

SAUCON RAIL TRAIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Monday, March 22, 2010
Time: 7:00 PM
Location: Upper Saucon Township

Present: Jack Cahalan, Lower Saucon Township Manager; Charlie Luthar, Hellertown Borough Manager; Tom Beil, Upper Saucon Township Manager; Donna Bristol, Lower Saucon Township representative; Steve Labrake Hellertown representative; Erin Frederick, Lehigh County Conservation; and Terry Boos from Hellertown. Frank Pazzaglia, Hellertown Borough representative arrived at 7:12 PM.

Jack said he sent copies of the minutes from the last meeting around. If you have any corrections, please let him know. Otherwise, they will be posted on the Lower Saucon Township website for reference.

- **Grants/Master Plan/Trail Development – Update**

Jack said he didn't attend the meeting that was held at Erin's office with Lorne Possinger. Charlie said one of the things we had to supply to them were the estimates from the engineers for the cost of a master site plan. Jack said his estimate was coming, until the issue about the 99 year lease came up. He asked his Solicitor to contact SEPTA to see if they would be agreeable to extending our lease term to 99 years. Joe Devaney, the SEPTA solicitor, indicated that he had to talk to his folks down at SEPTA, but he didn't seem to think there was any problem. It just extends the term, but doesn't change any conditions. Steve said it kind of struck him odd about the whole thing as there wouldn't really be in any difference from a 30 year lease to a 99 year lease. They can still take it over anytime they want to again. Jack said hopefully that can be done without going through this whole back and forth routine with our Solicitors. He's assuming if that's going to be okay with everyone, just to change the term to 99 years. That's where he was. He'll go back to his planner and get the estimate again and send it to you. Erin said Bob from Upper Saucon said you were going to do a resolution and everyone would pass it regarding the grant.

Jack said Tom just sent this draft resolution out today and if we all adopt something like this, that would take care of it and would join us together for the DCNR grant application. He looked at it and it looks okay to him. Charlie said it looks like the standard language. Tom said the only thing, no. 4 on page 1, do we want to go with one project manager, one grant application or do you want to have four separate Project Managers? Jack said it would probably be simpler to just have one Project Manager. Tom said he could be the Project Manager. Jack said basically Tom would be the contact person to go to. Upper Saucon has the longest stretch of the trail. Tom said the way it worked before, you have to gather all the invoices and then send them into the state and they will send you a check. You have to pay the bills first. Donna said how are you going to handle that? Tom said it shouldn't be a significant amount of money. Donna said how are you going to distribute the money, according to the length of the trail? Steve said at this point, it's just for a master plan. Tom said the way it's worked in the past, Upper Saucon paid 100% to the consultants and then they will bill the other municipalities based on a formula we haven't come up with yet, each party will be billed according to their part of the trail. When the reimbursement comes in, they will disburse that to the municipalities. Donna said does each municipality take care of its own signage, money for that, and so forth? Jack said this is still just for the master site. That all has to be worked out. Tom said one thing that might help, and he's not sure at what stage you do this, in the intermunicipal agreement or in the master site plan, once this committee is official and approved by all four municipalities, then we have to assign some duties to that committee. What's the function of that committee, what are their powers? One of them has to be: how is that committee funded? Right now Lower Saucon Township is funding all of the work. You are doing the minutes, you are running the advertisements, but eventually there has to be some funding mechanism for these activities. That needs to be addressed.

Steve said a lot of this has to do with the four municipalities being together and deciding how they want to do this, whether it's each one gives 25% or are we doing it based on the percentage of trail mileage? At some point the four of you have to make that decision. Tom said you can get into some tricky issues here as there are some municipalities that want representation on this committee based on equal representation. Each group gets a representative, but then they are going to want the cost sharing based on the miles of

