

**Dryden Rail Trail Friends and Task Force  
Minutes of the August 17, 2016 Meeting  
Varna Community Center**

**Attendance:** Steve Shaum, Nancy Kleinrock, William Shang, Armin Heurich, Tyson Merrill, Bruno Schickel, David Keifer, Kathy Ludders, John Ludders, John Kiefer, Brian Postle, Milo Richmond, David Fogel, Nancy Brown, Tom Brown, Michael Lane, Dan Lamb, Judy Pierpont, Eileen Maxwell, Nancy Munkenbeck, Bob Beck, Alice Green

Meeting was convened at 7:05 pm.

**Review of agenda** for additions

**Report on Rail Trail List Serve:** Alice said the list serve is open to all interested in the project. Currently there are 70+ members. All can submit to the list serve. Replies can be directed to the individual originating a message, or to all list serve members. Alice and Bob are administrators, able to add or delete members, but the list serve is not moderated.

**Seven new maps** showing the trail from Route 13 to Dryden Village have been supplied by Fernando D'Aragon and his staff at Ithaca Tompkins County Transportation Council. They are available for viewing on the Dryden Town Website: <http://dryden.ny.us/board-commission-list/rail-trail-task-force>

**Tax Maps, Ownership, Property Deeds, Surveys, and Trail Easement Prep**

Bob, Bruno and Alice have been visiting property owners along the section of the trail between Game Farm Road and Route 13. Bob is preparing easements tailored to each property. Most owners have been contacted and the response has been very positive.

Tom and Nancy Brown just submitted their signed easement, and were thanked enthusiastically by all in attendance.

Bob distributed a very well articulated letter of support from Rachel Graham, another property owner who signed the easement.

Bob described a situation with one unresponsive property owner in Varna whose land appeared to cross to both sides of the RR right of way. He studied tax maps and deeds and discovered that the actual property line only goes half way across the right of way, which allows a work around—across the Cornell-owned half. The County Assessment office agreed with Bob's analysis, and officially changed the property map.

New maps for the Route 13 to Dryden section include info about properties that are adjacent to but do not extend across the RR bed. There are about 48 RR property owners on the Ithaca to Dryden route, with a few owning multiple properties.

Mike Lane suggested contacting Mahlon Perkins regarding the original deeds. Bob said he will contact Mahlon to verify who owns the FH Fox Bridge.

Todd Bittner is working with Cornell Real Estate to review the easement Bob prepared for the several Cornell properties.

Dan Lamb noted that when a significant number of easements are in hand, a town hearing will be scheduled to accept them.

### **Freeville Village Trail Agreement with the Town of Dryden**

David Fogel reported that the Village of Freeville Board of Trustees is solidly behind the project. There are a number of ways to situate the trail. The village is considering a proposed pocket park on Route 38. It could be a great junction, with a Railroad Station theme, exhibits, etc. Regarding maintenance, the Village might consider the model if the Village of Dryden has an agreement with the Town of Dryden to maintain the trail.

The railroad station theme could be extended to other stops along the entire trail.

### **William George Agency Breakthrough!**

Bruno Schickel reported that he and Bob Beck had a very encouraging meeting with administrators at the agency. Bruno had a preliminary conversation with Pat Foote, William George facilities manager, who lives on the Schug trail. This helped anticipate points of contention from the past, and garnered Pat's support for the meeting.

An obstacle for the George Agency was an earlier proposal that would have taken the trail under George Road through a tunnel that would have created a place where kids could hide. Bruno surveyed the site and proposed going back 300-400 feet and creating a gradual slope to get up to and across the road. This eliminates the need for a tunnel, and it might also create a site for a small parking area.

When they met with George Agency officials, Jeff Daily and Danielle Chase, they presented maps, easement documents and the trail plan. Jeff agreed to recommend the trail easement to his board at their fall meeting, and talked about their need to be a good neighbor. The trail might enhance their horseback program. It might be necessary to add gates at certain points.

### **Next Steps**

#### **Contact property owners in the next section**

After good progress working at both ends of the proposed trail, the next challenge will be to contact owners along the Route 13/NYSEG to Dryden Village section. Once again, it will be helpful if any trail supporters who know these property owners can help the task force approach them.

#### **Meet with DOT Officials**

The NY State Department of Transportation (DOT) is likely to release a Request for Proposals for Grants for projects shortly. They will meet with local leaders September 6, and it will be important for representatives from our Dryden trail group to meet with them. Hope to have a separate meeting to learn what the DOT could support in a Dryden Trail grant, and to clarify ownership of the FH Fox Bridge.

Bill Shang noted that the benefits of the trail from a public health perspective should be emphasized. He volunteered to help write about this for a section of the grant proposal.

### **Explore alternatives for Route 13 Crossing**

Bruno suggested one solution might be an at-grade pedestrian crossing. Several expressed concern regarding safety for pedestrians and bikers.

Going under the highway bridge at Fall Creek could add 2/3 to ¾ mile to the trail, but it would add a creek-side experience. For transportation grant purposes, a path to the Route 366 intersection should be included as a spur to the trail, to tie it in with NYSEG, etc., as an employment hub.

The following alternatives for the crossing were brainstormed:

- An at-grade crossing
- Wide shoulder right of way outside of guard rails or a mowed path that takes the trail under the bridge
- Crossing at the intersection of Rtes. 13 and 366 where there's a light, and proceeding along Hall road to rejoin the RR bed
- Obtain Cornell plantations approval to cut an angle down through the woods
- A bridge over the highway (in Buffalo there's a bridge over the highway with a circular on ramp)
- A tunnel under Route 13

### **Prepare a Grant Proposal**

Back in the 1999, Former Town Supervisor Jim Schug coordinated a 50-page proposal for this project, complete with many letters of support from area stakeholders. This can serve as a start for the new proposal, and the task force needs help in updating the support letters.

Mike Lane suggested getting help on the grant from the county Planning Department. The following people volunteered to help with grant writing: Judy P., Milo, Bill Shang, Alice, David F and John Kiefer.

**Announcement:** Armin reported that the Finger Lakes Cycling Club will be celebrating the completion of the Black Diamond Train at Cass Park pavilion on Sunday, Oct. 2. The BD trail is 8.3 miles long, with a cinder/ crushed gravel surface over landscape fabric. It required 18 culverts. At one time there was a Black Diamond passenger train.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm

**The NEXT MEETING was set for 7 pm Wednesday September 21.**

(The meeting will be in the **Dryden Village Hall, 16 South Street, Dryden**)

Submitted by: Alice Walsh Green