

**Dryden Rail Trail Task Force and Friends
Minutes of the Feb 19, 2018 Meeting
Freeville Village Hall**

Attendance: Judy Pierpont, David Keifer, Bob Beck, Bruno Schickel, Susan Ashdown, Ewa Wdzieczak, Jeanne Grace, Michele Blackman, Russ Nelson, Brent Hollister, Kevin Dean, John Kiefer, Milo Richmond, Todd Bittner, John Lampman, Alice Green

Meeting was convened at 7:05 pm

Additions to the agenda: 1) Re-designation of State Parks grant project manager, 2) Tasks for friends group, 3) Changes in task force membership, 4) Privacy barrier for Railroad St. property

Minutes of the January meeting approved by voice vote.

Re-designate project manager for State Parks Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYS OPRHP) Grant

After initiating work with town staff to implement the NYS OPRHP grant, John K. and Bob determined that the best division of labor would be giving Bob the project manager position, with John providing expert guidance and technical assistance for implementation. The two will work with Bruno on construction planning. Bob will be the contact person with both the Town of Dryden and Kathleen McIsaac of NYS OPRHP

Tasks for Friends of the Dryden Rail Trail

Bruno announced that at the end of the meeting he would resign from Task Force to be able to help with fund raising. Since Town appointees by municipal law cannot solicit donations, the Friends group will meet separately to coordinate fund raising. Bruno said he would still attend joint task force/friends meetings.

He reiterated the intention that the group will raise the full \$182,000 local share, so that no tax dollars are needed to match the parks grant.

Alice reported that at the last town board meeting, the supervisor explained the town intends to authorize use of the Town's Recreation Reserve Fund for initial trail expenses. These funds can be restored through grant funds and donations.

Changes in Task Force Membership

There are now three vacancies on the Task Force, created by two resignations and Alice's appointment to the Town Board. Alice will send an email to the 200+ member list serve seeking new volunteers. It will include a note about the town's goal of greater gender parity on town committees, as well as an explanation that members of the Friends of the Rail Trail Group, not Task Force members, will be handling local fund raising.

Privacy Barriers for Railroad Street Property

Kevin Dean brought a complaint that he was not contacted to follow up after he requested in October that the town provide plantings as a barrier between his Freeville village backyard and the trail. He mentioned that he and his family support the trail, but were very disappointed that they haven't heard from the Task Force. He said he expected to have a follow-up phone call within that week, and he doesn't want to be ignored. As a measure of his family's support, he said that his daughter, a girl scout, wants to work on a project to

install 6 benches along the trail. They have ordered another 40 trees to plant, but now request that the town pays for a 6-foot -high fence along the entire border.

Bruno apologized for not following up quickly enough. Bob added that all the members of the Task Force are volunteers, and are working hard to follow up on details across the 10.5 miles of the trail. Bruno said the privacy hedges are on the trail work plan, and were discussed earlier today with Town DPW and at last month's meeting (See Jan. 2018 minutes.). He will meet Kevin at 7 am 2/20.

Preparation of Updateable GIS Map of trail and status – Todd, Bob

Todd and Bob have created a new set of maps that show status of easements, and more details of trail progress, for internal use and to show stakeholders and planners those details. Russ said he has been trying to work on the map with the open street map application, and asked about having access to the new GIS map. Todd said there are still details to be worked into the mapping before it will be available to the public. He mentioned that although we had a "soft opening" of the Dryden-Freeville section last fall, there's still a need to finish rules and regulation, create signage, and mark road crossings. When these are complete, the sections can be added to IthacaTrails.org. , but no Dryden Rail Trail sections meet the criteria yet. Susan asked if the internal mapping could show links to other trails? Yes.

County Strategic Tourism implementation grant – Todd, John, Bruno, Bob

John reached out to 5 regional engineering companies with a request for proposals to study Route 13 crossing options. Three proposals were received. A selection committee, John, Bob, Bruno, Todd and Ray Burger, selected one and are now checking references. No proposal is for over \$20,000, well under the typical county strategic initiative tourism grant that will be sought to fund the study. The deliverable is a preliminary design and cost estimate for building a bridge or tunnel.

TB: Makes sense to get this info so we can go after proper funding for this high-ticket item. We'll have the vision and the cost lined up. BB: Since a typical grant in this category is up to \$30,000, we would like to ask for additional study of the two trestles at the Game Farm, railings at FH Fox Bridge and washout near the Fox Bridge, and possibly costs of building a trail spur going down to Fall Creek under the Route 13 bridge and back to the rail bed corridor.

TB, BB and Judy P. will work on putting this application together. Our main county contact, Tom Knipe has taken a job with the city. Judy offered to help collect letters of support.