trail. He sees some friction in terms of how this group is funded, how the activities are funded. These are things we are going to have to work out. Donna said if you are just figuring miles of trails, there are some areas where there are a lot of roads that intercept the trail which means every time the road intercepts the trail, you have to put in barriers and signs. Whatever municipality has more crossings; their cost is going to be greater too than someone who has one long line with only two crossings. Steve said if you are looking at the bridge railings; they are all in Hellertown and Lower Saucon. He doesn't think Upper Saucon has a single bridge rail to put up. Maybe on the bridge at Lutron, on both sides, but most of the bridge work will be needed in Hellertown and Lower Saucon. Tom said there's going to be some kind of plan developed so all of our signage, all of our landscaping, all of our buffering between residential properties and the trail, all of the road crossings, all of the rules, the usage, all those things are going to be uniform across the trail and that's where you people are going to come in; and then the cost to erect the signs and the fences and build that trail. That cost will be borne by each individual municipality. The goal here is whatever we construct should be uniform. Upper Saucon doesn't put in a ten-foot wide trail and Lower Saucon has a six-foot wide trail. Upper Saucon doesn't put in a paved trail and you guys put in a mulch trail. We're trying to get away from having this hodgepodge trail of all different kinds of signs, road crossings and nothing is uniform. Each municipality will pay for its section of the trail. It's just that we need to know what type of signs and what type of rules are in place for the entire trail. Donna said why does each municipality pay for their part of the trail? Tom said he thinks that's only fair. As a taxpayer of Upper Saucon, why should they be paying for Lower Saucon's trail? We are going to try to apply for grant money, but he doubts we are going to get 100%; maybe we'll get 50%. Frank said we had a recent meeting, was that talked about? Charlie said they talked about it a little bit with Erin. Frank said they said our chances for state dollars are quite low. They are not impossible, but our chances for state dollars to do the master plan are quite good, but for trail development, they are quite low. He was on the Ironton Trail yesterday and rode the whole trail and it is not all uniform as far as the surface. Jack said that's because it was done in phases. It's three different municipalities with different budgets. It is a municipal responsibility and we're all preparing to step up for that. The good thing is once the initial development is finished and the rules are established, after that, other than maintenance, the operational things will be a lot less from a financial standpoint and that's where the fundraising and some of the other types of events that pay for themselves will be in important. Once it's initially opened, the heavier maintenance would be done by the municipal Public Works Departments.

Frank said independent of the finances, the things we have been talking about from the beginning, what is the trail going to look like, how is it going to be used, why couldn't this body address all of that? Once the decision is made, this is what we'd like to do, then go to the next phase of budgeting out and then because it's probably not going to fall back to the State of PA to fund this for the practical reasons we all know, then each municipality is going to have to plan that is going to play out over some number of years. Some municipalities that have resource are going to enact the plan quickly; others it might take a number of years to actually get the trail up to speed. If we cobble all these things together, then it limits at least the planning process. Jack asked Tom if he was thinking he needed the master plan completed and approved before they could move on? Tom said that's a very good question. Jack said that's what we were facing in the beginning – to do or not do a master plan? Tom said there are benefits for doing a master plan first, and then there's also for just going ahead and constructing the trail first. If you do a master plan, he thinks you are looking at least two years of planning. You can't even think about doing anything until you have two years of planning in place, which is the downside. The upside of the master plan is you can resolve all of the issues you just brought up a couple of minutes ago about uniformity, rules, financing, and all these things can be dealt with in the master plan. The upside obviously is working ahead and building the trail and you can have trails built this year yet and have people using it and you don't have to wait two years for this master plan, but what will come of that trail? You could wind up with rushing it through with a situation where some municipalities don't have money, so you have portions of trails constructed, other municipalities don't agree with their neighbor in terms of what the trail should look like and what the rules should be, so you don't wind up with a coordinated trail. That's the downside. You wind up with a trail right away, but it may not be coordinated. That's an issue that this group should start thinking about. We should probably make a recommendation on it as that's probably an important issue you are going to face within the next three to six months as you go forward with the trail. Are you going to try to construct it this year or do you apply for this grant and do the master site plan and do the planning before you build the trail? Frank said he agrees completely. Respectfully, this group has been addressing these issues and it's

been due to a lack of participation from the other municipalities that has limited their process. It's not as though we haven't thought about it, but it's very hard to push any particular agenda when we don't hear from all the voices.

