

# Oconee River Greenway Authority

## MINUTES

24 June 2008

**Members Present:** Peter Boylan, Chairman; Richard Bentley, Bo Edwards, Lee Moon, Marion Nelson, Bubba Williams

**Others Present:** Jeff Gray – GMC  
Vonda Everett – GDOT  
Kraig Collins - GDOT  
Rae Wade – Master Gardeners  
Emily Fairbrass - GMC Prep School  
Therry Deal – ORGF  
Linda Fussell – County Commissioner  
Heather Langston – ORGA Director  
Sherrill Jones – Recorder

**Not Present:** Troy Clymer, Dennis Holder

**Location:** President's Conference room in the Old State Capital building.

- I. Call to Order** – At approximately 1:35 PM, Chairman Boylan called the 24 June 2008 meeting of the Oconee River Greenway Authority (ORGA) to order.
- II. Approval of 29 April 2008 Minutes** - After a review of the 29 April 2008 Minutes, Mr. Bentley made motion, that was seconded by Mr. Williams, to approve. The motion to approve was unanimously accepted.
- III. Treasurer's Report** - Dr. Heather Langston reported a current net income balance of \$9,239.97 and a total liabilities & equity balance of \$205,155.35.
- IV. Introduction of Guests** – Chairman Boylan welcomed those present and the following guests introduce themselves: Rae Wade (Master Gardeners), Emily Fairbrass (GMC Prep), Dr. Therry Deal (ORGF representative), and Linda Fussell (new county commissioner).
- V. Old Business:**
  - A. Phase I Status**
    - 1. Grand opening of Phase I** - Mr. Bo Edwards reported a successful grand opening, stating attendance was far greater than anticipated and community response to the event was extremely positive. Chairman Boylan gave a “hats off” to Mr. Edwards and his committee for an exceptionally smooth and successful grand opening!
    - 2. Sewer Manholes Update** - Mayor Bentley reported that this job has been accomplished in terms of lowering the manholes previously identified; however, three additional manholes have been located and will be lowered as soon as possible. As anticipated, there was minor trail damage which has been repaired satisfactorily. To lower the additional manholes, the repair crew will need to enter via Franklin Street to avoid culverts. Mr. Gray reported that GMC staff will close entries currently accessible to 4-wheelers.

**B. Phase II Status**

**1. Concept report update** - Ms. Vonda Everett reported that the completed concept report was emailed to the Atlanta GDOT office on 12 June 2008, and that it usually takes about a month before a response is received. She does not foresee any problems, and she complimented Dr. Langston on the thoroughness of the report.

**C. Woodruff Grant** – Chairman Boylan reported that a meeting with Mr. Russell Hardin of the Woodruff Foundation is still needed, and he stressed the importance of representation from all vested groups (city and county governments, ORGA and ORGF boards). Mayor Bentley, Mr. Edwards, Dr. Langston, and Chairman Boylan agreed to attend. A representative from the county as well as the ORGF board will be asked to join the group. Dr. Langston will coordinate a mid-July meeting with Mr. Hardin.

Discussion regarding the reporting of current grant fund expenditures to the Woodruff Foundation followed. Dr. Langston was asked to gather information about this reporting (or lack of) during tonight's meeting of the Foundation. Chairman Boylan and Dr. Langston will put together an information sheet for all those planning to attend the meeting with Mr. Hardin.

**D. DNR grants status** – Dr. Langston reported that 2004 DNR grant funds will not be reinstated; however, DNR will fund another project at \$100,000. ORGA, however, will have to provide a 20% match. The 2006 DNR Grant has been reinstated.

Mr. Edwards expressed concern about grassing, and was assured by Dr. Langston that Mr. Hammock will reseed in the fall if necessary.

**E. Financial Spreadsheet Update** – Chairman Boylan reported that he will work with Dr. Langston to refine and clarify the current financial spreadsheet, noting a quarter million dollar shortfall. Dr. Langston asked permission to use SPLOST money to assist the city with the Greene Street extension. Mr. Nelson made a motion to allocate \$94,747.63 of SPLOST funds to assist the city with the Greene Street extension. The motion was seconded by Mr. Edwards and unanimously approved.

