

Dryden Rail Trail Friends and Task Force
Minutes of the Meeting Monday, May 17, 2021 Via Zoom

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

Call to order at 7:05 pm – Bob Beck, Alice Green

Additions to agenda: Portrait opportunity: Spirit of Tompkins, TCat to Trails, Task Force membership

Approval of April minutes unanimous

Receipt of DEC Game Farm approvals – Dan

Both the NYS Department of Conservation (DEC) and the Town have now completed the paperwork for the 20-year agreement, and the agreement has been approved by the DEC, Dan reported. He said approvals have also come through for trestle renovation and trail resurfacing at the Game Farm.

Work plan with Highway/DPW – Bob

Bob plans to meet with Rick Young from DPW tomorrow morning. His crews are ready to go with the trestlework at the Game Farm.

State Parks EPF grant update – Bob

Bob has been in touch with Kathleen McIsaac from NYS Parks now that Game Farm agreement has come through, marking the last right of way needed to sign the EPF grant. Bob has asked Town Attorney Peter Walsh to revise the Town Opinion of Council and sent it to Kathleen who will pass it on to Albany. Kathleen doesn't know how long it will take to complete the review in Albany.

She told Bob that, contrary to what was understood earlier, the costs of stone dust surface can be included under the EPF grant. Todd asked if that grant could also be used for the base, adding that this addresses important issues in leveraging funding for the project.

Todd said this now means the EPF and TAP grants can match each other. Since the grant's approval in 2017, much of the Town's match has been accomplished through in-kind contributions by volunteers and donations. Now the TAP grant can be used for reciprocal match with the EPF grant, and vice versa. Bob reported that Bruno Schickel has brought the project up to date for documenting volunteer work and donations in 2019, and he has asked that the Town pick up the seven kiosk roofs he has stored in a barn. Bob said that the DPW would retrieve and store them.

Road crossing signage and installations

It's still not clear whether the grant could cover the costs of crossing signage and other necessary installations like flashing lights. Bob said that two years ago, the Task Force was told that the EPF grant would not cover the costs of the many road crossings along the trail. Recently Kathleen McIsaac stated that EPF grants don't cross roads, but Bob reminded that this grant has already been approved and it's clear that it crosses roads. If the crossings are not covered in the grant, Bob hopes the Town DPW budget might cover the signage, road markings, and any flashing lights required.

Route 13 pedestrian bridge update: Proposed Resolution to Town Board – Bob, Todd, Alice, Dan

The Route 13 bridge subcommittee has met with engineers, and prepared and sent the Task Force a resolution regarding the bridge alignment and acquisition of two properties on the eastern side of the planned pedestrian bridge. It requests that the Town Board approve going ahead with designs for Alternative 11, and also to engage the DOT to take over management of proceedings on the properties that need to be acquired. Bob explained that approval by the Town Board to move forward would lead to the next step, a public hearing, possibly to be scheduled in July, and then approval of the DOT contract by the Board.

Dan emphasized that the Town Board hopes for unanimous approval of the recommendation. Alice reminded Task Force members that this step of agreeing with the DOT to handle these proceedings is the first of several steps towards acquiring the small property sections needed on the east side of the bridge. After about 5 years of attempts to obtain an agreement from the print shop property owner and a year of contacts with the residential owner requesting an amendment to their previously donated (in 2016) trail easement, it's hoped that the DOT outreach will lead to an amicable agreement for a fair purchase price for the two portions of properties, one residential and the other commercial. Bob shared the map for the proposed bridge alignment showing that the eastern ramp curves away from the residential property.

Nancy suggested softening the language to “pursuing negotiations,” rather than asking that the resolution ask the Town to enter the contract with DOT. After discussion and a slight modification, the Task Force members unanimously approved the revised resolution (attached).

