

May 15, 2013

Mr. Mark Hecker  
Assistant Director  
Parks & Recreation Department  
City of Lawrence  
1141 Massachusetts Street  
Lawrence, KS 66044

Dear Mark,

Thanks ever so much for taking the time to see me on short notice last Friday. I very much appreciate your provisional expression of interest in working with me to develop an interpretative signage scheme for the Burroughs Creek Trail and the Haskell Rail-Trail in East Lawrence.

To briefly review the main points of our conversation:

1. In real life, I am the director of public affairs of the Kansas City (Mo.) Public Library system, a position I've held since June 2006 following completion of my middle-aged MA in American history at the University of Kansas. During my KU years, I also served as director of the KU History Project, which resulted in the creation of the KU History Galleries in the Kansas Union and a web site called KUHISTORY.com.
2. In the 2013-14 school year, I will return to KU on a part-time basis as the Simons Fellow in Public Humanities at the Hall Center for the Humanities. One of my projects during this time will be a practicum for several KU humanities graduate students in which they, under my direction, will apply their academic knowledge and skills to achieve a practical outcome. The objective of this undertaking – and the reason why I seek the cooperation of Lawrence Parks and Recreation – would be a comprehensive and coordinated system of interpretative signage along the Burroughs Creek Trail and Haskell Rail-Trail from 11<sup>th</sup> Street to 29<sup>th</sup> Street in East Lawrence so that users of these trails will be enabled to gain a fuller understanding and appreciation of the history and physical environment of the land through which they are traversing. Such signage will be a major enhancement to the quality of the experience for users of the trail, and combined with other deliverables yet to be determined – a printed guide, a dedicated web site, a mobile app, podcasts, public programs, guided walks, etc – should increase usage of the trail by residents and visitors alike. Additionally, as we discussed, what we accomplish with this project could become a model for the enhancement of trails all across Kansas.
3. As the Hall Center's Simons Fellow, I will have access to the advice and counsel of appropriate KU faculty members as well as the resources of KU's Spencer Research Library, ensuring that the content of the interpretative signage and other deliverables will be of the highest quality. Additionally, we are also partnering with

the Douglas County Historical Society, further ensuring a high level of community involvement in this venture, including the possibility of a temporary exhibit about the trail in the Watkins Museum and the likelihood of one or more public programs to increase local knowledge of this enhanced recreational resource.

4. As I mentioned, the commitment I am seeking from Parks and Recreation is expected to be nominal and carries no financial obligation. Content creation for the interpretative signage, including research, final copy, and graphic design, will be executed by the KU grad students under my direction and with whatever level of involvement you deem appropriate from Parks and Recreation. Funding for the fabrication of the interpretative signage panels will be obtained from private sources. All I will need from Parks and Recreation is time and labor – the former for guidance, direction, and approval for fabrication of the interpretative signage and final site selection; the latter for physical emplacement of the signage and ongoing maintenance.

Mark, in a nutshell, this is essentially what I propose. May I count on your support? The Hall Center would like to issue a press release about my appointment as Simons Fellow in the next few days and it would be great if we could include some language to the effect that Parks and Recreation is on board with this project, at least on a provisional basis. That said, no rush if you are not ready to commit – I can come up with alternative wording that merely suggests efforts will be made in this direction, etc.

In any event, please let me know when you have had a chance to review this so we can determine next steps.

Yours cordially,  
Henry Fortunato



**Henry Fortunato**

Director of Public Affairs

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