NOTE: Subsequent to the meeting the following financial spreadsheet was created:

**Construction Funds, June 2008**

Source	Available Funds	Phase I, CST	Add Alt. #7	Greene St.	Phase II, PE	Phase II, CST	Total Budgeted	Total Expended	Total Remaining
SPLOST (FY08)	536,000.00	199,432.41	124,000.00					323,432.41	0.00
SPLOST (FY09)	412,567.59			94,747.63	50,000.00	267,819.96	412,569.59	0.00	412,567.59
DNR (NRT-06(16))	100,000.00		100,000.00					100,000.00	0.00
GDOT (6690)	254,944.12	235,105.00	254,243.04				235,105.00	254,243.04	701.08
GDOT (7629)	2,000,000.00				200,000.00	1,800,000.00	2,000,000.00	9,621.38	1,990,378.62
Woodruff 2004	500,000.00	143,891.00	429,641.37	5,252.37			149,143.37	434,893.74	65,106.26

Total Budgeted				100,000.00	250,000.00	2,250,000.00			
Total Expended		883,316.82	224,000.00	5,252.37	9,621.38				
Remaining		0.00	0.00	94,747.63	240,378.62				
Shortfall									182,180.04 <sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Remaining SPLOST FY08 funds (\$212,567.59, highlighted in green) have been added to FY09 available funds (\$200,000.00) for a total of \$412,567.59

<sup>2</sup> Amounts highlighted in blue are budgeted amounts

<sup>3</sup> Remaining GDOT funds from Phase I PE were added to available Phase I CST funds (highlighted in pink)

<sup>4</sup> Remaining Woodruff funds will be used to finance educational signage (highlighted in purple)

<sup>5</sup> Amount highlighted in red represents the shortfall of "local match" for the GDOT 7629 grant

**F. Maintenance of Park** – Mr. Williams regretfully reported that the county is still reluctant to participate in grass cutting. Mayor Bentley indicated that he would like for the city to have an alternating schedule with the county crew and or with volunteer crews. Mr. Nelson, Mayor Bentley and Billy Brack (Southside Equipment) will meet at the site to assess equipment needs for maintenance. Chairman Boylan committed GMC resources for cutting grass until January 2009 when a new group of county commissioners take office. Mr. Nelson reported that Central State Hospital uses inmate labor to maintain the hospital campus, using equipment owned by the hospital. He suggested that ORGA,

being a state authority, might possibly access to both equipment and manpower. Mayor Bentley noted that the city has used this resource; however, they have not found it to be dependable in terms of following a schedule. Dr. Langston will coordinate with the city and with GMC re: grass cutting from now until January 2009.

## VI. New Business

**A. Master Gardeners' Plan for Garden near Boat Ramp** - Mrs. Rae Wade of the Lake County Master Gardeners explained the nature of the Georgia Master Gardener Program, and outlined the following seven-feature landscape plan for the area south of the Boat Ramp near the river bridge:

- 1) The small, lower leafy twigs and dead branches of the five large shade trees on the site would be “limbed up” and removed so that the view of the beautiful little “river island,” now blocked, is visible to the public. The major trunks and higher main branches of the trees themselves would not be touched so as to provide the maximum amount of shade.
- 2) Shrubs and small trees growing up the riverbank below the site would be thinned and trimmed back, so they would not be blocking the view of the river from below. However, the shrubs and small trees themselves would not be cut down but left alive so as to continue to anchor the riverbank with their roots.
- 3) The weedy vegetation would be removed from the site, (poison ivy, green briar, nut grass, crabgrass, privet seedlings etc.) with an environmentally-safe herbicide, and the site raked of vegetation. The uneven site should then be leveled with a Bobcat or some such, and in order to set up a maintenance-free situation, then covered with a thick permeable mulch layer of wood chips or pea gravel to discourage weed growth and to provide dry footing over the clay soil even when there has been rain. Pea gravel is more expensive in the short run but less expensive in the long run for it would not need to be replaced each year as wood chips would be. When weeds inevitably do push their way up through the gravel/wood chips, it is an easy and quick job to hit them with an environmentally-safe herbicide. Rae Wade will see that this is done periodically. No mowing or weeding would be needed to maintain the site.
- 4) The “public area” of the site where the gravel/wood chips are placed should be bordered with medium size rocks, such as were used at the Carrington Woods Garden Site, to define the picnic/sitting area.
- 5) Larger trees would be planted on the perimeter of the site outside the defining rock border, to provide more shade in the later afternoons. We have been informed of a donor of these trees.
- 6) We would be seeking to have a few plantings but only of flowering shrubs and/or small trees, such as crepe myrtle, to define the perimeter outside the rock border and to provide color at various seasons, but for the most part, the site will be low maintenance once these plantings are established. We would seek to have these plantings donated.

