

**Dryden Rail-Trail Friends and Task Force
Minutes of September 20, 2017 Meeting
Dryden Town DPW**

Attendance: Bob Beck, Chuck Geisler, Judy Pierpont, Dan Lamb, Steve Winans, James Miner, Alice Green, Ted Schiele, Susan Ashdown, Rich Kugler, Diann Zeigler, David Bravo-Cullen, David Fogel, Dean Russo, Bruno Schickel, Diane Tessaglia-Hymes, Chris Tessaglia-Hymes, Todd Bittner

Call to order (7:09 p.m.) – Bob Beck

Bob opened the meeting with thank yous for recent work to team members, mentioning especially Alice, Bruno, Todd and Dan. The group thanked Bob for his ongoing work as task force chair

Game Farm/Dept. of Environmental Conservation (DEC) negotiations

Dan reported that he contacted DEC officials last month for help expediting a trail agreement in time for the state parks grant application. He said DEC officials agreed to write a letter of conditional support, which arrived in time to include in the grant application. This was a significant breakthrough, after years of attempts to secure permission to start the trail at the point where the East Ithaca Recreation Way ends at Game Farm Road and connect it across the original rail bed and easement sections into Varna. Dan said Task Force members are on track to communicate with DEC officials again by the end of the month to work out a signed agreement.

Follow-up from Community-Design Workshop: Trail name and logo ideas – David Fogel, Diane, Bob, Alice, Todd

David presented a proposed trail logo design, using the name “Dryden Crossings Trail,” with the Town of Dryden map as a background. A tagline “Connecting Communities” could be added, depending on the context for using the logo. Much discussion of both the name and logo details, and possible modifications, followed. There were also suggestions on what to call the various subsections, or neighborhoods where the trail will pass, such as the Dryden to Freeville village “stretch” or “link.’ Todd suggested reviewing the process for deciding on the final name and trail logo with the June design workshop committee and facilitators.

Suggestions for Kiosk design and Leopold bench plan (via Roger Hopkins of Lansing) – Bob noted that the recent clearing at the George Road crossing harvested many locust trees with wood that could be used for amenities along the trail—with the landowner, the William George Agency’s, permission. He circulated plans for a kiosk design, used at the Von Engeln nature preserve, and a Leopold bench design. Both could be built by volunteer crews. Bruno said logs could also be used for parking lot bollards and edges, adding that he doesn’t think all the trail amenities necessarily need to be the same in different locations. Some prototypes could be built at the new George Road crossing. Benches could be placed on a concrete block and secured in place.

Smoke-Free designation – Ted Schiele, Coordinator of Tobacco Free Tompkins, County Health Dept.

Ted presented a request that the Task Force consider designating the Rail Trail a “tobacco and smoke free outdoor area.” Citing other local efforts in Ithaca, Ulysses, Lansing, and Newfield, he said his group promotes smoke free areas to insure access for people with disabilities, and for sustainability and fire and litter prevention, and as a public health issue. He distributed examples of possible signage. Todd Bittner explained that the town of Dryden does not own the rail trail, but is securing easements through privately held land. There is no reference to smoking rights in existing easements, and adding the issue could complicate and impede the process of obtaining the rest of the easements. Bob thanked Ted for his presentation and said the issue of smoking could be addressed in the rules of etiquette that will be posted at kiosks along the trail.

George Road crossing: Update on progress (with major donations of time and equipment) – Bruno

Bruno circulated a list of contributors, volunteers and dollar values of donated work and materials (attached) which made it possible to create a new gently-sloped trail up to an at-grade trail crossing at George Road. Most of the clearing was completed in two sessions, with 10 volunteers helping at the first session. Many loads of fill have been delivered and placed. This will be topped with gravel donated by RMS. Bruno said fill is also necessary for another 600-foot section towards Freeville, which has 6-inch deep mud. The section will need ditches excavated and two new culverts for drainage. He said the next trail project will be trimming in a section east of Mt. Pleasant Road.

The list of the value of contributions led to talk of recognition for the many kinds of donations to the trail. Chuck suggested establishing different levels (including in-kind work) for recognition.

Freeville trail section – David F.

David Fogel noted that the Village of Freeville has completed repairs of the trestle at Johnson Road, and that Village DPW staff is ready to install railings.

