

**Dryden Rail Trail Task Force and Friends
Minutes of the May 21, 2018 Meeting
Dryden DPW Building**

Attendance: Todd Bittner, John Keifer, Bruno Schickel, Bob Beck, Chris Tessaglia Hymes, Diane Tessaglia Hymes, Dan Lamb, David Kiefer, David Fogel, Judy Pierpont, Alice Green, David Bravo-Cullen, Russ Nelson

Call to order 7:04 pm — Bob Beck

Additions to agenda:

Russ suggested another workday for trail clearing. Bruno said he'd put together a game plan for workdays at the Mt. Pleasant section, with the goal of opening that stretch by end of June.

Rick and Diann Kugler have requested a connection from Hillside Acres to the trail in Varna. Bob said CU Real Estate (Kristin Gutenberger) is looking into this. CU is swapping with the Game Farm use of some land along the HS acres, so maybe can't use the field, but could go through the woods.

Approval of the May minutes with one correction: Approximately 22 bollards (not 45) were installed at the George Rd. parking area at the last work party.

Design Committee – Diane TH

The Design Committee presented and recommended the final logo design. Todd moved approval; David F. seconded. Approval was unanimous. Bob and Diane noted there have been lots of good comments since this version was posted on the trail's Facebook page.

Next steps: add this with a style guide to the town website and Diane's contact info to make sure it's being used properly. If people want to use the logo, they should get a clean tiff or jpg version. There was a short discussion on copywriting. DTH said we are copywriting it by using it. If anyone wanted to steal it, we'd say no and maybe have to go to court.

Dairy Day display for this year:

The Rail Trail is registered for this event, and now owns a cow cutout, which needs to be painted. David Keifer volunteered to prime it. The new logo can be added. Bruno, Dan, and Bob volunteered to help set up and staff the booth. Diane offered to get a quote on stickers to affix to the trail banner, and possibly to hand out.

County Strategic Tourism Initiatives Grant for \$26,000 awarded to Dryden Rail Trail – Todd, Bob, John, Bruno

Todd wrote the grant proposal, and John prepared requests for proposals for a study of options for crossing Route 13 and for necessary work at the FH Fox bridge over Route 366. The selected engineering firm for the Route 13 crossing study, Barton & Loguidice (B&L), will begin work as soon as possible. John K said the work should start with a subsurface study to determine if there's bedrock and how deep it is. Todd said an alternative would be to look for well data in that area. Bruno said NYS has a clearinghouse for details of wells. But that is public water area, so not many wells were dug.

T.G. Miller will prepare plans for the FH Fox Bridge work and for trails to the Fall Creek bridge at Route 13 (DOT's P.E.-stamp requirement). Bob said he talked with Dondi Harner from TG Miller who is willing to work on the Fox Bridge portion of the project: railings, signs, and any structural needs. He said it was originally thought that an architect's stamp would be adequate for that work, but DOT in Syracuse requires an engineer's stamp. Dondi will also look at engineering requirements to build a trail spur from the rail bed to the existing Route 13 Bridge and back to the trail.

To minimize cost for that temporary Route 13 crossing, there was a question about whether it could be simple pathways rather than ADA compliant full width trail. If necessary, the pathways could be more fully developed later. Bob said he thinks we need to build full trail. It's a trailhead and highly visible place. Todd clarified that the NYS grant doesn't require making it ADA compliant for now. Bruno said that on the east side the site for the proposed trail is already at 5%. On the other side, there's just one place that needs fill. The wetland is not in DOT right of way. He suggested meeting with DOT, but reducing the scope dramatically and still have a nice path. Bob said he would obtain for Dondi a Route 13 record plan from DOT to use for the plan.

Todd said the STI grant also covers the washout and Game Farm trestles, but now it appears the washout can be dealt with more easily. He will reach out to the new tourism planner to see if we can re-direct the grant money to the trail spur rather than the washout.

Federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant application deadline, Aug. 16

Bob said he just learned Friday that DOT TAP grant is due Aug. 16, not later in the fall, as originally thought. The B&L study is a step in preparing the grant, since it will provide information about whether bridge or tunnel options are financially feasible. A workshop for the TAP grant in Syracuse is scheduled June 7; then pre-application review is June 28. By then the application should be entered into the online portal. Judy agreed to gather letters of support for the August due date.

Bruno asked whether applying for something and being rejected is a good thing. Todd said the task force was strongly urged to re-apply. Our 2016 proposal was highly regarded in the last round.

Bruno asked whether, strategically, it might be better to wait for the next funding period after we have more of the trail open? Then ask for bridge AND surfacing for the trail. He said he is worried about how the bridge or tunnel would effect getting easements.

Todd said our philosophy has been to build what we can, when we can. We could also put together a grant application to finish the sections of the trail covered in the current NYS Parks EPF grant to ADA compliance with a stone dust surface. The current Parks grant will just cover an earth surface. Adding stone dust, at an estimated \$10 per linear foot, would cost \$250K from Game Farm to Pinckney Rd .

Bruno again questioned the wisdom of building an expensive Route 13 crossing before easements through Etna are complete. Todd said we won't know results of the grant till Jan 2019, it can take a year to complete the contracts; construction probably wouldn't start until 2021. The Town match is 20 percent for TAP.

Bob said he believes it is important to keep up momentum on the project, and not to lose multi-modal funding money that Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton has offered for matching dollars. He repeated that County transportation Planners and NYS DOT regional representatives have strongly urged the task force to apply again.

Todd reminded members that the county also encouraged the task force to apply for funding through their capital grants program. He said the first category of county funding is the STI grant, and the second will be for up to \$70,000 in a capital grant. This could help us to go for easements that have been hard to get. Then another TAP grant could be applied for.

John said the project could go for another State Parks grant after we complete the current one, and that could help finish the project.

AARP grant proposal – Alice, Bob

An AARP grant application for community improvement funds was submitted last week. It seeks \$8,000 for three kiosks, and seven benches. Announcement of grant recipients will be made in June. Recipients must agree to complete and document the work by the end of the year.

Kiosks: design, cost, community build – Bruno

Bruno provided a kiosk design that he priced for a copper roof that will age well. Kiosk components can be built off site, and then moved and installed on site.

Benches

Bob found a company in Indiana that produces steel frame benches that use solid recycled plastic boards (2x4) that look like wood and are said to last 50 years, and are maintenance free. Cost with in-ground posts is \$329 per bench, not including shipping charges. Could ship by freight on pallets to DPW. The company would charge \$125/set of two metal brackets, which could be used with locally-sourced wood.

Deputy Highway Superintendent Chris Clauson found a Brooktondale business, Aardvarc Welding and Fabricating, that could fabricate and assemble 6-foot benches similar to Jim Shug trail benches using welded steel pipe and treated lumber at \$428 each for a minimum of 10 benches. This firm made a prototype frame that was delivered to DPW.

Bruno said he would prefer to source the benches locally. At Montgomery Park structural fiberglass was used. Tom Brown would give us short pieces of locust for free. Bob wondered if a comparable recycled plastic could be found locally. Todd said it makes sense to look at true costs including maintenance; plastic would take less maintenance.

New Pedestrian Crossing Signs and Flashing Caution Lights in Dryden Village – Bob

Bob said he had talked with Highway Superintendent Rick Young about the new crossing markers in the village. Rick thinks these cost \$15K per set, but didn't know who funded them. John K said this was part of the sidewalk project for which the village got the DOT grant. Bruno said this type of system doesn't work where traffic is at higher speeds. Todd said the town can go ahead and paint the cross walk and put in the signage for the George Rd. crossing.