Jack said speaking for Lower Saucon Township, he's been a proponent of the master site plan since the beginning, but because of the hurdles we are going to have to jump to get there, such as the cost and the time, he doesn't think we can wait 2-1/2 years or 3 years to open up the trail. What he has been doing parallel to what this group has been doing is to have our staff and consultants look at the trail and come up with recommendations for what we can do on a temporary basis to address some of the issues like the bridges crossings and the surface, because there is a push from his Township to get sections of the trail opened this year. If we can't do it, because of a problem with safety or a problem with the cost, then they won't do it. Financially and physically, he believes it's possible to do something this year. That's what their intention is to do that, but they don't want to mess up any long range plans. That's why they are trying to figure out what is the best solution that is not going to involve permanent features that will mess up our joint planning in the future. That's where he is coming from. You are kind of thinking differently on that, which is okay, but they do want to move ahead. He doesn't want to mess up the Saucon Rail Trail development. Tom said we need some kind of a plan whether it's an informal plan that you guys put together or whether it's a formal plan that a consultant puts together through this grant application, but there needs to be some kind of a written plan. If you guys want to take that task on, that's great. You'll probably save us all a good \$10,000 or \$15,000, but you have to put the time in and the end product has to be a quality product that all of us can take back to our boards and get approved. Jack said this group has been saying that. Everyone understands what we are up against. It's not an easy thing to say let's do a master plan. Frank said one of the things we discussed early on was even if this committee put forth their best effort and put together a comprehensive master plan with their thoughts and effort in it, and it's very professional looking, if it doesn't have a stamp of approval from a PE coming from a consulting firm, will the boards actually approve it? He can't say. There could be township's that say, you guys are not professionals, it doesn't have the credibility and you haven't thought about it. That's a lot of effort that ends up being wasted. On the other hand, the amount of money the State of PA is willing to pay a consulting firm to put together one of these plans, when we sat down with DCNR and went through it point by point, our master outline as it now exists was lacking only one feature, and that was handicap accessibility which we forgot to consider. We don't have the credibility with the PE. The State of PA is willing to spend a lot of taxpayers' dollars to pay a consulting firm to put together a master plan with a stamp on it and if that's what it takes for credibility, that's what we have to do. Otherwise, he's confident that once they work in handicap accessibility, we've considered every major point that needs to be considered on how you put together one of these trails. Then it's up to people to accept that recommendation or not.

Donna said would we ever be able to have handicap accessibility because of the type of surface we are putting in? Tom said you have to view this role from about 10,000 feet. Right now you are talking 15 feet off the surface. None of us, him included, can tell you what kind of ADA handicap requirements there are. That's a book inches thick. You are never going to sort that out. Let an expert handle that. Your recommendation is that if handicap accessibility is important to you, your recommendation should be somebody, Township, State and evaluate this and tell us what type of handicap access we need. That's the end of your recommendation. You are not going to say whether you need a one inch every five foot incline or 3% incline or 8% incline, or rails – you can't get into that as you'll be spending the next ten years sorting that mess out. You need to get an overall plan as to what you want to do. Do you want to write the plan? Do you want a consultant to write the plan? Then come up with some general things you need to get this started and the rest will fall in place. Don't get bogged down with the details. We all have consultants we can work with to iron out those details. You'll be banging your head against the wall if you want to talk about what kind of ramps to be used and what kind of railings. You can bring fifteen people in who specialize in ADA, and there will be fifteen different answers. If it's important to you, then it should be that it's fully ADA complaint. You might have to bring in an ADA specialist to evaluate the trail. Steve said there are some pieces we definitely put together on the plan we made up, so it's a good start. Frank said if we are going to put together a trail, the one recommendation that is missing there is a handicap recommendation. Tom said that's the point he was trying to make. He said he thinks the PE signature is overpriced and what he sees consultants generate is they take boiler plate language, something they've

done in 50 other places and try to force it on you as they don't want to spend the time to tailor the product for your needs. If you do get a consultant, make sure they are going to give you the product you want and they are going to specialize it to you needs instead of just taking something off the shelf. That's been his experience with engineering and planning type consultants.

Frank said Jack has said that Lower Saucon is committed to getting some of their trail open. As you are doing that and are working with your engineers, are they using this document as a guideline? Jack said basically. They've already discussed the length, the width and the barriers on the bridges. We are working on the details on the barriers that would be the safest and most economical. What could be put up on a temporary basis that will not distract from the later development of the trail? The road crossings are the one thing that whatever goes up now, based on the PennDOT approval and for safety reasons, is probably what is going to be there permanently. The gates, the bollards, the signage, and the road crossings are probably going to all look the same. He doesn't see that's a big problem to put that up. Frank said the document says consider that those road crossings need to be similar to what has already been bought and paid for in Hellertown for the Main Street crossing. That's sort of a 10,000 foot view with very little detail. Jack said he can put together a plan with his consultants that will say where the safety signs will go at the crossings and where the safety barriers will be put up for the bridges. It will allow the public to go across that bridge when the trail is open. We've talked about some of the surfaces, the modified crushcrete that could be put on. Not a 3" type of depth, but enough that we can have a surface that can be rolled and compacted so people can get out and walk on it. He is working on all these things with his Engineer and Planner. The idea would be to come up with a plan this year that he can take to his Council and say this is what we'd like to do with our trail section. If they are okay with that, then he will be able to move ahead with that. The one big problem he has is that on one of the crossings he's hearing a recommendation for blinking lights. There is a cost factor and some other issues with that type of equipment, so that might slow them up and stop them from going over that crossing this year. He has to see what we run into when we look at it. Frank said with that said, it almost makes him feel hopeful that this list has been somewhat useful. Jack said there isn't anything on that list that's going in a different direction than what the Township is working on. Charlie said this is the basis for the master plan. Jack said all the pieces and elements Charlie and I are working on individually. Frank said what could happen is there could be these four municipalities that sort of agree these are all great things and we have our people that could begin executing them, but then at the Township boundaries the trail changes somehow. At best - cosmetic, at worst - functional. This is the point Tom is speaking of and he'd like to avoid that.

