

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Roger L. Stancil, Town Manager

FROM: Ray (Butch) Kisiah, Parks and Recreation Director  
Bill Webster, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director

SUBJECT: Proposed Master Plan - Hollow Rock Access Area to the New Hope Preserve

DATE: November 23, 2009

### PURPOSE

Adoption of the attached resolution would accept the *Proposed Master Plan - Hollow Rock Access Area to the New Hope Preserve* and refer it to the Greenways and Parks and Recreation Commissions for comments and recommendations.

### BACKGROUND

In 1991, Chapel Hill, the City of Durham, Durham County, and Orange County adopted the *New Hope Corridor Open Space Master Plan*. The report recommends the preservation of land along New Hope Creek and some tributaries as an open space buffer between the more densely developed areas of Orange and Durham counties. A portion of the master plan includes the Hollow Rock area of New Hope Creek.

In September 2006, the Town executed an interlocal agreement with the City of Durham, Durham County, and Orange County for acquisition and master planning of a portion of the Hollow Rock section of the New Hope Creek corridor. The Council purchased 2 acres of the 75 acre site. The Town's portion is located in Durham County.

Two Council members were appointed to a Park Planning Advisory Committee, which has worked to create a master plan for future development of this property. The process included design workshops and public input meetings. The Committee has completed its work and has now forwarded its report to the four governments. Please see the attached *Proposed Master Plan - Hollow Rock Access Area to the New Hope Preserve*.

### DISCUSSION

The master plan addresses issues related to the 75 acre section of the New Hope Corridor known as the Hollow Rock section of New Hope Creek corridor. The Park Planning Advisory Committee has worked to fulfill four responsibilities assigned to it by the interlocal agreement:

- Develop recommendations for uses for the parcels that make up the Hollow Rock area
- Develop recommendations for facilities and locations for those facilities within the Hollow Rock properties
- Provide phasing recommendations for park development
- Hold public meetings to solicit input from the public

The advisory committee's plan includes details for development of the park in phases to serve the purposes selected by the advisory group. The plan was developed after a number of public meetings and much discussion of constraints and opportunities.

The report recommends that future park amenities include:

- A small parking lot
- Restroom building
- Hiking trails
- Educational opportunities
- Return of the historic Hollow Rock Store to its original site.

### **Remaining Issues**

Although the master plan recommends a relatively simple development plan there remain a number of unresolved issues.

Closing of Pickett Road: The plan recommends that Durham and Orange counties consider closing a portion of Pickett Road in cooperation with the NC Department of Transportation. It appears that this issue is complicated and will require additional discussion prior to any resolution. The park master plan contains recommendations for park development under both scenarios: the closing of Pickett Road and Pickett Road remaining open.

Funding of Park Development: Estimated costs for total development of the park, including some additional land acquisition range from \$538,000 on the low side to about \$711,000. Development of Phase 1 (Essential Elements) alone is estimated to range from \$250,000 to \$350,000. Cost estimates can be found on Appendix 2, page 20 of the report. The report does not address the source of these funds. Cost estimates are not based on detailed design.

One item not included in the cost estimate is the site preparation and moving costs to relocate the old Hollow Rock Store building to an area near its original location. The current owner of the building has offered to donate the structure if the moving costs can be addressed. A new organization called "Friends of the Hollow Rock Store" has formed and is working to raise funds for the building's move and renovation.

Management Plan: The plan states that a "detailed Management Plan should be developed that includes the inter-jurisdictional roles and responsibilities for park development, operation and stewardship" (page 17). The *Interlocal Agreement for the Acquisition, Planning and Operation of the Hollow Rock Portion of the New Hope Creek Plan*, created the Park Planning Advisory Committee. However, the Agreement does not address the operation of the park. At its last meeting, Committee members felt that they had completed their work and that a more technical advisory body should be in charge of determining operations and management functions.

We think that due to the location of the site, Durham County and Orange County will likely become the primary parties to develop, operate, and maintain the Hollow Rock Park site. The Town's 2 acre parcel is located outside of the area proposed for development and is likely to contain only a few trails. At this time it appears that the Town's involvement in the management plan can be relatively minor.

### **FISCAL NOTE**

Adoption of the Hollow Rock Master Plan would result in no immediate financial impact. However, there would eventually be costs associated with development and routine operation of the park. At this time there is no information on how those costs might be allocated among the local jurisdictions adopting the Master Plan.

The City and County of Durham and the County of Orange would need to propose an agreement with the Town for consideration by the Council if they wished the Town of Chapel Hill to become a partner in the development and operation of the park in order to share in the costs.

### **NEXT STEPS**

The Council could provide any initial feedback this evening. The staff would share any comments generated by the Council with City of Durham, County of Durham, and Orange County to assist them with their deliberations.

The attached resolution would refer the report to the Greenways and Parks and Recreation Commissions for comments and recommendations. We would also share those comments with the other jurisdictions.

Meanwhile, the completed master plan document is being reviewed for adoption by the City of Durham, County of Durham, and Orange County. We anticipate that the greatest level of discussions will be between Orange County and Durham County officials since construction, day-to-day administration, and operation of the facility is most likely to be their primary responsibilities.

We anticipate bringing the master plan back to the Council sometime in 2010 for possible approval once those discussions have taken place and any potential changes to the Master Plan have been identified.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

We recommend that the Council provide any initial comments concerning the *Proposed Master Plan - Hollow Rock Access Area to the New Hope Preserve*. In addition, we recommend that the Council adopt the attached resolution, which refers the report to the Greenways and Parks and Recreation Commissions for comments and recommendations.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Proposed Master Plan - Hollow Rock Access Area to the New Hope Preserve (begin new page 1).