COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Type: Council - Regular
Meeting Date: October 1, 2026
Agenda Item Type: New Business
Staff Contact: Phillip Trocquet

STAFF REPORT

AGENDA ITEM:

Consideration of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Town of Tyrone and the Southern Conservation Trust for the Handley Park Nature Area. **Phillip Trocquet, Assistant Town Manager**

BACKGROUND:

The Town acquired approximately 45 acres adjacent to Handley Park for the purpose of conservation and light recreation offerings for residents. The 2023 SPLOST identified nature trails for the property, and the Town has allocated $20,000 in SPLOST funds this fiscal year to begin improving the site.

The Southern Conservation Trust (SCT) is a Georgia nonprofit that specializes in natural land conservation and has a record of partnering with municipalities in Fayette County on passive recreation and conservation spaces. As the property moves from acquisition into planning and initial improvements, staff recommends formalizing a working relationship with SCT so the Town can draw on that experience.

The proposed MOU establishes a non-binding, cooperative framework for the Handley Park Nature Area. SCT will serve as an advocate, advisor, and community partner by providing technical guidance on conservation practices and shared-use trail development, assisting with community outreach and public education, and partnering with the Town on grant and fundraising opportunities. The Town retains oversight of the project, including compliance with applicable laws and policies, coordination with contractors and stakeholders, and final decisions on SCT recommendations. The parties will meet quarterly, and use of either party's logo or branding requires mutual approval.

The MOU has a three-year term and either party may terminate it with 30 days' written notice. It does not create a contractual relationship. Any binding commitment, such as on-site work or a financial contribution, requires a separate written agreement and will return to Council as applicable.

FUNDING:

The MOU does not obligate either party to provide funding, and approval carries no direct cost to the Town. The $20,000 in 2023 SPLOST funds allocated this fiscal year for initial improvements remains under Town control and will be spent in accordance with the Town's procurement policies. Any future financial, grant, or resource commitment involving SCT will be defined in a separate agreement.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Town of Tyrone and the Southern Conservation Trust for the Handley Park Nature Area and authorization for the Mayor to execute the agreement.

ATTACHMENTS:

Handley Park Nature Area Memorandum of Understanding

PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS: Council Retreat