

**Dryden Rail Trail Friends and Task Force
Minutes of the Meeting Monday, March 15, 2021
Via Zoom**

Attendance: Chris and Diane Tessaglia-Hymes, Bob Beck, Loren Sparling, Steve Winans, Susan Ashdown, Todd Bittner, Judy Pierpont, Rose Borzik, Dan Lamb, Alice Green

Call to order at 7:03 pm – Bob Beck, Alice Green

Additions to agenda: none

Approval of February minutes: unanimous

Ithacatrails.org Update – Todd

Myra Schulman from Cayuga Trails Club (CTC) approached the coordinators of Ithacatrails.org to see if it could connect with TCat to provide more information about bus connections along county trails. As one of the organizers of that website, Todd reported that the group is interested in putting public transit info into the mix of resources on the site

CTC is now collaborating with a student team from the Cornell Design Connect Group, on plans to integrate info with TCat for bus stops and scheduling, and perhaps even augmented or altered routes to give access to trails.

Todd noted that a lot of TCat routes intersect with the rail trail. Right now the main way finding is car-, pedestrian-, and bike-focused, but it could be bus and public transit focused as well. Susan suggested the DRT could start by adding TCat stops to our own maps on the kiosks.

Bob thanked Todd for getting Ithacatrails.org started, and asked about the timeline for the work. Todd said this is a Cayuga Trails initiative and they may apply for grant to finish the work. Phase one of the project is in three parts: planning, writing the grants for CTC, and then interacting with TCat to see how that info should be integrated into the ithacatrails.org website. Todd noted that having the TCat route information incorporated onto the trails site requires ongoing maintenance to keep up with route changes. Phase two will cover implementation.

EPF and TAP Grant Update – Bob, Todd, Alice, Dan

Todd walked the Task Force through a spreadsheet created by Bob. He said that the project has received so many grants that it's important to document spending, and which may match with other grants. A goal of this spreadsheet exercise, which is a work in progress, is to see how much grant money is left that might be applied to new parts of the trail.

Summarizing the report:

- The total of all grants is \$2,262,500.
- The NYS Parks Environmental Protection Fund grant authorizes spending \$364,000 over a five-year period. About \$150,000 has been spent to date, leaving approximately \$213,000 to cover the remaining scope of work
- The goal is to complete \$364K and recapture the 50% Town match, through DPW and volunteer work and donated materials.
- It appears the project will be able to complete the earthen trail from Dryden to Freeville and Game Farm to Route 13 under the originally estimated costs. So it may be possible to extend the scope of work to additional sections, such as clearing and drainage of the section from Hall Woods Rd. to Pinckney Rd.

- A portion of the EPF grant can also provide a match for the TAP grant.
- The EPF grant scope does include a spur trail from the west side route 13 north to the sidewalk under the highway bridge at Fall Creek. Todd and Bob plan to meet with DPW chief Rick Young to figure out costs to cross the wetland on that spur trail with fill and culverts or a boardwalk. They said if the impacted wetland is less than a tenth of an acre, the project might qualify for a linear transportation permit. Otherwise a more extensive permitting process (or offset for the wetland impact) may be necessary. Susan asked if boardwalks would have less environmental impact. Todd said yes, but we also have to consider DWP access for maintenance,

Reynolds Game Farm Update & DPW Work Plan – Dan, Bob, Alice

Bob thanked Dan for sending the Town's signed Use and Occupancy agreement to DEC in Albany, and also two stamped plans for trestle repair and trail surfacing in the Game Farm. Dan reminded folks that the certificate of occupancy was mailed just two weeks ago, and it still may take a while for the state to return it.

Alice and Bob and Rick Young met this past Thursday and began mapping out a DPW work schedule. This will begin with trestle repair and trail surfacing at the Game Farm section, as soon as DEC returns the signed agreement and approvals. Susan reported that maintenance is also needed in the Monkey Run to Route 13 section. There is a lot of mud and puddles, and it looks like sections need more fill to dry them up.