Donna said if you set down the specifications and say the trail is going to be so wide and the eventual surface is going to be such and such. If you do that, and send this out to each one of the municipalities and they agree to that, then you are going to have a uniform trail. Frank said is there another level from this which is at 10,000 feet that we come down to 5,000 feet that contains this level of detail before you actually get to a huge master plan? Someone said absolutely. Frank said is it the charge of this group to come down to 5,000 feet and start fleshing out some of those details? Tom said you will have to start with the priorities. First thing is, are you going to apply for this grant? What do you want to do, build something this year or apply for a grant this year? Frank said he thinks they can do both. Steve said we were all in agreement about the master plan; this is something we must do for future funding and everything co-existing. That's something we want to pursue. Are there steps we can take meanwhile? He can see Hellertown and Lower Saucon getting open this year without a master plan as long as we may want to put some detail on this master outline where we have surface drawings, etc. At this point, we have four different municipal engineers looking at the road crossings four different ways. Do we want to standardize that to one type of crossing or is it okay to have four different types of road crossings throughout this trail? He thinks they are all going to be pretty close. He doesn't know if that has to be standard from township to township. Does it need to be? No. To have a trail surface, we are certainly well aware of the road crossings we are dealing with. A bunch of them have to be approved by PennDOT. We talked about this in the past and we should follow the PennDOT guidelines for the non-PennDOT roads as much as we possibly can because that's some type of standardization. We basically have a standardized road crossing. The bollards might be different from each municipality, does that matter? No, as long as it's a safe crossing, we're good to go.

Frank said you just have to be careful that you don't end up in this endless loop because we can pick this plan and start getting in the key details that sort of allow for uniformity. There's going to be some threshold which we don't know what it's going to be. What if we said the next level of detail on here was that we want the trail to be uniformly 20 feet wide? Even with something simple like that, it's going to go to four different Townships for approval. One Township could say 20 feet is not what we want and you guys really don't have the authority to mandate that. At some point, this thing is just a guideline. We come down to the next level of detail and we are starting to execute it as a master plan, but it can always be kicked back up and said "you guys really don't have a real master plan, so there's no real authority to these guidelines". He doesn't know where these thresholds are to take your analogy. We're at 10,000 feet right now; we'd like to come down to 5,000 because it just keeps getting kicked back. You really don't have a master plan, and so, one of the things we can think about is what is this next level of detail. Would the municipalities be comfortable with things like uniform width or what the road crossings look like? Tom said he would suggest don't worry about what municipalities are going to be comfortable with as he has dealt with elected officials for ten years. You can't tell day to day what they are going to be comfortable with, so if you are going to worry about what the municipalities think, you will spend the next ten years trying to find something that works. Do what you think is best. Have a reason for doing what you are doing. If there is a reason why you want 20 feet and you can explain that reason and it makes sense, your chances are much greater that the board is going adopt it. What's real important is you have reasons for doing what you want to do, and then we as the Managers or the consultants, whoever we bring in, can make that presentation to each of our boards. He thinks you'll find that each one of them will probably agree with them provided they are given some logical reason why you are doing what you are doing. Jack said that's been going on as we have been benchmarking a lot of this unofficially with the elected officials and with the staff and consultants. Nothing you've discussed here, as far as he can tell you, is going to cause a problem with the Township. They are on board with the development and they expect you to come back with some recommendations. The consultants have to weigh in and review them and he expects to give a package to his Council and tell them this is what we've worked on and we're in agreement with what the trail looks like. Tom said keep in mind, these elected boards are dealing with zoning issues and personnel matters and budgetary constraints. This Rail Trail is one of a laundry list of things that they are dealing with. They are looking for recommendations from you. They are looking for a group like yours to do the legwork and have justifications for your recommendations. They want you to come forward. They are looking to approve something that makes sense. Jack said the critical thing you can do is facilitate the input from the residents who are going to use the trail. This is not only now, but on an ongoing basis. You mentioned the privacy buffers. We've had some residents from the Township who made some comments about that and this group is not taking a stand on that, but they realize this is a critical issue and can make recommendations. Steve said at one of our first meetings, a lot of that buffer is going to change for every particular circumstance. Some people might want a couple of shrubs, some might want something else. You have to deal with that on a one to one basis because it can change. It cracks him up that they are dealing with this anyway because if the railroad decides to take it over, it's going to be a lot worse than people biking or walking down the trail. It could be a locomotive ten feet from your property line or building. Tom said our officials want to be able to refer people who are complaining about the Rail Trail and let you guys deal with it. You have to think about how you are going to handle that and any dollars that are spent on a 15 foot wide buffer and an eight foot tall wooden fence, that's money that's not spent on paving another section of trail. Which is more important – to make sure someone has a nice view out their back yard so they don't have to look at all the people walking through their back yard or build a trail. Be ready to deal with it and have some criteria as to who gets a buffer and who doesn't. When is a buffer justified and when isn't it? It's never justified because as soon as someone gets a buffer, you are going to have twenty people behind them wanting that same buffer and you are going to have a beautiful buffer, but no trail.