Update on Trail Easements and pledges – Bob, Bruno

Bob circulated a chart depicting progress in our first year in securing easements on parcels and miles of trail, relative to the totals needed (attached). Bruno said the Saunders Concrete Company (with 600 feet of rail bed west of Pinckney Road) has been sold to Hansen Aggregate. They’re positive about the trail, but won’t negotiate about the easement until the end of the year. The NYSEG section easement is in the hands of officials at Rochester regional headquarters, he said. He added that he has purchased a trail section east of Route 366 at Etna (behind the former Phoenix Book Barn), and donated a trail easement to the town.

Route 13 Crossing

- Meeting with NYSDOT Region 3 officials from Syracuse w/Fernando, Todd, Bob, Ray Burger and Barbara Lifton.
- Route 13/DOT Resolution (discussion and vote) – Todd, Bob

Todd reported that State Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton helped get a response from the Department of Transportation (DOT) regarding the FH Fox Bridge crossing at Route 366 and the crossing at Route 13.

Recently, she joined DOT, Task Force and other local officials at an on-site visit at the Route 13 crossing. Bob had suggested that the DOT consider installing a user-activated “hawk signal” at the crossing. But DOT officials instead favored either a bridge over (at least 16 feet high), or tunnel under the busy highway section, because the crossing is on a curve, and it’s near the Route 366 and Route 13 intersection.

A recent DOT traffic study showed backups already exist at that intersection at peak times. Funding for the bridge or tunnel could be requested in another proposal for a federal/DOT transportation alternative (TAP) grant in next year’s funding cycle. Barbara also offered to seek state funding for the project. Todd noted that when the Task Force applied for an earlier DOT grant, it was thought that the entire project had to be built to federal handicap accessibility standards. However it was learned that only the funded section needs to meet those standards. DOT officials at the site visit offered a quick estimate of \$100,000 for design and \$250,000 for construction. The town share might be around \$70,000. And DOT offered to provide more cost details.

Bob and Todd proposed a Task Force resolution requesting the DOT to conduct a preliminary cost analysis for the two crossing alternatives, bridge over and tunnel under. Discussion focused on whether the timing is right to conduct the study. Bruno felt it might be premature, and that it might deter acquisition of remaining easements. Todd pointed out that the study and then a possible funding request would probably take many months, and that hopefully the remaining easements will be in place before then. He said the Route 13 crossing is the “heaviest lift we have. If the DOT offered to study the alternatives, I’m for getting that information.”

David F. moved, and Bruno seconded the motion to request the DOT study. A quorum of six of the eleven Task Force members being present, the following resolution passed unanimously:

Resolution to Region 3 NYSDOT requesting a Preliminary Costing Exercise for Dryden Rail Trail over and under crossing alternatives at NYS Route 13.

WHEREAS, success in establishing a 10.5 mile rail-trail extension connecting the Jim Schug Trail at the Village of Dryden to the East Ithaca Recreation Way requires a safe trail crossing at NYS Route 13,

WHEREAS, extensive trail detours (that could enable crossing at the Route 366 intersection or at the Route 13 bridge at Fall Creek) are considered less desirable than a direct crossing,

WHEREAS, a direct at-grade crossing, even with installation of a pedestrian-operated traffic signal, may be undesirable on a busy highway for reasons of safety and traffic flow,

WHEREAS, either a trail walkway passing under the highway or a pedestrian bridge over the road would provide a desirably direct and safe trail crossing without interference of traffic flow at Route 13,

WHEREAS, Mark Frechette, Planning Program Manager, NYSDOT Region 3, has provided time and advice to our project, and has recommended further study of over and under crossing alternatives at Route 13,

WHEREAS, NYS Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton has expressed strong support for the Dryden Rail Trail project and has offered her ongoing support to provide for a safe and direct Route 13 crossing,

WHEREAS, the Dryden Rail Trail Committee needs to understand the full design and construction costs associated with over and under crossing alternatives at Route 13 in order to seek prospective funding opportunities,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Town of Dryden Rail Trail Task Force requests of NYSDOT Region 3 a Preliminary Costing Exercise for over and under rail-trail crossings at NYS Route 13, near Varna in the Town of Dryden; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Town of Dryden Rail Trail Task Force requests of NYSDOT Region 3 a timely response by December 31, 2017.

September 20, 2017: Approved 6-0-0

Discuss potential change of monthly meeting day (to Monday?)