Spur trail to Fall Creek wetland issue – Bob, Todd

Bob has had exchanges with DOT and Dondi Harner from TG Miller about plans to build the spur trail on the west side of Route 13. He also spoke with Margaret Sullivan from the Army Corps of Engineers. She advised avoiding the wetland there. On Friday Bob met with Ron Lacain, a wetlands specialist, who walked with Bob on the wet area, and said he recommended against crossing the wetland because it would be a long-term process, “a nightmare,” adding that “it could take years” to secure permissions. Based on these consultations, Bob recommends that the Task Force should put the spur trail section on hold for now, halting TG Miller’s work on surveying the area, and not requesting a work permit from DOT.

Todd said when the DRT initially, pursued this spur trail option, it appeared the wetland along the proposed section fell under the amount of acreage that requires a permit. However, with further study, it now seems that the area is large enough to require a federal permit. Though we expected that paperwork could be in place to allow for DPW to do the construction this year, this is clearly not the case now. Todd has a DEC contact in wetland regulation that he will reach out to see how onerous the process would be. To be clear, he said, when the section is dry it's walkable. A permit is necessary only if enhancements are sought. The spur is a necessary link to the parking area under the Route 13 Bridge.

Game Farm Road crossing plan – John Lampman, Bob

John Lampman is creating a plan for the Game Farm crossing, which he described as pretty rudimentary. Given that the County has planned to remove a rise from the road, the sight distance to the crossing will be improved. He thinks it would work to have trail crossing signs on the road in advance of the crossing and the usual stripes and signage at the crossing itself. The plan calls for full 30-inch stop signs facing pedestrian, bike and equestrian traffic from each side of the trail. He said full sized stop signs reinforce the pedestrian and biker responsibility.

He thinks pedestrian operated flashing lights are not necessary. He said that signs at both sides of the trail crossing would reinforce advance signs. Bollards and/or gates for emergency vehicles can be placed on both sides of the road. He looked at other trail crossings around the County, and only in the Village of Dryden are there the pedestrian operated flashing lights. John operated under the assumption that the speed limit would be reduced to 45 MPH. However, the Towns of Dryden and Ithaca have not yet received a response from the DOT to their February 2020 request for the reduction of speed on Game Farm Road from 55 to 45 MPH.

Todd asked if John reviewed any other crossings that had parking near a county road with 55 MPH. John said there's one on Black Diamond trail where the trail comes out through the parking lot. This analogue is useful to make the case that the county shouldn't require anything more at Game Farm than they do at other county trail crossings. Rose suggested a supplemental sign for trail users that state that traffic doesn't stop for pedestrians or cyclists. It was noted that traffic entering and exiting the parking lot on the Town of Ithaca side should be factored in the plan.

John said he could have a plan ready to present to the county in a couple of weeks.

Design for trail parking signs - Diane

Diane said she would have some designs to distribute to the group via email in the near future.

Response to House of Reps funding request - Dan

Dan reported that the DRT did not receive a House of Representatives directed grant. Now the Senate has instituted the same type of grant, and Dan has committed to submit a reworked version of the Congressional grant to the Senate. This will be the sole federal item that the Town will be pursuing, to cover the gap in bridge funding. The submission will go to both Senator Schumer and Senator Gillibrand. Will know within a month.

Spirit of Tompkins Portrait- Alice

Local photographer Robyn Wishna is recruiting individuals and organizations in Tompkins County to portray the Spirit of Tompkins County. Alice asked if Task Force members were interested in participating, and there was discussion about an appropriate time and location along the trail.