Charlie asked Erin what she needed out of this group for the grant application? Erin said she needs a report from the consultants. Charlie said he gave her one already, but there are some contingencies in there. That would be a key thing and put enough dollars into it. Donna said when you say you want a budget, do you want a specified budget on how much it's going to cost for screenings, etc. Charlie said we have something to start with. Erin said she thinks she has enough information to start pulling it together and then she will forward it to all of the municipalities for review. It shouldn't take that long to put it together. Donna said what she is hearing is we are applying for this grant. There is a formulized plan so we can get more money

from the state in the future. You're going to take your current outline and still provide more detail to that. You are then going to get it to your supervisors for instruction. Frank said to take it down to the next level which he would imagine to be the key points that help the uniformity for the trail. All of that is always contingent on the municipalities reviewing it. We'd say these are our recommendations. Our outline needs some kind of skeleton budget because coming back to this point of elected officials, one of the things that are always in their mind is what is this going to cost. We actually don't know what it's going to cost. The last meeting with the state people they asked what we were talking about in terms of budgeting. He didn't expect that to be a question. It comes up all the time, so we have to put some thought into that. Jack said they are working in that and every item will have a cost assigned to it. We'll have a cost for the surface material we are talking about, the crossings, etc. That will all be costed out. Tom said what he is hearing tonight is you want to apply for the grant for the master plan, but yet you also want to try to construct something this year and whatever you construct, you want it to be uniform. What you have to start doing is taking your list and deciding what things need to be dealt with right away in order to build the trail and which things can wait until the master site plan is developed. That should be your homework assignment for the next meeting. Steve said is Upper Saucon waiting until the master plan is complete before they start working on the trail? Tom said no. Upper Saucon wants to build the trail this summer as they put \$250,000 into their budget to build the trail, so they are ready to go. Frank said the order of that list is a crude prioritization as we saw it - road crossings, bridge crossings, trail surface, access points, and kiosks. Maybe that priority is correct, but you can change it. Steve said we pretty much decided on a ten foot trail. Tom said start thinking about what recommendations you need to make in order to help us to get started this year - what's essential? Jack said we've been talking about that at these meetings. He and Charlie know what they each need and have been working with their engineers and Public Works people to start working in that direction. He intends to come back next month with everything lined up with the cost. They've been kicking around a lot of things with the bridge crossings. There's a cost factor involved in this because they have the longest bridge over the Saucon Creek. The other bridge is shared with Hellertown and they were talking about the Jersey barriers and there is a cost involved with that. They have to weigh that and see what the cost of a temporary solution would be versus a permanent solution. He doesn't want to go to his Council and say it's going to cost \$20,000 to buy Jersey barriers that we aren't going to use after they put up the permanent fences. They have to look at that. They have to look at the signals at the crossings. He then has to come to you and say here's what is possible in 2010 and Charlie has to do the same thing when he looks at the cost and his budget. They are pretty sure they can come back and open portions of it this year. Maybe not the whole way down, but they can get something opened. Frank said he's tickled pink hearing what you guys are saying, but somehow in the last thirty minutes, we've gained authorization to do things that we hadn't even started, and he's very happy for that. It sounds like this group, when the meetings started, did not have authorization. Tom said the best thing to do is make a recommendation that makes sense and see where it goes. You have to respect the process and the process is you don't make the final decision. If you want to make the final decision, go get a petition, run for Supervisor and get elected. That's how you make the final decision. That's not your role in this process to make the final decision. Your role is to make a recommendation, so you do your job and make a recommendation, do the best recommendation you can, and then it's up to the elected officials if they want to fund that and implement that recommendation. Jack said they've always been authorized to pull those recommendations together and give them to the Township and Borough. Again, it's not official until the elected officials say so. Frank said we wanted to make sure there were others from the other municipalities helping and didn't want to make this sound like it was two guys from Hellertown running the show. Tom said as long as your recommendations don't come out and say Upper Saucon should pay for the whole trail you should be okay. Steve said over the bridges how wide an access do we need? The trail is ten feet wide, what if we need to get an emergency vehicle over the bridge, do we need it to be 20 feet wide? Jack said it depends on what you mean as an emergency vehicle? Steve said a fire truck. Jack said he doesn't think we'd need a fire truck there. Frank said he thinks the only emergency vehicle would be an ambulance if someone falls and breaks their leg. Jack said there will be police and emergency vehicles that will be able to get through. Steve said this is something to consider, how wide do we want it? Charlie said for the High Street Bridge, it's 12 feet wide for emergency vehicles. Steve said the Rail Trail must be a minimum of 12 feet then. Charlie said that was the culvert. The idea was you could get some pretty big vehicles through it.

