

SAUCON RAIL TRAIL OVERSIGHT COMMISSION MEETING

Date: Monday, January 25, 2016
Time: 6:00 PM
Location: Lower Saucon Township Council Meeting Room

I. Opening

A. Call to Order: Peter Jarrett welcomed everyone

B. Roll Call: Lower Saucon Township: Roger Jurczak, Jerry Holum, Carol Schneider
Coopersburg Borough:
Upper Saucon Township: Peter Jarrett, Diana Inglis, Joe Geib
Hellertown Borough: Steve LaBrake, Cathy Hartfrant

II. Public Comment/Citizen Non-Agenda Items – None

III. Public Comment/Related to Agenda Items Below – None

IV. Presentations/Trail Business

A. Elections

1. Peter started the meeting off with the reorganization of the President, Vice-President and Secretary. They are to be rotated among the different municipalities. Steve LaBrake was nominated for president and it was seconded. Peter Jarrett was nominated for Vice-President and it was seconded. Diana Inglis was nominated for Secretary and it was seconded. Peter and Roger suggested a financial position in Jack's absence. He thinks there should be a controller position responsible for furnishing the reports. Carol said she could get the reports for them. All were in favor of the new positions.

B. Vision/Future Plans

1. Springfield & Richland Township Update

An email from John Bruner said that Bucks County has appointed an engineer. That will take several months. They are moving forward with it. John said that the AMC along with the Highlands Trail Committee will be pressuring and keeping Bucks County Commissioners on top of the funding. It is easy to present the report but you need to have the money. There has been communication with the County and they are getting money together for funding in Springfield Township. Joe said that there he doesn't know of anything happening in Richland Township. It is moving forward.

2. Bethlehem Greenway Update

Steve said that there is nothing further until they start working on it this year and plan to be complete the project in 2017.

C. Trail Improvement Projects

1. Signal Restoration Project

We are currently on our winter hiatus between the cold weather and waiting for a few parts. Blastco said they are on the way. They are gifting us the work and they said they will be forthcoming. We are waiting for the painting of all the sheet metal and the rings. It was asked where the u bolts stand. The gentleman who said he could do the u bolts said the cost was based upon doing the whole project. The price then was between \$60 and \$80 and it was said at a prior meeting it wouldn't get any cheaper than that. Peter looked through Grainger catalog for pricing. They are going to contact Fastenal for pricing.

D. Upcoming Events

1. **Water Street Park Reopening** – First Day of the Farmers Market in May.

E. Other Business

1. **Bingen Murder** – Steve said that he reached out to the writer of the Patch article, Karen Samuels. He sent her a message to see if we had her permission to put it up. It seems as if it

is good information to share with people. We could have a marking at the depots. There could be a picture of the depot at each one of the locations along the trail with some history such as when it was built and when it was destroyed. Since each municipality had its own railroad station, today each municipality can be responsible for obtaining the pictures and history.

2. **Information Along Rail Trail** – The committee suggested putting atlases along the rail trail for people to see what different businesses and residences were there. Right now they feel the most important thing to work on is the four stations. Each commissioner per municipality is responsible for their depot.
3. **Signs** – The signs look nice. Once they are up, they can't be easily changed. It was suggested to put a QR Scanner as opposed to a sign because the barcodes can be easily changed and would save money. Diana suggested putting the information on the sign and then also the QR scanner for more in depth information if someone should want them.
4. **Rail Trail Rules** - Diana asked if hover boards were allowed on the trail. They aren't bikes but they aren't Segway's; which are allowed. The committee feels that the hover boards are allowed access to the trail. It was asked who had the right of way, a Segway or bike? Another thing on the trail that is more popular is night riding. The committee has a rule that you can only access it from sunrise to sunset. If the trail is used for commuter purposes, it is ridiculous to tell them they can't use the trail to come home from work. The rules are for safety purposes. Cathy said it hasn't been in an issue in the Borough. Diana said the rule is there as a tool to be enforced if necessary.

F. Website/Facebook Updates – There are no updates. Facebook has been getting some activity with a lot of likes with the updates to the trail. Coopersburg had suggested doing a polling questionnaire. This will allow people to give ideas for what they see on the trail. Survey Monkey would allow this. The committee will prepare questions for the next meeting to be put on the Survey Monkey. It was also suggested to post an open ended question on Facebook to receive feedback.

V. **Miscellaneous Business Items**

- A. **Previous Meeting Minutes** – There was a mistake on the minutes that stated 60 u bolts and it should be 6 u bolts. Also, the correction of the spelling of dams. Meeting minutes approved unanimously with corrections.
- B. **Dams** – It was asked if at Hellertown Borough the dams were ever brought up. Cathy said they have a meeting with Wildlands Conservancy. They are making their presentation to borough council at a meeting. They took Tumminello Dam off the table in consideration of its historic significance. They would like to move forward with the Water Street Dam. It was asked why they would put it on there and take it off. Cathy said she doesn't think they realized the historic significance of it. They did come to a Saucon Valley Partnership meeting and indicated it was taken off. The purpose of the removal of the dams is to allow fish to come back up. The first dam is at Easton. The likelihood of that coming down is about the same as the Tumminello Dam. Cathy suggested he come to the council meeting and pose that question. The repair for the Tumminello Bridge is on hold due to waiting for grant money.
- C. **Financial Report** – None
- G. **Bills to Pay (if any)** – None

VI. **Commissioner Individual Statements & Updates**

- A. **By Municipality** – Pete said Roger has been involved with the committee since before the committee formed. We would hate to lose his expertise. Peter asked if they would be interested in giving him a title of emeritus to keep him in the loop and retain his expertise. Jerry suggested that we also recognize Jack for his time put into the committee. No action was taken on either suggestion. Coopersburg will soon be right in the middle of the trail. They are going to be a destination. The trail has been cleared and once you put gravel on it you have the trail. It was asked when the Water Street Bridge is scheduled. Cathy said it is scheduled for summer of 2017. It will be closed in its entirety to complete the project for 60 days. Upper Saucon is working on getting grants for funding from

PENNDOT to get money to the bridge over Preston Lane. The other project is working with DNL on a grant application for sign improvements leading to the trails and parks with information and directions. Joe was asked if he has an idea of how heavy the trail is used in how it relates to Desales. It is hard to say because there is not a lot of ways to interconnect but it will improve. He feels it is lightly used between the park and Passer Road. It is more used by Lutron when employees are walking on their lunch. There are some students working on a bike share program at Desales for students to use on the rail trail. Nothing has come to fruition.

VII. Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m. Next meeting February 22nd at Hellertown Library.