

Dryden Rail Trail Friends and Task Force
Minutes of the Zoom Meeting Monday, August 17, 2020

Attendance: John Kiefer, John Udall, Loren Sparling, Bob Beck, Alice Green, Chris and Diane Tessaglia-Hymes, Susan Ashdown, Rose Borzik, Todd Bittner, Bruno Schickel, Dan Lamb, Karl Kolesnikoff, Bob O'Malley

Call to order to 7:08 pm – Bob Beck, Alice Green

There were no additions to agenda

Approval of July minutes was unanimous.

Pending DEC agreement for trail at Reynolds Game Farm – Dan

Dan said the Town is still in the period of waiting for word from the DEC regarding the Use and Occupancy permit that would give permission for the DRT to operate and maintain the trail through Reynolds Game Farm for 20-50 years. Dan said it's been less than the 8 weeks that Jim Farquhar from the DEC said it might take to complete the permit agreement. Bob wondered if the terms of the Town's DEC agreement regarding Dryden Lake could be applicable to the Game Farm. Dan said he doesn't think so; adding that the DEC has recently asked the Town to take over ownership; he doesn't see this as in the Town's interest. Bruno agrees.

Bob reported that he'd contacted Kathleen McIsaac from Finger Lakes State Parks who was pleased the Occupancy Permit is in progress and is eager to read the terms. Bob's guess is that if it's for 20 years or more, it should be acceptable for the EPF grant. She wasn't familiar with this type of permit, Bob said.

Pending 3-way MOU for Game Farm Road crossing – Alice, Bob

Alice reported that last week the Supervisors of Dryden and Ithaca completed revisions to the proposed three-way Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding creation and maintenance of an at-grade crossing on Game Farm Road between the two Towns' trails. The revisions have gone back to the County's attorney. She said this represents progress, but at a glacial pace. She also mentioned that it appeared that DOT was doing a traffic study at the Game Farm Rd. crossing last month, and asked that the Town notify Bob as soon as the results are sent to the Supervisor and/or Town Clerk.

Bob said he's waiting to hear back from John Lampman about his potential communication with Keith Ewald from Barton and Loguidice (B&L), the engineer the Town of Ithaca has contacted. He's not sure whether they've talked about whether B&L could stamp the crossing plan that John

has agreed to provide on a pro bono basis.

Route 13 bridge project – Bob, Todd, John K, Bruno, Dan, Alice, John L

Erdman Anthony (EA) project engineers are working on the design, and will report back to the committee about costs for different types of alignment. Todd had a question about the ways in which the DRT might seek public input about the design options for the pedestrian bridge. There are a number of options. Sometimes there are stations where people can look at the options and give feedback, other times there are presentations and Q&A opportunities, and on-line meetings are a possibility in this COVID time. Bob wonders what EA would recommend, for example, following what they are doing in the City of Ithaca with their Floral Ave pedestrian bridge project. Todd thought the DRT might get started with conversation about our preferences. The timeline for these presentations is probably in the fall. Susan asked about experience with large Zoom meetings that might include breakout rooms. Dan likes Zoom meetings where folks can record their questions, and interact in breakout rooms. He thinks it's good for citizen involvement, noting the Town has used Zoom sessions to explain proposed Comprehensive Plan updates, but not in very large numbers.

Bruno remembered that EA said they could do a full-fledged public hearing or lesser levels of public engagement. He thinks we should go for the largest gathering we can... even if it's on Zoom. It's an opportunity to educate the public and invite in as much comment as possible. Bob noted some wouldn't participate online. Susan said you'd gain some and lose some. Perhaps presentations could be made for targeted groups, like horseback riders. She asked if the bridge would still accommodate equestrians. Todd said the bridge design specs call for that.

Todd said Zoom breakout groups allow more participation, and DRT facilitators can help in each group. Recordings of these breakout groups can go directly to the bridge consultants, without the mediation of a scribe.

Dan asked if we should be including horses on the bridge. Todd said it is in the grant proposal and in our easements. Dan is concerned regarding liability, particularly on the pedestrian bridge. Todd recalled that DOT said that the bridge can be designed to accommodate horses, and that means the project now saves the expense of the second (east) spur trail for horses. The railing height is designed to accommodate equestrians. Bob said there would need to be signage and rules for the bridge. It might be appropriate to require horseback riders to dismount and lead the horse across the bridge, and maybe even the same for bicyclists. Bruno said he shares Dan's concern; he wants to reinforce with the engineers that the DRT wants to consider all the implications of having horses on the bridge, including the width, at the design phases. Bob said

the current bridge plan calls for 12 feet width, which accommodates horses on the Pine Tree Road pedestrian bridge.