Frank said he was struck yesterday by some of the features on the Ironton Rail Trail. They have a couple of road crossings that are really scary. He could not believe them and there is very little to warn you, in particular, the one in Coplay where you go up to the furnaces. Secondly, their barriers have the swinging metal gate, and some do not have anything. They also have two different trail surfaces – one is paved with screenings and one is coarse stone. If we can kind of avoid that with our trail, that would be good. He asked Tom if their Township was thinking about paving? Tom said they were thinking of a crushed stone surface. Due to the fact that the lease says SEPTA can take back the rail line, they would have to rip out any paved surfaces there. It's easier to rip out crushed stone than asphalt, so that almost forces our hand. Frank asked about the 30 year lease. Jack said they contacted the Solicitor about that and his indication was he didn't see a problem with it, but would run it by his folks and let us know. Hopefully, it can be done. Charlie said the one thing that might be important with the grant is if you come up with a number as the Township and Borough will have a sharing cost. The simplest and easiest way might be to do a four way split on the 50%.

Frank said how much is public relations engaged in this? He's getting a lot of people asking questions. When is the trail going to be opened? Is the trail opened? Why are you guys dragging your feet? Steve said he's getting those questions daily. Frank said is it worthwhile now to write an article and put it in the local newspaper to keep people up to speed. Jack said they've been giving reports at the SVP meetings on a monthly basis, there's people and press there. He's been trying to put some information out on the website. People call up and he refers them to the website. He hasn't really been definite about the opening, but he does say they hope to open a portion of the trail in Lower Saucon in 2010. Hellertown has said that's their intention also. Frank is saying Upper Saucon would also like to open portions in 2010, so that is good news. He doesn't know where Coopersburg is. If we could say that we all have the same intentions of attempting to open portions of the trail in 2010, that's what we could give to the people. Frank said if they wrote a short article and give it to them for their okay, would that be okay? Jack said yes, as long as it doesn't commit our elected officials to something they haven't seen. Tom said what are you trying to accomplish with this article? Frank said the goal is to be transparent to the public who is paying for this and to let them know what our best intentions are for opening this trail. There aren't any elected officials here, and they are going to want to know if the public is behind this if they are going to allocate funding to make it happen. If part of the justification you mentioned is important, this is the first step to bringing the public into it and making sure their tax dollars are being well spent. Steve said he'd like to get the website up so they can put information on it. It would be an informational website saying where it stands right now, and when they think it might be opened. He was thinking we had to wait until the resolution and agreement is approved by everyone until we put anything out to the public. Frank said he could see it backfiring if we don't do this right, but he also would worry about all the best intentions going forward to the public saying you never made us part of the process. It could backfire that way. Jack said there are people who are aware this group is meeting and they've been welcome to come and talk about their complaints and concerns. Donna said there's a lot of positive feedback. When she and Jan get to go out and solicit for fundraising, the public already knows about it. Jack said a lot of people know about it, but don't know the date it's going to be opened. They'd like to know that. Steve said you can't give a date. He saw a lot of people walking on it already. Tom said maybe you need a series of articles. The first article could be this is who we are as a group. This is what we're trying to achieve. We're planning a trail. It's going to get constructed at such and such a time frame. We are going to make a recommendation to all four governing bodies. The recommendation is going to include things like the safety features, the trail width, and the uniform signage. This is who we are and this is what we are doing. Come join us at 7:00 PM every fourth Monday and it rotates at different location. Let us know what your thoughts are with the Rail Trail. Then you do another article, saying we've studied these issues, made recommendations, and we are going to present it to the governing bodies. You have a series of articles and you have an obligation to keep the public informed as to what you are doing. The public has an obligation to come and see what's going on. Donna said when the public comes, it would be a good idea to let them know if they have questions and so forth, they should wait until after the meeting is over and we'll answer them. We got kind of bogged down with people who weren't coming to the previous meetings and everybody had to wait while they were asking questions that everyone else knew the answers to. Jack said we haven't formalized this whole meeting process yet. We are very informal right now. Some of them who have been coming have been serving as unofficial representatives for the Townships. Roger Jurczak has been very valuable doing research for this group. Tom said we should be ready for the people who are