7) Seating and/or tables: Two groupings have been discussed by Tenold, Mahs and Wade, but exact pieces and positions are to be decided once the site is cleared and prepared. One possibility is to provide the heavy metal tables with attached benches such as can be seen at local outdoor eating establishments like Sonic. Another possibility is simply to provide two groupings of heavy metal benches.

After Mrs. Wade’s presentation, Chairman Boylan addressed a concern for the cost of plants, equipment, herbicide, mulch, pea gravel, etc. needed to accomplish the tasks. Mr. Nelson indicated equipment for leveling should not be a problem, and Mr. Edwards noted that Lawson Lawrence could be asked to donate additional crushed pipe. He also reported knowledge of a source for tree donations. Mr. Nelson expressed caution in that the area indicated is subject to flooding. Mrs. Wade requested approval to go ahead with the plan. Chairman Boylan asked Dr. Langston, Mr. Edwards and Mr. Nelson to work with Mrs. Wade to draft a more detailed plan to include a site drawing reflecting the features identified, as well as a materials and equipment list, for review at the July board meeting.

Mr. Nelson complimented the work of the Carrington Woods Garden Club on the garden north of the boat ramp. Dr. Langston expressed the need for a master garden plan for the entire greenway to insure continuity throughout.

## **B. Signage**

**Map of River Walk** – Dr. Langston presented a map created by Kevin Haywood for board members to critique. She noted that the indicators for exercise stations as well as the two blue arrows will be removed. When finalized, the map will be placed at the trail entrance by the parking lot. Mr. Nelson asked that distance (mileage) be indicated. Chairman Boylan asked for the removal of almost all words. There was considerable discussion regarding the map’s orientation, with Mr. Gray stating that it needs to be posted in the direction of travel. The directional symbol for north seemed to be the main source of confusion. Those present supported the idea of a sandblasted sign. Mr. Moon agreed to secure additional information about what can and cannot be put on a sandblasted sign as well as the cost of such a sign, and will provide this information at the July board meeting.

**C. Central State Hospital Property Update** -Chairman Boylan reported that Rosser International has included the Greenway in its master plan proposal, to the Governor, for use of state property in Baldwin County.

**D. FY09 Budget Report** - Dr. Langston reported that FY09 budget requests to both the city and county have been approved. Combined with funding from ORGF, ORGA’s operating budget for FY09 totals \$85,892. She presented an FY09 operating budget summary, as well as an up-to-date FY08 summary sheet for review.

**E. Security** – Both Mayor Bentley and Mr. Nelson reported that security at the Greenway is fine in spite of a recent “Union-Recorder” report. The Mayor noted that the city police patrol covers the area every 45 minutes. In addition, both GMC and the county are patrolling. The incidents reported in the newspaper were isolated ones. In one case, the person left the window of the vehicle down and items on the seat. Mr. Nelson visits the area several times a week and makes a point of engaging visitors in...everyone loves

it!” Dr. Langston and Mr. Edwards met with an employee of Lowe’s, who offered to assist in seeking a corporate grant from the company.

Those present agreed that a warning sign is needed at the boat ramp re: dangers/cautions/hazards of swimming. At the July meeting Mr. Moon will bring pictures of warning signs approved through DNR’s legal department.

- VI. The next meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, July 29, 2008 at 1:30 PM** in the conference room of the Old Capital Building.
- VII. Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 3:15 P.M.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

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**Sherrill Jones, Recorder**