Beargrass Creek Alliance

Minutes for Regular Meeting held on March 16, 2020

The Beargrass Creek Alliance held its monthly meeting via Zoom. After some technical issues were resolved, the meeting started shortly after 7 :00 p.m.

Tuned-in attendees were:

Ed Allgeier

Barbara Berman

Linda Gugin

Suzanne Hoehne

David Rummler

David Spenard

Jim St. Clair, Secretary

Ward Wilson, Executive Director, Kentucky Waterway Alliance

Discussions

The meeting was scheduled to be held at the St. Matthews library branch, but was not available due to the coronavirus crisis. If circumstances improve, we might be able to hold the April meeting there. Linda, reporting on the clean-up of the Beargrass Creek Greenway, noted considerable progress has been made, including removing campsites left by homeless, trimming of weeds and overgrowth, and shoring up banks. She also reported on surveys sent to participants in the Every Drop program and suggested following up with visits to see first-hand the results. Suzanne asked for a list of those who didn’t respond the survey and said she would be willing to follow up. David Rummler noted he has contacts with the Jefferson County Extension Agent and believes they may be willing to partner with BCA on rain garden/rain barrel project, which Ward endorsed as a good idea. Ed noted the agency might be able to contribute some funding for the project. David R. said he would be meeting with the extension agent once the virus crisis has abated and David Spenard said he would be willing to join in such a meeting.

David S. reported that the Jefferson County Public Schools system is moving forward with a plan to acquire 40 acres of land at 2605 Echo Trail in eastern Jefferson County as the site for a new middle school. The site is in the Floyds Fork watershed. On March 10 the JCPS Board of Education voted 7-0 to approve a proposed Purchase and Sale Contract for acquiring the site. The contract will be sent to the Kentucky Department of Education for review.

Under the contract, JCPS will pay the owner, a developer, $2.1 million,or approximately $52,000 an acre. The current owner will, as part of the contract, install sewer service facilities for the school. The contract requires JCPS to install a water service line that will serve the school site and the developer’s property. The contract does not quantify the cost of the water line. JCPS has been unwilling to supply copies of the appraisals for the property.

An administrative regulation of the Kentucky Board of Education limits acquisition and site preparation cost to ten percent or less of the total project cost. Exceeding the ten percent limit requires authorization by the state Board of Education. The $2.1 million purchase price for Echo Trail is 6.2 percent of the total project cost. The water line cost and the total acquisition and site preparation cost have not been disclosed. There is a concern that total acquisition and site preparation cost will exceed ten percent of the project cost. There is also a concern that the contract cost, when properly quantified, will exceed the value of the land per the appraisals.

This issue was called to the attention of the JCPS Board prior to the March 10 vote. The issue is being called to the attention of the Interim Commissioner of Education, the Kentucky Board of Education, and the Kentucky Department of Education.

BCA’s participation in the April 22 Earth Day Event: Beargrass Teach-in being planned by David Wicks was discussed, but in the meantime that event has been postponed until September 30. Ward said he is hoping that the annual Wild & Scenic program, scheduled for April 17 at the Clifton Center, will be held but is not definite at this point. A spring clean-up project will probably be delayed. A BCA clean-up in St. Matthews has been cancelled.

Ward, responding to a question about any new developments on the Army Corps of Engineers $3 million project to study restoring the entire Beargrass Creek ecosystem, said he hadn’t heard anything recently but will try to get updates. He noted that Andrew Reed, who had been the Corps representative for the project, is relocating to Colorado.

The meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m.; the next meeting is scheduled for April 20.