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**Friends of Hominy Creek Greenway Board of Trustees statement
on Bear Creek development.**

WEST ASHEVILLE, NC -

The Friends of Hominy Creek Greenway Board of Trustees share the communities' anguish regarding the 20 S. Bear Creek development adjacent to the Hominy Creek Greenway in West Asheville. The loss of tree cover; the impact on the riparian buffer and water quality; increased traffic; the harm to the landscape, wildlife habitat and viewshed; the loss of tranquility; are among a few of the prevailing concerns.

The Trustees understand the need for additional housing, but we also endorse the urgency of protecting green space as development accelerates in our community. We look forward to the opportunity to engage with citizens, developers, and local government to ensure the stream and the Hominy Creek Greenway are protected.

The Board of Trustees reaffirm our commitment to protecting Asheville's endangered green and blue assets for all to enjoy. We are eager to continue to serve as a competent and vigorous voice for thoughtful development that prioritizes the stewardship of current and future public green spaces.

About the 20 S. Bear Creek Development

Despite complaints from residents about traffic and negative environmental impacts, the development at 20 S. Bear Creek Road near the Malvern Hill neighborhood proposed by Catalyst Capital Partners was approved by the Buncombe County Board of Adjustments on December 9, 2020. The Board of Adjustment agreed that the proposal met the county's developmental criteria.

The developers broke ground in October 2022.

Catalyst Capital Partners (CCP), based in Charlotte, had proposed a larger project, Crossroads at West Asheville, which included 802 apartments, 14,400 square feet of retail space, 50,400 square feet of office space and 64,000 square feet of self-storage on a site previously owned by Crossroads Asheville Church. After major community opposition, CCP dropped that proposal and followed with a "scaled back" proposal that comprises 660 apartments in 14 buildings on 55.4 acres.

At the December 2020 meeting CCP said the development will not adversely impact wetlands. The developers said they would develop a mile of greenway that will be open to the public and eventually could connect with other parts of city and county greenways. The

developers said they spent nearly two years working on the project and getting to know the community.

One major opponent to the proposal, the Malvern Hills Neighborhood Association, dropped its opposition to the project before the hearing, as part of a lawsuit settlement. The organization is not in favor of the proposal. In a statement to its members issued before the hearing, the association said it would not oppose the Catalyst Capital Partners conditional use permit application. ([Source: Asheville Citizen-Times](#))

About the Hominy Creek Greenway

After moving to Asheville from Atlanta in 2006 Doug “Brotherhug” Barlow led the effort to convince public officials to protect a secluded fourteen acre greenspace along Hominy Creek known as the “Waller Tract”.

The price tag of the Waller Tract, however, was far too high for him to handle alone. So Barlow set out to convince public officials of the value of the narrow wedge of land along Hominy Creek. His case for more green space is a familiar one: Urban parkland can improve ecological health, provide a place to play and gather, and help residents connect with nature, making the city more livable.

“It’s a magical place,” said Barlow. “The first time I saw the land I immediately felt that it needed to be public space.”

Thanks to his efforts, in 2011 a coalition of public and private interests bought the Waller Tract on behalf of the City of Asheville for \$139,000 in order to establish the Hominy Creek Greenway. The tract includes a portion of the [world’s first hydroelectric powered trolley](#) developed by lumber baron Edwin Carrier in 1892.

From the get-go, Barlow envisioned a community park planned by the community. For him, spearheading neighborhood movements is nothing new: In the 1980s, Barlow helped transform two acres of derelict urban Atlanta into a beloved community [park and land trust](#).

This time, he helped launch the Friends of Hominy Creek Greenway, Inc. (FOHCG) in 2011, a group of volunteers dedicated to creating and managing the parkland that borders a mile-long section of Hominy Creek in West Asheville. The FOHCG is partnering with local government, Asheville GreenWorks and other organizations to improve and manage the property.

In addition to being a corridor for commuters, the Hominy Creek Greenway is an unusual piece of forest in the city, Barlow said. He hopes the greenway’s history, beauty, and ecology will continue to serve as an inspiration for educators and artists.

For more information about the Hominy Creek Greenway or the Bear Creek development contact FOHCG spokesperson Jack Igelman (jack@igelman.com 828-216-0888).



The FOHCG is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the Hominy Creek Greenway's wild nature and history, and connecting West Asheville to the French Broad River and downtown Asheville.

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