

**Dryden Rail-Trail Friends and Task Force**  
**Minutes of October 16, 2017 Meeting**  
**Dryden Town DPW**

**Attendance:** Todd Bittner, Diane Tessaglia-Hymes, Chris Tessaglia-Hymes, Bob Beck, David Keifer, Dan Lamb, David Fogel, Diann Zeigler, Susan Ashdown, Milo Richmond, Dave Burnett, Kevin Dean, Steve Winans, Bruno Schickel, Armin Heurich, Alice Green, Nancy Munkenbeck

**Call to order** (7:10 p.m.) – Bob Beck

Village of Freeville resident asked to add request to the agenda (below). Minutes were approved.

**More follow-up from Community-Design Workshop: Ideas to name the whole trail**  
– Alice, Diane, David F., Todd, Bruno, Bob

Members of the Design Committee (listed above) met Oct. 10 to map out next steps, based on input from the June Community Design Workshop. They decided to begin with establishing the overall trail name, before choosing a logo design. To hone in on name options, the committee pulled suggestions from the workshop, decided to invite more ideas online and at the next meeting. The committee agreed to conduct a straw poll to rate the suggestions, using the group list serve and input from attendees at the October meeting.

Alice reported that 20 name suggestions emerged after a lively on-line discussion. “Dryden Rail Trail” received more than twice as many on-line votes as the nearest contenders, “Dryden Crossing Trail” and “Dryden Crossings Trail.” She introduced the straw poll process, inviting attendees to place colored stickers on their top three trail name choices. Prior to the rating exercise, several task force members and trail friends spoke.

Bob asked, first, that the suggested name Bob Beck Trail be pulled out of the running. He said he favors keeping the words “rail trail” in the name to designate the origin and type of trail, and that adding “Dryden” keeps it from being generic and makes it unique. A Google search (suggested by Susan) revealed no other similar name. Bob also suggested that a fourth word in the name would likely make it too cumbersome. Bruno agreed that “Dryden Rail Trail” says it all, adding that there will be lots of other naming options for individual sections of the trail. Chris said the Dryden Rail Trail name is specific and that he’s glad the name will be decided first, so the logo design proceeds from it. Dan said he and many members of the Task Force have been torn, liking the original name, but not being sure whether it was creative or unique enough. Todd noted that the suggested tagline “Connecting Communities” can be used in many settings, and conveys a lot about the project, too.

The “Sticky Note Straw Poll” exercise then yielded the following ratings: “Dryden Rail

Trail” 59 points, “Dryden Crossing Trail” 14 points; “Dryden Crossings Trail” 4 points, “Dryden Watershed Trail” 2 points, “DIRT “ (Dryden Interconnected Rail Trail) 2 points, “Three Creeks Trail” 1 point.

Alice said the Design subcommittee will reconvene to finalize the name recommendation after this latest input, and to consider some other design recommendations expected soon from the June workshop facilitators, David Cutter and Reed Heugerich.

### **Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) /Game Farm update –**

Dan, Todd, Bob

Dan reported on a 3-hour meeting September 26 with DEC officials: Jim Farquhar, Chief, of the DEC Bureau of Wildlife; Mike Schiavone, Head, Game Management Section; Evan Wills, Manager of Reynolds Game Farm; Aaron Swartwood, Asst. Manager, Reynolds Game Farm; Chuck Parker, of the NYS Conservation Council; Steve Wowelko of the Onondaga County Federation of Sportsmen and Bill Conners, head of the Fish and Wildlife Management Board. Representing the Town of Dryden were Dan, Supervisor Jason Leifer, Town Planner Ray Burger, Bob representing the Rail Trail Task Force, and Todd representing Cornell Natural Areas, the CU Deer Management program and the Task Force.

