

## **MEMORANDUM**

TO: Roger L. Stancil, Town Manager

FROM: Ray (Butch) Kisiah, Parks and Recreation Director  
Bill Webster, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director  
Kenneth C. Pennoyer, Business Management Director

SUBJECT: Acceptance of Funds for Design and Construction of Stairs for the Bolin Creek Trail

DATE: June 8, 2009

### **PURPOSE**

Adoption of the attached resolution would accept \$120,000 in funding through the Metropolitan Planning Organization and a \$30,000 grant from the Friends of Chapel Hill Parks, Recreation, and Greenways. These funds would be used for the design and construction of a flight of stairs to access the Bolin Creek Trail from the north side of Franklin Street.

### **BACKGROUND**

Phase I of the Bolin Creek Trail, from Martin Luther King Junior Blvd to Elizabeth Street was completed in 1994. Phase II, which extended the trail to Community Center Park was completed in 1998. The stairs project was originally considered during construction of Phase II of the Bolin Creek Trail, but was not accomplished due to funding constraints. The Greenways Commission has listed this project in its annual list of goals since that time.

The Friends of Chapel Hill Parks and Recreation Department is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation that was started in 1992. The organization does business as The Friends of Chapel Hill Parks, Recreation, and Greenways. In 2008 and 2009 the organization received \$308,000 from the estate of former Town Council member Joe Herzenberg to be used for the Bolin Creek Trail. On March 9, 2009 the Council accepted \$15,000 from the Friends for an initial evaluation and design for eventual renovation of the existing Bolin Creek Trail.

Chapel Hill is a member of the Durham – Chapel Hill – Carrboro Urban Metropolitan Planning Organization. This organization is responsible for regional transportation planning for the western portion of the Research Triangle area of North Carolina. The \$120,000 programmed for the Bolin Creek Trail Stairs project is from federal Surface Transportation Program Direct Allocation funds provided through the Metropolitan Planning Organization at the request of the Town. Other Chapel Hill greenway projects currently scheduled for partial funding through the Metropolitan Planning Organization include the Morgan Creek and Dry Creek Trails.

### **DISCUSSION**

Currently there is no safe and legal way to access the eastern end of the Bolin Creek Trail from the neighborhoods on the north side of Franklin Street. Any pedestrian who desires to enter the

trail from the north side of Franklin Street must cross 5 lanes of traffic to access the trail at Dickerson Court or in Community Center Park. In response to the situation trail users have created an informal path between the Sunrise Biscuit Kitchen restaurant and the west end of the Franklin Street Bridge. The path is steep, rough, and eroded.

The project would add a flight of stairs to allow pedestrian access to the trail. We expect the project to be technically difficult due to a number of issues including potential FEMA permitting, the presence of old construction debris at the site, and constructability issues related to poor soils and steep slopes.

#### **FISCAL NOTE**

The project's primary funding source would be \$120,000 in federal Surface Transportation Program Direct Allocation funds. The Friends of Chapel Hill Parks, Recreation, and Greenways, a non-profit organization, has agreed to provide the required \$30,000 local match.

We think that the combination of federal Surface Transportation Program Direct Allocation funds and the Friends grant will pay all costs of the design and installation of the stairs. Once installed there will be some routine costs in order to properly maintain the stairs.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Council adopt the attached resolution that would accept \$120,000 in funding through the Metropolitan Planning Organization and a \$30,000 grant from the Friends of Chapel Hill Parks, Recreation, and Greenways. We also recommend that the Council enact the attached ordinance that would establish these funds in the Town's Capital Improvement Program.

#### **ATTACHMENT**

1. Map showing location of proposed stairs
2. Letter from the Friends of Chapel Hill Parks, Recreation, and Greenways