

Granite Quarry supports Thread Trail project

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By Mark Wineka

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GRANITE QUARRY — The town of Granite Quarry became the third Rowan County municipality Tuesday night to pass a resolution in support of the Carolina Thread Trail.

Granite Quarry joins Landis and Salisbury in supporting the Thread Trail, aimed at creating a network of greenways and conservation corridors connecting 15 counties in North and South Carolina.

The Granite Quarry Board of Aldermen approved the resolution unanimously.

The resolution says Granite Quarry is “committed in concept to working with neighboring communities and with the Carolina Thread Trail to plan, design and build a system of trails that will connect our communities, people and special points of regional interest for years to come.”

Randi Gates, one of two community coordinators for Carolina Thread Trail, said the non-profit project, launched in 2007, already has raised \$16.8 million in cash donations, \$3.77 million in land contributions and \$17.8 million in public funding commitments.

Eleven counties — Rowan County has balked at supporting the trail network in the past — have adopted master plans with identified Thread routes. In addition, 14 corridors are under development, 80 miles of the Thread already are open and 64 miles of connecting sidewalks are in place.

Catawba Land Conservancy serves as the lead agency for the Thread project with Foundation for the Carolinas serving as a philanthropic partner.

Gates said the Thread Trail also aims at celebrating the region’s history, conserving local lands and providing free recreation by connecting local parks and open spaces.

Greenways and trails help with economic development, increase home values and have environmental benefits, she said.

Gates emphasized that trail development is community driven, relying on local staff people and citizens. She acknowledged that if she can’t get Rowan County government on board, she will be attempting instead to garner the support of its communities and make them eligible for funding.

Communities develop their own steering committees and can receive up to \$60,000 for a planning phase, which involves hiring a consultant. In implementation stages, the Thread Trail can help with corridor development, land acquisition and construction.

To date, Carolina Thread Trail has resolutions of support from 181 different entities.

As for the question of eminent domain and the taking of land, Gates said nonprofits do not have the power of condemnation. She said the Thread Trail also would not fund any project that included unwilling property owners.

Granite Quarry already has trails in place in its parks.

"Let's look at how we can connect those," Gates told the board.

In another matter Tuesday, Brookwood Drive resident Danny Gay said the ongoing culvert project on his street has left him a resident of "215 Mud Road."

"What I see going on doesn't address the flood ordinance the town has in place," said Gay, who is running for a seat on the town board this November.

Gay said he has witnessed the flooding on his street for 17 years and expressed doubt that the new culvert being installed will remedy the situation.

"I'll tell you, you're going to need a bigger pipe," he said. "I don't think you can stand in the way of Mother Nature like you have."

Gay also predicted the project would not be completed anytime soon because it's running into "new issues" every day. He invited other citizens to come down and see the construction for themselves.

"It's a very discouraging situation being in the middle of it," he said.

Meanwhile, Town Engineer Jeff Moody said the contractor has set the new box culvert and is working on the sewage line's relocation and storm drainage. Two state inspections have been done, one connected to erosion control; the other, water quality.

"Things are starting to move along pretty good now," he said.

Moody said he had yet to receive a revised construction schedule from the contractor and could not say when the project will be finished.

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