Dan and Bob presented the rail-trail plan and progress to date. Dan said that the Town, Cornell and Trail Task Force members systematically answered numerous objections to the trail from the Sportsmen’s groups, pointing out that there is no data to support their assertions that a trail would increase crime, sexual assault or terrorism. Dan said the opposition from the Sportsmen’s groups seems to stem from the fact that the Game Farm’s pheasant raising operation is the last one in the state, and was threatened with elimination in 2010. He said Supervisor Leifer reassured attendees that the Rail Trail project would support the Game Farm operation, and that the trail is an economic development project that the town of Dryden wants and needs.

Todd made the point that the trail could serve as an insurance policy for the Game Farm, making it a win for both. He noted that Cornell Natural Areas will open up certain areas for hunting, and wondered if the Town of Dryden might offer some town-owned lands for hunting, as a gesture of cooperation with the Sportsmen’s Groups.

Dan said that the take away from the long meeting was that DEC official Jim Farquhar is willing to work on a five-year memorandum of understanding, spelling out rules and policies that would allow the trail to traverse the 2600 feet through the Game Farm land. The exact route, whether along the old rail bed or across the game farm field, is yet to be determined. Bob said the Dryden delegation was optimistic after the meeting, and expect the DEC will get back to them within a week or two with a summary of the meeting.

In the discussion that followed the meeting report, Bruno suggested getting local sports and gun clubs involved in lobbying for the trail easement. Chris thought the Game Farm might benefit from greater educational emphasis. Milo said he had worked with DEC and the Sportsmen’s groups over many years, and that this sounds like the first significant

progress. He added that the beneficiaries of the pheasant-raising program are based in Avon, NY.

**Route 13 crossing update – Todd, Bob**

Todd and Bob reported on the Department of Transportation (DOT) regional office's response to the Task Force's request for cost estimates for a bridge or tunnel crossing at Route 13. The Task Force voted in October to ask for the estimates, following a September meeting with State Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton, Fernando DeAragon from the County Transportation Council and regional representatives of the DOT. They said Mark Freschette, of the DOT's Syracuse regional office, followed up with a memo citing quotes for similar local projects, such as the Pine Tree Road Bridge. These were considerably higher than on-site estimates made at the September meeting. Todd said the memo indicated that the Route 13 Rail Trail Bridge could cost closer to \$1.3 million, because of a longer span, due in part to abutments that would have to be built off the road shoulders. The bridge would need to span 90 feet, and rise least 16 ½ feet high. Tunnel costs would be comparable, according to the DOT.

Armin asked if the trail could use the crossing at the Route 13/366 intersection, which already has a stoplight. Todd explained that a recent DOT traffic study showed backups already exist at that intersection at peak times. DOT reps also felt that extending the trail back under the existing Fall Creek bridge would not solve the problem, since, in part, many trail users would still go directly across the highway.

The section of Route 13 crossed by the trail is designated "limited access." The existing rail trail crossing could be grandfathered in, but any different alignment would require other regulatory actions. Such changes are hardly ever approved, task force members were told.

Assemblywoman Lifton again offered to seek state funding for the project. Todd suggested the Town could request state funding for a feasibility and concept design study of the crossing options. This wouldn't require a local match, as a federal DOT grant does. Freschette and DeAragon seemed to favor this idea. If the study did not exhaust the funding, it might be rolled over for the actual project, and it could be a match for federal funds, Todd said.

Members voted unanimously to request that Assemblywoman Lifton seek \$100,000 for the study.

**Progress on Dryden to Freeville connection: George Road crossing & west to Freeville – Bruno**

Bruno passed around a revised report (attached) enumerating more than \$45,000 in donated materials, machine time and volunteer time generated to complete the section between the villages of Dryden and Freeville. He estimated that final filling with gravel to stabilize soggy spots would take an additional 50 hours. He said that on a "trial run" between Dryden Agway and Toads Too in Freeville the previous weekend, bikers had to

walk their bikes in some muddy spots. They need the added fill. He would like to use locust logs from cleared trees to create some barriers to keep vehicles from the trail, as well as for some other trail amenities. He will check with Pat Foote, maintenance director for the William George Agency, which owns the property, about using the locust trees.

