

SAVE DAVIDSON

Pathway to Beaty Property Public Use

A Community Resource to be shaped by Citizen Input



Save Davidson's Beaty Property Task Force – Ben Beall, Denise Beall, Leah Chester-Davis, Cambria Nielsen, Donna Pollack, Alice Sudduth – began meeting in early February 2018 to outline the pathway to the public use of the Beaty property.

Working from the premise outlined in the statute below and knowledge of the 2017 events in Davidson which included protests, petitions, a lengthy fight to preserve Town-owned land *sold to the Town to be used as a park*, and the formation of social welfare organization, 'Save Davidson,' our town learned that strong citizen support for a park; not only last year, but across a 32-year period. With awareness that the Mayor and Board of Commissioners are dealing with numerous issues, this document is intended to help and recommend action steps and assist in outlining the pathway to this valuable community resource.

§ 160A-383. Purposes in view.

Zoning regulations shall be made in accordance with a comprehensive plan. When adopting or rejecting any zoning amendment, the governing board shall also approve a statement describing whether its action is consistent with an adopted comprehensive plan and any other officially adopted plan that is applicable, and briefly explaining why the board considers the action taken to be reasonable and in the public interest. That statement is not subject to judicial review.

The planning board shall advise and comment on whether the proposed amendment is consistent with any comprehensive plan that has been adopted and any other officially adopted plan that is applicable. The planning board shall provide a written recommendation to the governing board that addresses plan consistency and other matters as deemed appropriate by the planning board, but a comment by the planning board that a proposed amendment is inconsistent with the comprehensive plan shall not preclude consideration or approval of the proposed amendment by the governing board.

Zoning regulations shall be designed to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare. To that end, the regulations may address, among other things, the following public purposes: to provide adequate light and air; to prevent the overcrowding of land; to avoid undue concentration of population; to lessen congestion in the streets; to secure safety from fire, panic, and dangers; and to facilitate the efficient and adequate provision of transportation, water, sewerage, schools, parks, and other public requirements. The regulations shall be made with reasonable consideration, among other things, as to the character of the district and its peculiar suitability for particular uses, and with a view to conserving the value of buildings and encouraging the most appropriate use of land throughout such city. (1923, c. 250, s. 3; C.S., s. 2776(t); 1971, c. 698, s. 1; 2005-426, s. 7(a); 2006-259, s. 28.)

““Planning should involve a community. The worst types of planning that we do is planning we do in the building. The likelihood is that people will push back if they feel their voices have not been heard.”

Taiwo Jaiyeoba
Planning Director, Charlotte

Phase I (January thru June 2018, 0-6 months)

Recommended Immediate Steps

Explore best options (conservation easements/other) for protecting the Beaty Street Property in perpetuity. By July 2018, implement appropriate actions that are irreversible, protecting the land for generations to come. This would help allay citizens' concerns. This would also alleviate pressure to quickly install a plan and allow time to gather public input, consider it, and implement. The easement could be structured in one of two ways; 1. Entire parcel under easement with a 'reserved buildable' on specific number of acres (majority of quality acres for park) or 2. Carve out a portion and apply the easement on the natural lands portion. Recommend discussion between Mayor & commissioners, Director of Davidson Parks & Rec, and Save Davidson representatives before easement is executed.

Recommended Foundational Steps

1. **Mayor Rusty Knox, on behalf of the Board, makes an official statement along with The Director of Davidson Parks & Recreation** at upcoming Board meeting (by early March) that the Town Board will address the Beaty Property issue this spring. The intent of the statement is to allay concerns and put citizens at ease.
2. **Town of Davidson appoints a Beaty Street Task Force.** Within 60 days appoint a Task Force charged with the following
 - 1.) Seeking guidance from Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation regarding developing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ), necessary for gleaning information on scope of services and helping provide basis for firms to consider; Requests for Proposals (RFP); budget allocation; and making recommendation to Mayor and Board.

Note: To coincide with development of RFQ, Town of Davidson representatives participate with Save Davidson in meeting with nearby landowner regarding additional park property.

- 2.) Developing an RFQ, researching, interviewing, and recommending an entity to lead the town through transitioning the Beaty Street Property to a park that is open for all to enjoy.
- 3.) Appointing a citizen input group that compiles an inspiration/examples list gleaned from visits to other towns/parks.
- 4.) Overseeing the process of the selected entity to ensure that citizen involvement and overall transparency are integral in every step.