Bob asked the Task Force to consider moving the meeting because of conflicts with the Wednesday time. Members agreed to the switch

Next meeting was set for 7- 9 pm MONDAY Oct. 16, 2017 at the Dryden Town DPW building

Adjournment at 9:20 pm

Prepared by Alice Walsh Green

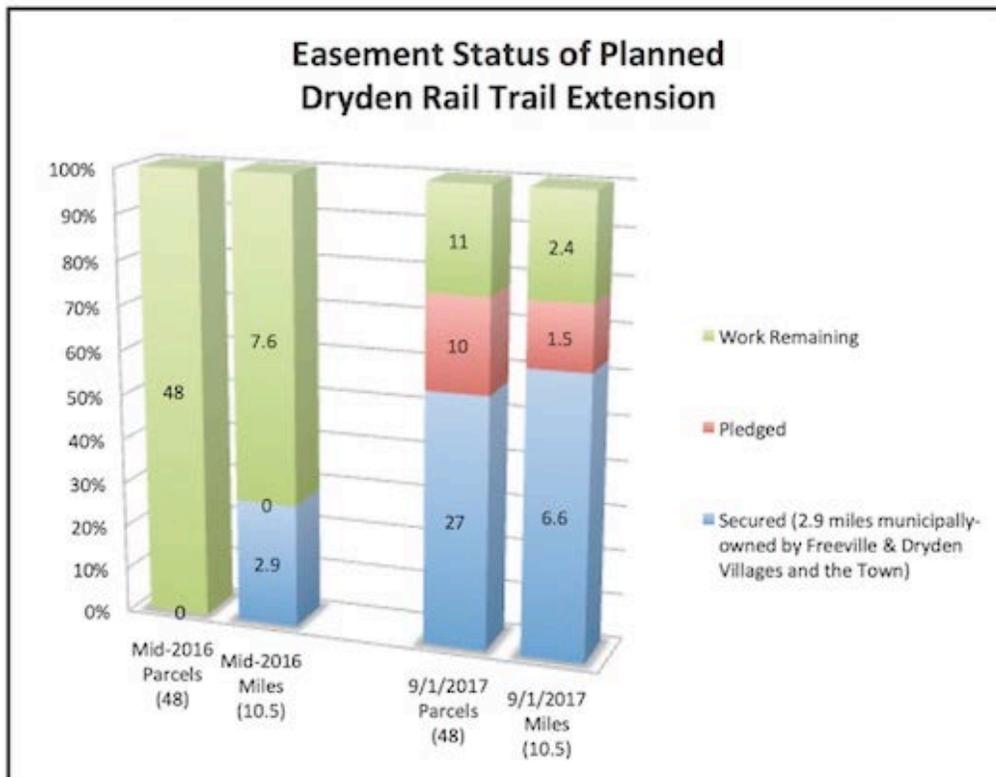
See attachments below:

Cost report prepared by Bruno Schickel:

Cost Report for work to connect Village of Dryden to Village of Freeville	
Donations of Work to date	
Mix Brothers (Dennis and Nate Mix) Machine time 55 hr @ 125.00	\$ 6,875
S & S Tree Service (Jack Simrell) Large tree cutting	\$ 1,000
Dirt / Fill (J E Y Contracting) trucked by Mix Bro's 100 loads @ value of 140.00	\$ 14,000
Reagan Land Surveying (Paid By Bruno Schickel)	\$ 2,100
S & S Tree Service (Paid by Bruno Schickel)	\$ 600
Volunteer time (work done on three different days) 160 hours @ 25.00	\$ 4,000
Total Value of work to date 9/20/17	\$ 28,575
Donations pledged to complete in the next 2 weeks	
Mix Brothers (Dennis and Nate Mix) Machine time 16 hr @ 125.00	\$ 2,000
Dirt / Fill (J E Y Contracting) trucked by Mix Bro's 20 loads @ value of 140.00	\$ 2,800
RMS Gravel 10 loads item 4# @ 250.00	\$ 2,500
Excavator machine time (Paid by Bruno Schickel) 32 hr @ 125.00	\$ 4,000
Colvert pipe 10 inch x 100 fee (paid by Bruno Schickel)	\$ 1,100
Misc expenses (paid by Bruno Schickel)	\$ 500
Volunteer time 50 hr @ 25.00	\$ 1,250
Total Value of work to complete	\$ 14,150
Grand Total	\$ 42,725

(continued)

Chart prepared by Bob B.



Securing the right-of-way: Here's a visual summary of our work, from mid-2016 to September 2017, in obtaining Trail Easements on 48 parcels from 38 landowners along 10.5 miles of the old rail bed.