Signs and graphics – Diane, Susan

Diane displayed new laser printed COVID signs, laminated by Susan that will be posted on the trail. New stickers will also be installed, listing the Town's phone extension number to Highway/DPW to report maintenance issues.

New trail work at Etna (Adkins easement west of Rte. 366) – Chris T-H, Bruno

Teens from Dryden's Project Lead program cleared portions of this section in 2017 & 2019, but this year the program was cancelled. Chris reported that he has been working on clearing more of this section in recent weeks to open the stretch another 100 yards remaining to the farm access road between two farm fields. There are another few hundred feet in the easement parcel. For now, it will still be a dead end, but many Etna residents are interested in using the area that is available.

Also, he said, there is interest in opening some trail access on the east side of Route 366, from the Finger Lakes Land Trust's Etna Nature Preserve. It would be great to get some fill on the west side of Route 366 to allow parking before the Adkins section. He wondered whether there could be some limited signage indicating the trail.

Bruno thanked Chris for the work. He looked at a survey map which he believes shows that the DOT owns more than 60 feet from the centerline of Route 366. He said this means the DOT would have to approve any work there. Todd said he's had experience trying to get DOT approval for use of a turn off on Route 13 in Newfield. They were very stringent, requiring perpendicular rather than parallel parking. There's a permit process and they'll require a full parking lot. Bruno said another option would be building a parking lot on a triangular parcel on the south side of the trail owned by Judy Auble, with dimensions of about 100' x 160' x 200'. He thinks this would allow for a serious trailhead and perpendicular parking.

Other upcoming trail work – Bruno

Bruno asked whether the Task Force wants to get into the Etna section to do more serious clearing, even though it's still a dead end pending easements. Judy asked if opening this up would jeopardize the acquisition of the next easement. Bob thought not. Bruno next wants to focus on getting stone dust down on some already opened sections of the trail, George Rd., Dryden area, then Stevenson Rd to the Fox Bridge. Susan noted bicyclists have to walk their bikes over the

gravel at Fox Bridge. Bruno said water drains through now; he thinks crushed number one stone will work better than stone dust on that bridge. He asked again if the Task Force also wants to add work on the Etna section. Diane and Chris said that several neighbors would like to use this. Diane said that the bridge over Fall Creek in Etna will close down for repair next year, so that will cut off some walking areas. Adding this section of the Rail Trail would help fill this gap. Bruno owns the section from nature preserve to the east side of Route 366, but doesn't want to encourage anyone to illegally cross properties where DRT does not have easements. But he said if there were an alternative route through the nature preserve from Route 366 and across the Tessaglia-Hymes' property that could work. Diane said the question is whether the Finger Lakes Land Trust would approve this. Bob will check. Alice said it might be the time to ask DOT to approve the crossing at 366. Bob noted this is at the place where the speed limit changes from 35 to 55 MPH. Chris asked if there could be signage indicating the trail. Bruno suggested posting the oval trail logo at the site.

Todd pointed out that flashing lights are really needed at Mt. Pleasant Rd. He reminded that the Task Force talked about the possibility of switching the flashing lights on Springhouse Rd. to Mt. Pleasant. Bruno said he'd talk with Rick Young about this. He added that Rick agreed to remove DPW signs that were mistakenly placed on kiosks. He'll work with Rick to work out the logistics of the switch on the flashing lights. Todd pointed out that there's probably a DOT standard for installing such crossing lights and John Lampman might provide this guidance.

Work with Highway/DPW and Town Hall in facilitating management of trail data for grant payment requests – Bob, Alice, Bruno, and John K.

Bob said EPF grant requires the Town to maintain grant records together and distinct from other Town records such that they are easily available for audit. We know what data these are and what we need for grant reimbursement requests: DPW staff and machine time, materials and purchase records, engineer and attorney invoices, and donation and volunteer records. Alice said there is a shared central drive where different Town departments can deposit pertinent info separately for an audit. We can use John Kiefer's format for recording and submitting these records for reimbursement. She suggested waiting till we sign the final EPF contract before we set up the records management system. Todd suggested that we could collect most of the information before that final signing. John pointed out that we already have the project manual that gives a good amount of info about how to prepare reports. He suggested collecting 2018 info and organizing it as best as possible, and then submitting it to State Parks for their review and suggestions. He offered to help organize receipts etc. in order to get them in for a Parks critique as soon as possible. Rose offered to assist with organizing and data entry.

September Meeting scheduled for 7 pm Monday September 21, via Zoom

Adjournment at 8:30 pm

Submitted by Alice Walsh Green