TCAT to trails (Cayuga Trails Club/Design Connect) -Todd

A meeting about this collaborative project is scheduled for 4pm Monday, May 24, at The zoom link is:

<https://cornell.zoom.us/j/99389143529?pwd=RnBvKzhtcUUxSG1VNGdNWXI1ZU9JZz09>

Schedule June 21 meeting

Adjournment at 9:04 pm

Respectfully submitted by Alice Walsh Green

Rail Trail Task Force resolution to Town Board – 5/17/21

Recommending approval of a contract with NYSDOT for managing the process of acquiring two parcels east of Route 13 for the Dryden Rail Trail Route 13 pedestrian bridge, based on a design alternative minimizing the impact on the two land parcels

WHEREAS, the Rail Trail Task Force’s successful grant-writing efforts have yielded multiple awards for the Town to construct a pedestrian bridge crossing at Route 13. These grants include: a grant from Cornell University, a Tompkins County Tourism Implementation Grant, a Tompkins County Tourism Capital Grant, a New York State Multi-Modal Grant and a New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant,

WHEREAS, Erdman Anthony, the engineering company hired with overseeing the project, has prepared eleven bridge alignment alternatives with cost estimates and land requirements,

WHEREAS, the Rail Trail Task Force in continuing its careful review of the alternatives, while considering cost and the alternative alignments (within the historic railroad 66-foot “curb cut” constraint in crossing this controlled-access highway) has selected Alternative 11 (see attachment) which offers the lowest estimated cost,

WHEREAS, the trail and eastern bridge-approach ramp of the selected alternative requires areas of 0.16 and 0.71 acres, respectively within the northern and southern parcels adjacent to Route 13, for which extensive Task Force effort has, to date, been unsuccessful in obtaining adequate trail easements,

WHEREAS, the area of land required to cross the edge of each parcel will be partially contained within a previously encumbered Town of Dryden sewer and water easement,

WHEREAS, the width of the required land crossing the edge of each parcel will be defined as a minimum needed for construction, use and maintenance of the trail and bridge approach ramp,

WHEREAS, the approach ramp will be positioned as far away as feasible from the private residence to the north, and

WHEREAS, NYSDOT has offered to provide to the Town of Dryden their services and expertise in property acquisition,

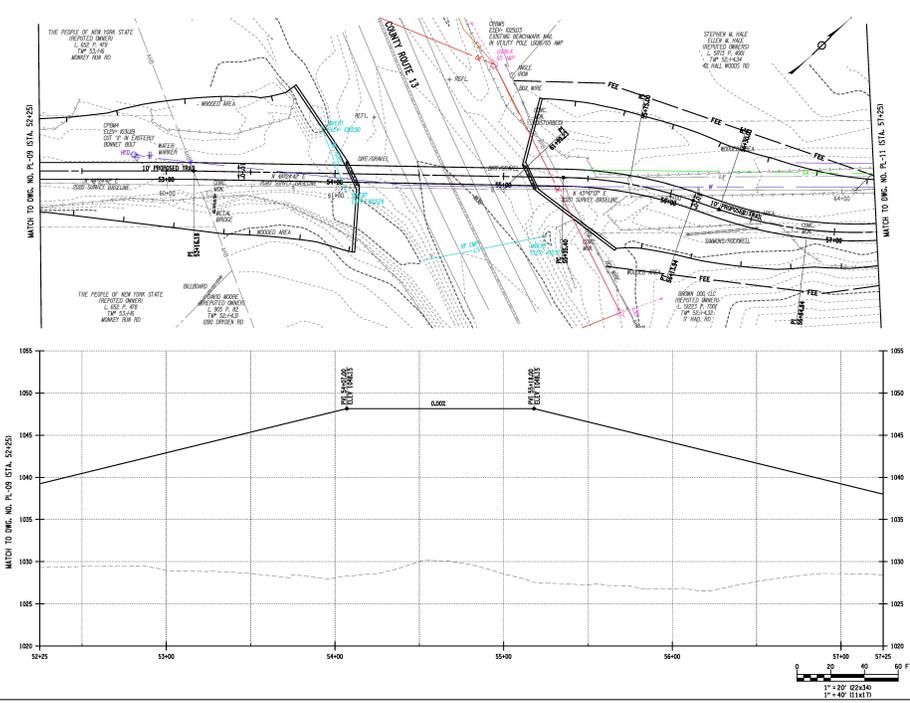
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Rail Trail Task Force recommends Alternative 11 as the preferred alternative, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force recommends that the Town sign the contract with NYSDOT authorizing NYSDOT to manage the process for the acquisition of the required portions of the two parcels east of Route 13.

