townhomes)
- Kelly Swords (Canterbury Townhomes)
- Jeff Vanke (Weatherhill Point Subdivision)

Please note that the Morgan Creek Valley Alliance has indicated that Jeff Vanke will be its representative on the Morgan Creek Trail Planning Committee (Attachment D).

Board of Aldermen Representatives

The April 20, 2004 resolution indicated that one or more Board of Aldermen members would serve on the trail planning committee and appointed Alex Zaffron to the committee. The Board of Aldermen may wish to consider appointing additional members to the committee.

Other Representatives on the Committee

The April 20, 2004 resolution indicated that several other organizations would have representatives on the committee. As indicated below, some of the organizations have already indicated a representative while other organization representatives are pending.

- Planning Board (1): Heidi Paulsen
- Recreation and Parks Commission (1): Pending
- Environmental Advisory Board (1): Neil Flanagan (primary representative); Brian Elderbroom (alternate)
- Transportation Advisory Board (1): Tom High
- Frank Porter Graham School (1): Pending
- Morgan Creek Valley Alliance (1): Jeff Vanke
- Orange County (1): Pending
- Town of Chapel Hill (1): Pending
- OWASA (1): Pending
- University of North Carolina (1): Pending

BACKGROUND

A greenway trail along Morgan Creek between Smith Level Road and University Lake was envisioned by the 1994 Carrboro Parks and Recreation Master Plan (Attachment B). As development has occurred in the vicinity of Morgan Creek over the past decade, several public access easements adjacent to Morgan Creek have been dedicated to the Town.

Carrboro Vision 2020, adopted in December 2000, includes support for a network of greenways along streams that would serve as nature trails, biking and walking trails, and wildlife corridors. More recently, voters in the November 2004 bond referendum authorized the Town to borrow up to \$4.6 million for construction of sidewalks and greenway trails, including funding for a greenway trail along Morgan Creek.

Through the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO), the Town has secured funding for greenway trail projects over the next several years using STP-DA (Surface Transportation Program - Direct Attributable) funds. These funds include \$40,000 for design and \$480,000 for construction of a trail along Morgan Creek. The use of these funds requires a 20 percent match from the Town.

As part of a December 16, 2003 resolution specifying next steps related to the greenways, the Board of Aldermen voted to “allocate \$10,000 either directly from the first sidewalk and greenway bond issue or seek reimbursement from that source, to provide the match for the design/development plan for Morgan Creek West greenway trail.” It is anticipated that the Town would hire a consultant to assist with the preparation of a conceptual plan.

Chapel Hill Conceptual Plan. The Town of Chapel Hill is currently developing a conceptual plan for a 10-foot asphalt or concrete trail along Morgan Creek that will connect Smith Level Road to the current terminus of the Fan Branch Trail at Culbreth Road, with a smaller natural surface trail that would provide access east to the Merritt Pasture. Near Smith Level Road, 200 feet of this trail is in Carrboro’s jurisdiction. The Town of Chapel Hill has worked closely with Carrboro to determine the point of connection with the future Carrboro trail system and the best location for crossing under Smith Level Road.

Chapel Hill’s Morgan Creek Trail Conceptual Plan Committee is developing a draft conceptual plan that eventually will be presented to the governments of Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and Orange County. The Committee is currently recessed awaiting a revised study of the Morgan Creek floodway.

Morgan Creek Trail Preliminary Functional Plan: Carrboro’s portion of the Morgan Creek Trail is proposed to run between Smith Level Road and University Lake. Funds from the MPO will be used to develop a preliminary functional plan that would determine the best location for the trail. This plan would show connections to residential areas, streets, and public facilities.

Once a preliminary functional plan is completed, it will be used as a guide in making subsequent decisions related to land acquisition, easement acquisition, and other related decisions. It may be necessary for some detailed engineering information to be gathered at the preliminary functional plan level because of the physical obstacles found in the Morgan Creek valley. The study would also determine the best locations and costs of future pedestrian bridges.

FISCAL IMPACT

On December 16, 2003 the Board of Aldermen voted to “allocate \$10,000 either directly from the first sidewalk and greenway bond issue or seek reimbursement from that source, to provide the match for the design/development plan for Morgan Creek West greenway trail.”

RECOMMENDATION

The Administration recommends that the Board of Aldermen adopt the attached resolution appointing neighborhood representatives and Board of Aldermen representative(s) to serve on the Morgan Creek Trail Planning Committee.