Bruno also reported that he received a request from the owners of the Hillside Acres mobile home park in Varna to create a connecting access path from the park to the rail trail corridor. Chip Ray, owner of the park, Bruno, Bob, Diane Z. and Rick Kugler met on October 6 to scout out a route for the connector trail. However, that path would need to cross some Cornell owned property.

Bruno said he would like to schedule clearing work on the nearby and overgrown 1500-foot section west of Mount Pleasant Rd. this fall. He estimated the stretch would need about 32 hours of machine time to move some dirt piles, and about 80 hours of volunteer work. "It would be great to get this done by the end of November."

Todd said he would have a concern about facilitating increased use of the trail in that particular section prematurely, because the Town is still in negotiations with Cornell Agriculture and the DEC for adjacent parcels along the rail corridor near the Cornell Compost station. Funneling more hikers and bikers onto that section without the easement could aggravate the negotiations, Todd said. Bob added that the Task Force's grant application to NYS Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation covers that trail section. He said waiting for grant approval would allow all that volunteer time to be applied to the local match for the project.

#### **Plan for public announcement / celebration – Bob, Bruno**

Bruno said his "trial run" bike expedition made him realize we should wait until the Dryden to Freeville section is "ready for prime time" before holding a celebration. Diann Z. noted that the Black Diamond Trail had a "soft opening" last November. Several members said folks are already finding and using the section, but it makes more sense to wait until spring, especially since there may be a good news announcement about the NYS PRHP grant over the winter.

Diane TH suggested that it would be good to give an event/fund raising committee enough time for planning. Todd wanted to have giving and naming levels set in place for fund raising, and suggested setting up subcommittees to work on events, branding and funding raising.

#### **Request for screening by Freeville Village resident**

Kevin Dean of Railroad St. in the Village of Freeville said he wanted the Task Force to know he is a full supporter of the trail. Because it crosses very near his home, he requested some kind of fencing or vegetative barrier to protect his family's privacy. Todd Bittner said the task force needs to develop "a suite of possible accommodations" for Dean's and similar situations. Alice noted that the Design Connect group listed many options for vegetative screening and fencing in their 2015 report. Bob thanked Dean for

attending and said the committee will be looking at screening options.

Next Meeting set for 7 pm MONDAY Nov. 20 in the Freeville Village Hall.

**Meeting adjourned** at 9:25 pm

Submitted by Alice Green

See attachment below:

Cost Report Update: 10/16/17:

## Cost Report for work to connect Village of Dryden to Village of Freeville

by Bruno Schickel Vice Chair of Dryden Rail Trail task Force 10/16/17

### Donations of Work to date

Mix Brothers ( Dennis and Nate Mix ) Machine time 72 hr @ 125.00	\$ 9,000
S & S Tree Service ( Jack Simrell ) Large tree cutting	\$ 1,000
Dirt / Fill ( J E Y Contracting) trucked by Mix Bro's 120 loads @ value of 140.00	\$ 16,800
Reagan Land Surveying ( Paid By Bruno Schickel)	\$ 2,100
S & S Tree Service ( Paid by Bruno Schickel )	\$ 600
Excavator machine time ( Paid by Bruno Schickel ) 24 hr @ 125.00	\$ 3,000
Colvert pipe 10 inch x 100 fee ( paid by Bruno Schickel )	\$ 800
RMS Gravel item 4# @ 250 7 loads	\$ 1,750
Volunteer time ( work done on three different days ) 176 hours @ 25.00	\$ 4,400

**Total Value of work to date 10/16/17** **\$ 39,450**

### Donations pledged to complete in the next 3 weeks

RMS Gravel item 4# @ 250 10 loads	\$ 2,500
Excavator machine time ( to be paid by Bruno Schickel ) 16 hr @ 125.00	\$ 2,000
Misc expenses ( to be paid by Bruno Schickel )	\$ 300
Volunteer time 50 hr @ 25.00	\$ 1,250

**Total Value of work to complete** **\$ 6,050**

**Grand Total** **\$ 45,500**