Approved by unanimous vote.

Attachment: Route 13 Pedestrian Bridge Alternative 11

FILE NAME: \\N:\642400-07\p046\6110\mxd\plan\plan\phase2\plan\phase2.dwg
 DATE: 10/11/18
 USER: j...
 DESIGN SUPERVISOR: W. ACCORDELLI
 JOB MANAGER: K. PRESTI
 CHECKED BY: A. BLAZONIA
 ESTIMATED BY: A. BLAZONIA
 DRAFTED BY: J. BERMAN
 CHECKED BY: A. BLAZONIA



ERDMAN ANTHONY
 145 GILBERT ROAD, SUITE 200
 ROCHESTER, NY 14622
 (716) 421-8000
 (716) 421-8914
 erdman@erdman.com

DATE: _____ DATE: _____

WITH APPROVED A LOCATION OF SURVEY IN THIS TOWN AS A VALIDATION OF THE NEW YORK STATE PROVISIONS OF SURVEY LAW, SECTION 170.

NO.	DESCRIPTION	BY	DATE

CLIENT:

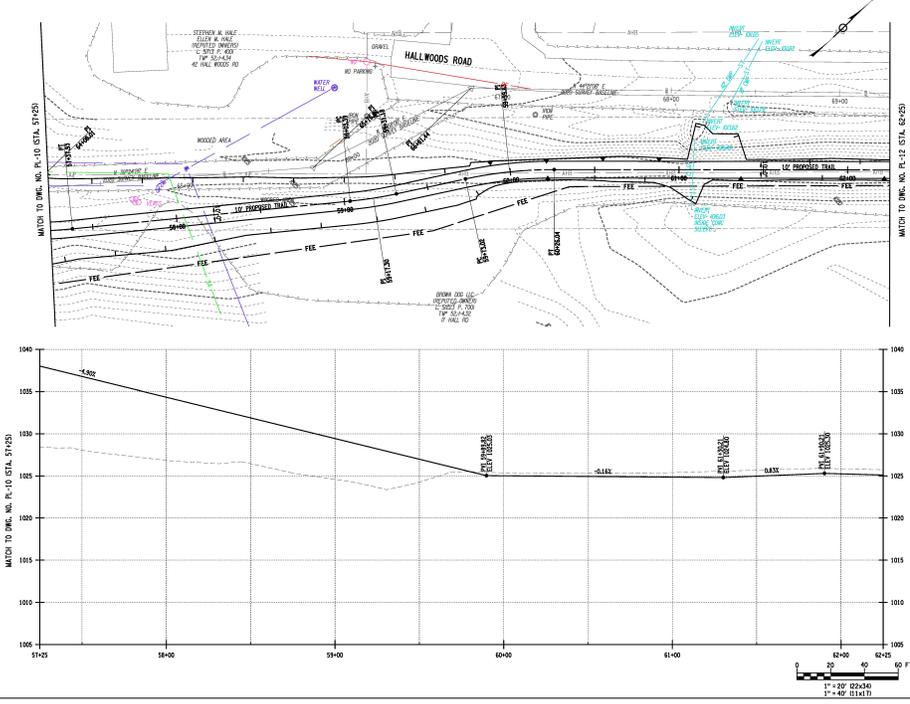
 TOWN OF DRYDEN

PROJECT NAME:
 DRYDEN RAIL TRAIL
 PHASE 2

DRAWING TITLE:
 PLAN AND PROFILE

ISSUE	DATE
H: 11-407 (V: 11-40)	OCTOBER 2020
FILE: 3860 71	TOWN OF DRYDEN
DRAWING NO.:	XXXXXX
XX # XX	PL-10

FILE NAME: \\N:\642400-07\p046\6110\mxd\plan\plan\phase2\plan\phase2.dwg
 DATE: 10/11/18
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XX # XX	PL-11