Game Farm Crossing - Todd

Cornell Transportation Planner Reed Heugerich offered to study traffic speeds on Game Farm Rd at the trail crossing. Someone stole the traffic counter. They did get some data that they can share with us. We originally suggested that we would need to go under Game Farm Road Bridge because it was such a dangerous crossing, but a walkway under the bridge wasn't built. The road and bridge are now higher with better visibility, and an at-grade crossing will likely be used instead. Both T. Ithaca and Dryden need to agree on the solution here. There's also a need to dissuade folks from parking on the opposite (east) side of the road on road-shoulder parking.

Village Resolutions Vs. MOU's

Kathleen McIsaac from NYS Parks has indicated that both villages will need to sign the contract for the grant. Bob suggests requesting resolutions from the villages, similar to the one that Freeville wrote for the TAP grant. David F. said that Freeville DPW chief Pat Brennan told him that the DPW's of the towns and villages have already divvied up maintenance of the trail informally. Bob said the Town has maintained Schug trail and the village mows the trail on the north side of Main Street.

Easements Update

DEC Volunteer Stewardship Agreement

Bob wrote the application to the DEC so that Town DPW staff will do the work and maintain the Game Farm section under the agreement. DEC says that individual volunteers would have to fill out separate applications, which we want to avoid. Todd agreed that this demonstrates that this is a Town commitment.

Dan said we've been working on this for a year. This is a 5-year agreement. DEC officials are worried about pushback from the hunting lobby. One Sportsman's Group leader already printed an opinion piece in the Poughkeepsie paper, and it was copied on-line in the Ithaca Journal. Dan followed up with the DEC's Jim Farquhar and asked the Task Force not to react. He suggested that the Town of Dryden might open up a town-owned property to hunting as a way of giving the Sportsman something in return for the trail agreement crossing the Game Farm property.

Todd also talked with Farquhar. He asked if the sportsmen really want to increase hunting in the town, or are they putting up a front to show they're pushing back. This town action would give them a chance to show they got something back. Dan said that DEC maintains they are working on the agreement and you'll have it soon.

Cornell Agriculture

The last CU easement has been obtained. The Town paid the Ag school for fencing and vegetation at the compost driveway. Todd said Cornell folks now know of our interest in having Sun8 developers do some of the clearing work as part of their development near the compost road.

Gary Sloan Development

Bob said Gary Sloan promised an easement as soon as Town Board approved his development. He indicated that Gary's lawyer is sending a red-line edit to the town attorney. However, Todd noted that Gary Sloan is selling this development.

Bob said he is working with the town attorney to review of the right of way across the length of the trail covered by the grant. He would like the Town Board to approve the easements already received, at their June meeting. Five easements have been waiting for town approval, some since last summer. Because of the costs of publishing public hearings for the easement acceptance, the Town has been waiting till there are more to approve at once.

Hansen Aggregates

Bruno and Bob had a face-to-face meeting with Hansen officials, one from PA. Bruno said they were great to work with. They were fine with a hedge, rather than a fence barrier. They wanted an attachment to the easement regarding the hedge and cross-walk signs at Pinckney Road. They'd already sent the easement to their attorney. They asked how they could help with trail construction. They grind up concrete; could be used for hard surface for trails. Todd said Cornell Natural Areas has used this ground concrete; it tamps well into the trail surface.

NYSEG

NYSEG is moving forward with licensing agreement. There's a big washout that we will have to span in the NYSG section

Herrmann

Bob is still working on gaining an easement east of Pinckney Rd. The south side of the trail to the centerline belongs to Jim and Amelia Herrmann. They lease to the storage facility there. He had agreed to sign the easement, but he had a stroke and now is reluctant. Bob re-approached them with a mailed letter, photos and maps. There's a ravine with a concrete culvert the width of the trail, and it isn't possible to cross on only half. So this easement is essential. Glenn Swan purchased the neighboring property, and uses the driveway now.

Next Meeting: June 18 in Freeville Village Hall

Adjournment at 9:15 pm

Respectfully submitted by Alice Walsh Green