Todd reminded that the EPF grant only calls for earth surface, so there is no EPF funding for the estimated \$10,000 it will cost to apply 1800 feet of stone dust in the Game Farm, as described in the resurfacing plan that went to DEC. Bob said it was decided to submit a plan that included the final surface, and that the project will have to find a way to cover this cost. Options include asking State Parks if they could include this in the scope of work under the EPF grant, or seeking added funding, like from the Triad Foundation.

Etna Area Update – Bob, Chris

Chris reported on talks with his neighbor about how to work around that property for the trail access in Etna. He explained that the neighbor doesn't want the trail to stick to the rail corridor because it is so close to his home. However he did offer a workaround through the perimeter of his property if the Finger Lakes Land Trust were willing to bring the trail along eastern edge of their property. Then he might allow the trail to angle up toward the other edge of the creek to Etna Lane through his property. He is open to working with the DRT on that side of Etna Lane. On the other side of that road, he owns a second parcel, with a dilapidated barn at the far corner. He doesn't want trail users close to that barn, but he'd be ok with a spur trail coming behind his property back into the rail bed. Bob said he has talked recently with reps from the Finger Lakes Land Trust, and the FLLT is willing to work with the DRT on crossing their preserve.

Bob also recently met with two other homeowners who may be willing to offer a workaround across their property on the other side of Etna Lane. Todd shared a map of the Etna section, and Bob traced how the trail could possibly be extended all the way to Kirk Rd. with the workarounds suggested.

Chris said he hopes the diagonal through the Land Trust will stay closer to the original rail bed than the previous sketches. But there's a need to retain enough shrubbery to screen view of the trail from the adjacent property.

FH Fox Bridge/Vet College Alumni Update – Bob, Diane

Bob said he has shared the DRT Design Committee's proposal with Jerry Bartoldo, the Vet School alum who's heading up an effort to raise \$50,000 for the right to name the FH

Fox Bridge in honor of Prof. Fox. Bob reported that the alums found the proposed designs “appealing.” Diane shared the design options, including a sign that hangs on the rail above the current graffiti on the bridge, another sign that would be mounted in the center of the bridge wall, and a mock up of an informational panel about Prof. Fox.

Diane said her committee’s next step is to get some design quotes for the costs of the installation. Bob said he reminded Gerry that this is a naming opportunity and the individual elements’ costs aren’t relevant. Todd said the signs are least expensive part; mounting is the largest expense. In addition to the signs on both sides of the bridge, the project elements will include a graphics panel and a bench by the trail on the west side of the bridge.

Todd suggested getting prices from several sign vendors. The DPW will be in charge of determining the best way to mount the signs. It’s not clear how long it will take for the Vet alums to raise the necessary funds. They may be able to work with the Vet School Alumni Giving Council.

Upcoming TC Parks & Trails Network Meeting – Bob

This group has been meeting twice a year since 2014. The next meeting is Thursday afternoon. Bob said it’s a great group and a good way to get updates on trail progress around the county. Anyone interested in attending on zoom was encouraged to contact Bob or Todd for the link.

Covid relief assistance to Dryden – Dan

Dan reported that the Town has been allocated \$1.56 million, of which some goes to the Villages. Spending under this package has to be COVID related. The money can be used for water, sewer and broadband projects. It may not be available for the trail project, but Dan believes there will be an infrastructure bill coming, and the trail project will be perfect for that. Todd asked whether some of the relief assistance could be used for culvert maintenance on the water and sewer lines along the trail, or utility re-location for the Route 13 Bridge. Dan said the Town Board would be working on making sure that the money is spent well for the largest benefit to the entire Town. He said the municipal broadband project is a very high Town priority.

Next meeting scheduled for April 19, 2021 via Zoom

Adjournment at 8:34 pm

Respectfully submitted, Alice Walsh Green