OPRHP grant implementation

The grant implementation committee met with Kathleen McIsaac, project liaison from OPRHP, to work out expectations for the grant. The team will also coordinate with Town Planning, Town Attorney, DPW and Town financial staff. Bob has been working on getting 27 easements completed and certified by the town attorney. We're still waiting for the Game Farm agreement.

TB was happy to see how willing the state was to be flexible on what moneys could be used for matches. They will permit switching expenses from the Dryden-Freeville section (already raised through volunteer work) to another part, if funds and easements allow. This will require delineating what discrete pieces we might add, "If funds allow."

RN: What about avoiding costs by using volunteers? TB: we want to have as much as possible built by volunteer builds and in-kind contributions. BB: We have to track all the time and contributions to get reimbursement for in-kind work. We will be asking Kathleen McIsaac for more details on rates of reimbursement for various kinds of services to the trail.

Offer of financial contribution from the Nature Conservancy – Bob

Jim Howe, Director of The Nature Conservancy CWNV Chapter, said his group would like to support the trail with a \$5,000 contribution. BB asked in what way we could recognize this organization's contribution.

Jeanne: What about asking for signage and including "donated by TNC" on sign.

TB: We have talked about level of giving and finance committee. We need to set a standard

BS: We have to make sure we pay attention to value of signage. I'm very confident folks will step up. Many people want to step forward to help with this. There will be lot of people to recognize. BB: Rick Kugler has offered to help with fund raising, and is willing to work with Bruno on this. TB: When we talked about recognize donors... we also want to recognize those who grant easements

Easements Update - Bob, Bruno

- *DEC/Game Farm.* BB noted that Dan Lamb initiated a resolution from the Town Board to DEC appreciating the work of the Game Farm.
- *Final Cornell easement.* Bob and Milo met with Kristin Gutenberger from Cornell's Real Estate office and Glenn Evans from the Ag school, regarding the easement along the roadway to the CU compost facility. This section is a bit northwest, and paralleling the proposed solar project. CU Ag wants the town to fund a hedge and a 6-foot fence. Initially they wanted town to install the fence, but they agreed to do it with CU staff if we pay for materials for that fence. Bob is negotiating fence and hedge costs. Also, the town will provide millings of recycled asphalt for dust control on the driveway. TB: we might get the solar company to do some clearing on the trail. And this could be a match for the grant.
- *Gary Sloan development next to Fox Bridge.* He's agreed to deed the trail section to the town when the development has been completed. For now, he's reviewing a trail easement that's necessary to be in time for the grant contract.
- *Print Shop at Hall Rd.* Their attorney in PA is reviewing the material.
- *Hanson Aggregates* has agreed to a meeting in the spring.
- *NYSE&G* BS said he is still pursuing this.

Logo and Signage

BS: Have to move forward with logo and signage.

TB: Need regulatory signs with logo on it to put up this spring and the task force needs to decide the dawn to dusk issue. BB: Diane is away in New Zealand and will be back at the end of this month. We need to present this at the next meeting. BB has prepared a long list of possible rules for discussion.

TB will share CU signs. Recently had to change signs with new Botanical Gardens logo across 96 miles of natural area trails. We have been working on universal icons for those who don't speak English. RN: Do we need to check whether there are town rules that need to be respected in preparing trail rules?

MR: Should we put up signs that say this trail isn't complete, use at your own risk?

RN: What about trying "soft rules" for the soft opening phase?

TB: Better to get the real rules up rather than incremental steps.

BS: Maybe we should do some trial signs before we put them up.

TB: Need a way to get feedback if you use temp signs.

BB: The critical section is Dryden to Freeville. We could use temp signs there. We want to have a grand celebration to really open that section. We can check to see if the highway department can fabricate some of the signs.

TB: It would be great if we had a volunteer who wanted to make the opening happen. We can put that out on the list serve.

Financial Planning

Bruno outlined an overall plan to match the State Parks grant, including an estimate of volunteer labor, materials, trucking and machine time that could be donated over the five year grant period. The Town share will include substantial DPW work on trestles, washouts, etc.

Alice talked about using the town recreation reserve fund for cash flow for this project.

Todd clarified that under the grant guidelines, the town must spend on the trail, before the state will provide reimbursement.

Milo said he believes a recreational trail is a very appropriate use for the recreation reserve fund. It supports all the kinds of activities that all ages can benefit from; health, fitness and exercise, bird watching, hiking, biking etc.

Bruno said he would encourage the Town Board to say task force must raise all funds for the local match, without using tax dollars.

Next Meeting: March 19 at Varna Community Center. (To Be Confirmed)

Adjournment: 8:58 pm

Respectfully Submitted by Alice Walsh Green