opposed to the Rail Trail because they live right next to it. Maybe you want to write some articles that say there's been studies done and it shows people who live next to the Rail Trail do not experience any higher crime. Donna said she's gotten positive feedback from people whose property abuts the trail. They can't wait to walk in the morning and that sort of thing. Jack said all the people coming to the meetings in Lower Saucon live near the trail. Donna said some of the people who come to the meetings are complainers. Jack said that's okay, you can work with them and they can become supporters. Steve said he thinks we are going to be pleased with the outcome of how many people are going to be using this trail. It's going to be a huge success. He's hearing people can't wait for it to open. Donna said we need to sit down and go over the specifications so we have the continuity and recommendation as to what the specs should be. Jack can submit our recommendation and let his people get out and then they'll have a plan to get out the crew and get moving on it. She knows Frank and Steve have researched costs. Jack said there is work going on and there will be some information that will be brought to you and will cover everything you need to know. What's going to be factored into this from his end, and from Charlie's end, is how much is it going to cost for these trail features? If some of them are too expensive, his recommendation is going to be that we put some of it off until next year. He will let you know what is doable in 2010. That will be coming. You are doing valuable work and we are also working on it. Charlie said PennDOT has taken their preliminary drawings on the crossings and made some recommendations and gave them back to our Borough Engineer for revision. They should be ready in a week, and then it goes back out again to PennDOT for final approval on Water Street. Maybe there's some uniformity we have to work on, but it should be pretty much the same design for all four municipalities. Steve and Frank said they would get together and go over everything. Steve said they can make it a power point presentation with drawings and such so that they can send it around for approval as far as they can show the surface. Frank said the article would be this is who we are as a group and we are planning a trail. We're making recommendations to the Township and the Township is committed to pending safety and budgetary considerations. We're mindful of the proximal and distal impacts of the trail. Studies have shown positive impacts such as increase in property values, increase in business traffic. We are considering all these things. Please come and join us at our next public meeting. He could envision this as a short article in the Valley Voice, the Township newsletters or the Morning Call. What we would do from there, is these are some of the decisions that have been made, and here's the next thing we are thinking about. It's a way of keeping the public engaged with these short articles. We could do a power point presentation so everybody could have a visual image. It would be a tool for the group. Donna said it would be good to have a picture of the trail for the article. They will work on it and email it to everyone, and as soon as they get the okay, they will distribute it.

Steve said can we start a Saucon Rail Trail website and put the same article up? Frank said he doesn't see why not. Jack said the domain name is ours. Jack said cost wise, we'd have to come to some agreement how the website would be maintained. Steve said he has someone who is willing to set up the site. Jack said if we are going to join in, everyone would probably want to look at the agreements, etc. Steve said he was thinking of putting the same information and some pictures on the website so he could at least refer people where to look. Jack said you can use .com or .org. They are both registered for us. If you want to go on the township website, you can take everything off of there. Steve asked what was the estimate from Isett for a master plan? Charlie said \$71,000.00. That's with contingency. Erin said you could submit for some of the materials that you can't budget for this year. Charlie said they said at the meeting you can't recover the money that you put into it initially.

Frank said he has to miss the next two meetings. Does it make any sense to have the April meeting before the proposal comes in or does it make sense to just say the proposal is going to go forward at the next meeting? Charlie said that is a good point. Frank said he could do a special meeting on April 12th and then move forward on April 26th. Frank said they could meet at 5:00 PM. Jack said that's good as it's at Lower Saucon Township. Would this would be in addition to the meeting on the 26th? Steve said there would be no meeting on the 26th then.

- **Rail Trail Clean-up** – Jack said there's a press release he put out on this. The Saucon Creek Watershed Association contacted him and Charlie and they had an arrangement to work with the Institute of Emerging Leaders at Penn State Lehigh Valley. They have to do a community service. They wanted to do a Rail Trail cleanup in conjunction with a stream cleanup. Terry said he was in on the Hellertown section and helped clean that part up. Jack said there was still some snow on the ground when they went out and they

did a great job. They picked up 50 bags of litter, 23 tires, a couple of pallets, a pile of miscellaneous scrap and one shopping cart. The Public Works Departments in Hellertown and Lower Saucon picked up the bags. Donna said different hiking clubs would do this sort of thing. Frank said at Lehigh they always have a street cleanup which is coming up in April. If you want to we could have the Lehigh students do a trail clean up. Erin said the Upper Saucon portion was done last year and when she walked through it this year, it appeared to be clean, and now they've done most of Lower Saucon and Hellertown. Terry said they were just talking about this on Saturday. That same day the Hellertown Ministerium had talked about getting involved after seeing the cleanup down at the Coke Works, so they are interested. He's assuming they can put a group of bodies together and there was already a cleanup done on Williams Street, but they only scratched the surface. They didn't even get the whole stretch worked on. That spot there, you can keep uncovering layer after layer of trash. Steve said he's sure the neighbors appreciate it.

