

**Dryden Rail-Trail Friends and Task Force
Minutes of the April 19, 2017 Meeting
Varna Community Center**

Attendance: Bob Beck, Bruno Schickel, Mike Richmond, David Fogel, Eric Sambolec, Alice Green, David Bravo-Cullen, Todd Bittner, Diane Tessaglia-Hymes, Chris Tessaglia-Hymes, Amy German, Dan Lamb, Judy Pierpont

Call to order (7:07 p.m.) – Bob Beck

Envision a Logo for Dryden Rail Trail – Diane Tessaglia-Hymes

Diane and Chris outlined their research on the history of the trail, and presented some options for designs using themes of rails turning to trails with footsteps, black diamond shape and Cornell red. The sketches and ideas sparked lots of discussion. Todd said our group has been using Dryden Rail Trail (DRT), but the name is still up for discussion; eg., the overall system could be the DRT, but individual sections could lend themselves to more community based themes, or naming rights. The charette will gather ideas for the overall “language” of the trail. Milo suggested a traditional RR crossing motif, David F. said he may work up some additional ideas. Bob expressed gratitude for Diane’s work, and reminded the group that this is a first step in bringing design ideas to the group. Alice suggested that Diane might lead the logo breakout group at the Community Meeting.

Update on plans for Rail-Trail Design Charette, and meeting with facilitators, David Cutter & Reed Huegerich – Alice, Todd, Bob

The Community Design meeting has been scheduled for 9 am to noon on Saturday, June 17 in the Dryden Fire Hall. This is before high school graduations, and after Dairy Day, a chance to table and advertise the meeting. All Dryden residents will be invited, with special focus on those who live along or near the trail. Also, the countywide Trails and Parks Network that produced the new IthacaTrails.org interactive website will send representatives.

Facilitators David C. and Reed met with Bob, Todd and Alice on April 12 to begin planning for the session. It will open with a large group overview of the trail project, including slides of the history, and images from other rail to trail projects. Next, attendees will be invited to join smaller break out groups to work on details like trail signage, kiosk and bench design, overall name and section names, etc. Each breakout group will share their ideas with the large group, and then next steps will be planned.

Facebook Page: “Friends of Dryden Rail Trail” Next Steps– Bruno

All members of the friends group were reminded to add posts and photos to the new Facebook page (especially as spring emerges and more folks are walking the existing trail sections), and to share the page widely.

USA Today video grant application:- Bob

Bob reminded the group that votes for the video submission about the trail are votes for the project, not necessarily for the quality of the video. The nationwide contest will provide grants to selected community projects. Videos with most votes move to judges. Repeat voting daily is encouraged April 12–May 12:

The Dryden Trail video, which focuses on the need for bridge repairs along the trail, was completed by Bob and his son, Gordon, and Steve Foote with ground and aerial shots. It can be found at

<http://act.usatoday.com/submit-an-idea/#/gallery/60418376>

Youth volunteer trail work project – Alice, Milo, Bruno

Milo volunteered to help create a trail clearing/ educational project, in conjunction with the Town of Dryden's Youth Employment Readiness program this summer. A new easement that Bob acquired from owners who now live in Alaska will provide a good site for trail clearing in Etna along a 1500-foot corridor. About ten middle school students will provide about 3 hours of trail work over each of four mornings, probably in July. Milo and Alice will meet with Lexi Hartley, from Cornell Cooperative Extension, and town youth employment readiness coordinator, to work out details for the project, including liability insurance for the volunteers.

Report on meeting with Jon Jenson at the Park Foundation – Bob, Alice

Jon Jenson was familiar and enthusiastic about trail projects, but said hard costs like trail construction do not fit with foundation priorities. He explained that in the past, the foundation has funded soft costs like design or planning work. He said he would be available to look at the request again, should such needs arise. He commended the Dryden Task Force and Friends group on the impressive progress made by the all-volunteer group. Todd suggested considering applying for paid staff to do tasks like grant writing or way-finding resources research. He also mentioned that the separate Roy H. Park, Jr.'s Triad Foundation has funded hard cost/construction projects.

Meeting with Ken Lynch, DEC Executive Deputy Commissioner – Dan Lamb, Todd, Bob

Dan invited Commissioner Lynch to come to Ithaca to speak to his class at Cornell on April 20, and secured a meeting to talk about the trail easement at the Game Farm. Although sportsmen's groups have opposed the proposal in the past, trail leaders will emphasize our intent to support the Game Farm operations and the DEC in a way that benefits both pheasant hunters and trail users.

April 30 Bird Walk with Chris Tessaglia-Hymes, Jim Schug Trail, Dryden Lake

The walk with Chris, a birding expert with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, will begin at 7 am Sunday April 30. The event is one of many walks and hikes throughout the county celebrating the launch of IthacaTrails.org, the county's brand new interactive trail map website.

Update on George Road crossing and William George easement – Bruno

Officials of the William George Agency are amenable to extending their easement to facilitate the crossing at George Rd., eliminating the need for another property owner's easement, Bruno reported. He hopes the final sign off will occur in the next month. The section will require some earth moving and tree removal but this could be completed this summer. If so, it's possible the trail from the Village of Dryden to the Village of Freeville could be opened in late summer, early fall.

Update on newly-signed Trail Easements, ongoing negotiations – Bob, Bruno

Bruno met with a representative of NYSEG to discuss their trail easement, and clarified that the Dryden Rail Trail is separate from the extension of the South Hill Recreation Way/Burns Road trail. Although taking our easement request through corporate layers may take time, Bruno was confident they will approve it.

Bruno is also pursuing talks with Saunders Concrete Company for their easement near Pinckney Rd.

Bob made a new contact with a realtor for the owner of property along the rail corridor behind Phoenix books. There the rail bed is a separate tax parcel. Following up on Bob's initial contacts, the realtor will re-approach the owner about an easement or possibly selling it.

Bob is still trying to reach the sole survivor of the donor of Finger Lakes Land Trust property in Etna, to gain permission for the easement and possibly to add some fill along the rail bed.

Bruno suggested creation of a large map to demonstrate visually the progress on gaining easements across the entire 12.5 miles of the proposed trail.

Department of Transportation Grant Application Update

Bob talked with Fernando D'Aragon from the County Transportation Council, who said an announcement of grant recipients can be expected "soon."

Next Meeting : 7 pm Wednesday May 17, at the Dryden DPW building

Adjournment at 8:55 pm

Prepared by Alice Walsh Green