


MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Neal Bench, Chair 
Parks and Recreation Commission

SUBJECT: Chapel Hill Parks and Trails Assessment Recommendations

DATE: September 16, 2009

At its September meeting, the Town of Chapel Hill Parks and Recreation Commission reviewed the Chapel Hill Parks and Trails Assessment recommendations and is in complete agreement with the findings of the report.

The Commission believes that the recent assessment demonstrates that the Town's park and trail system has suffered from a lack of both routine maintenance and needed renovation for many years. The Commission believes that the problems are greatest in the Town's park system, which has several parks that are more than 30 years old. However, it is evident that the Town's trails are also suffering from neglect caused by lack of funding.

The Parks and Recreation Commission believes that the Council's goal of building a sustainable community should include the development of a financial plan to address the current, extensive backlog of renovations needed to bring the Town's trails and parks back to a reasonable standard of repair. The Commission also believes that the key to developing a successful financial plan is to first develop a comprehensive master plan that uses the Parks and Trails Assessment as a starting point but goes on to specifically look at every facility currently in the Parks and Recreation department inventory rather than the representative sample illustrated in the assessment. This master plan should also point out any gaps in the current service levels that need to be addressed. The Commission believes that if the Town is seriously going to improve its parks and trails, the development of a financial plan to fund these needs must be based on a comprehensive review of all facilities and a determination of future needs.

In order to prevent the current situation from reoccurring in the future we believe that any such financial plan must deal with the ongoing need to make repairs, renovations, and provide routine maintenance.