Recommended Community Representation

Ideally citizens from the following entities would share and support the importance and urgency of protecting this valuable piece of public property:

Save Davidson (2)

Davidson Lands Conservancy President (1)

Davidson Parks and Recreation Director (1)

Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation staff member (1)

Trees Davidson member (1)
Town of Davidson commissioner (1)
Nearby neighborhood representative (1)
African American community representative (1)
East Davidson representative (1)
Davidson College representative (1)
Ingersoll Rand representative (1)

Recommended Environmental Inventory and Physical Evaluation of Property

Town of Davidson citizens presently realize a number of benefits from 19+ acres of natural space. Trees mitigate the adverse effects of carbon monoxide, contributing to cleaner air, less pollution from run-off into our lake, a natural sound buffer to reduce noise pollution, habitat for wildlife, and an aesthetically pleasing gift of nature in a world increasingly contending with paved, artificial environments. Benefits exist with leaving the land as is. There are also benefits to adding walking trails, parking, and restroom facilities. An assessment of the property is needed to determine optimization of this wooded acreage, keeping in mind that 18 ½ acres were part of the original Clontz parcel and designated for a park.

- Identify and secure assistance from resources (such as Mecklenburg County, AmeriCorps, etc.) and align tasks with expertise.
- Survey land to determine exact acreage and to assess streams and storm water flow and any other limitations or considerations needed when planning a park (what might affect location of trails and buildings such as restrooms, picnic areas, etc.); include lowest to highest possible use and projected costs versus revenue.
- Inventory all possible options while maintaining and optimizing the large trees in this natural space.
- Evaluate current benefits and limitations (what can and cannot be done).
- Determine current upkeep and maintenance costs for features such as pond/dam.
- Determine need for repairing dam and pond.
- Conduct identification assessment of trees and other plants.
- Pinpoint, mark, and remove any 'hazard trees' that have structural defects and are safety concerns.
- Install tree and rare plant identification markers.
- Analyze stream and aquatic life.

Recommended Trailblazing

A fully realized park may take a few years. Save Davidson believes the Town can implement initial steps to open the property for a basic trail experience with minimal infrastructural requirements.

- Engage a team of conservationists, park and recreation specialists, and town employee(s) to walk property and make recommendations for initial plan for trails.
- Develop plan.

- Identify trailblazing coordinator to schedule a series of work days and to engage various groups such as scouts, middle and high school students who need service hours, church groups, and others in helping with the following:
 - Putting up markers for trees and other significant plants
 - Removing identified invasive species
 - Clearing identified planned trails
 - Putting down cedar chips
 - Building and placing bird nest boxes
 - Constructing foot bridges
- Raze Fiji House (unless beneficial to keep slab or other structural element for other purposes).
- Install portable bathrooms.
- Construct temporary parking area.

Recommendation to open the Beaty Property

Hold a series of nature walks to introduce community to the property and provide an opportunity to give citizens a closer look at the property in preparation for a series of public design charrettes. While the charrettes are expected to be part of the input sessions, *immediately begin to offer nature walks* hosted by Save Davidson and, on occasion, jointly with Town of Davidson, Davidson Lands Conservancy, and other groups.

- Unlock gate to property.
- Schedule walks on natural habitat, topography, visioning (*Immediate*).

Recommended Communications Plan

Develop and implement a communications plan to keep citizens informed and engaged in various phases.

Phase II (June thru December 2018, 6-12 months)

Charrettes (both onsite & offsite) and surveys to capture citizen input (consultant to lead by April 2019)

Phase III (January thru June 2019, 12-18 months)

Complete Long-term Plan and Budget

To be developed by the selected firm based on site analysis, series of charrettes, and other input sessions

- Outside firm shepherded by Beaty Task Force
- Regular meetings to update public

Raising Capital – Design and implement a fundraising effort to supplement allocation in Town Budget based on plan and projected costs.

- Long-term plan (with 6-, 12-, 24-, 48-month implementation phases).
- Capital campaign with phases.
- Grant writing.

High Level Beaty Park Preservation Time Line