- **Fundraising/Brochure – Update** - Donna said they are a little bogged down with not being allowed to do anything on fundraising, so they kind of slowed down on it. She's talked to somebody who was a fundraiser for the Boy Scouts and he said if you are going to do fundraising, you want to do it before the event because if you wait until the trail is open and say now we'd like to do this and we'd like to do that and we need money for this. That should all be in place ahead of time and you do get to the point where you want to put money into this and that, but you have this source to fall back on. They don't know where to go at this point. Charlie said could there be an allusion to do fundraising in these articles that Frank and Steve are going to write? Donna said we need to know when to go ahead and talk to groups like hiking clubs and things like that and see if they are willing to support this. If you have a source of money and you get to the point where you need to put money for this and that, then you have money instead of waiting until you need the money and then you are frantically trying to get people to donate. Jack said what you were talking about, if they want to donate money, and someone comes up to you and wants to write a check, and you started the frame work at all the different levels, he doesn't think we have anything settled on how it would be done on the entire length of the trail. Charlie said it doesn't mean you can't raise the idea that eventually this group will be asking for funding as there are a lot of things that are not going to be done and we will be looking for help from people in the future. We don't have a finished trail. Jack said there probably won't be benches put in in year one. The railings with the routing Donna was talking about might not happen right away. Donna said you have to decide what you want this money to go for also. Is it going to be upkeep or are you going to need money for a surface. They really worked hard on a presentation before the last meeting, but they were kind of blown away with that's great, we'll see you later. They were kind of deflated. Where do we go, what do you want us to go? They worked setting up something so they could go out and talk to people. When the time comes, you want to have resources so you can do things. Steve said he didn't think it was time to do fundraising until there was an agreement approved by all four municipalities. Donna said we're talking about getting started doing things. Jack said Steve is correct. If someone writes a check, where is it going to go? What is it for? You got to be careful that we have something in place that is going to be carried out. For example, in the Township fundraising was done several years ago for a map that never materialized and he's still hearing about that years later from business people who contributed their money to that. We have to be careful if we fundraise. Do we need 501c3 status, and all those kinds of things have to be nailed down. Frank said for public outreach, is it harmful to say we are looking as fundraising to be a key component for this trail. Even if we had a big chunk of money right now to develop this trail, if you do more fundraising, you can do beautification of the trail. Donna said maybe you should not just specify what area it would go to. Donna said we are going to have to have historical sites on maps and we are going to need money. Jack said you were talking about where their name would be routed on the benches. Frank said this fundraising if a very effective public outreach, can we move forward with saying we'd like to start the process of building community partnerships with the hope of these partnerships playing a role in the fundraising and in the trail development. That way no one is committed to give you money right now, so this stance would be a good guide as to how you go about doing things. He would say yes, you put a lot of time and effort into this, let's start building the community partnerships. Don't ask anyone for a check, but say we are committed to this project. Donna said if we are mentioning fundraising, they are going to want to know when they can give a check. Why can't we just set up an account? Tom said you have two options here and he doesn't know which way to go. Option 1 is just set up a non-profit organization and some board that runs the nonprofit handles the money and they deal with it and decide how they want to spend the money. You guys have to figure that out. As municipal officials, they don't run non-profits. Donna said it costs a lot of

money to set up a non-profit organization. Tom said Option 2 is you come up with a gifting program and you lay out if you want to donate a bench, this is the type of bench you need to buy, this is the type of plaque we give you, and you can make your donation to one of four municipalities to have that bench installed in one of those four municipalities. What happens is they write a check to us, we pay for the bench and have the benches installed along the trail. You can do that with a section of trail. I want to build 50 feet in Upper Saucon Township. They write us a check; we build 50 feet of trail. That way the money is handled by each municipality. We can handle it as they do it now at their park. People give Upper Saucon Township money for benches, garbage cans, soccer goals, kicking walls and trees at our park. They have a system in place where they can handle donations. If you want to use that system, fine. They are not going to accept \$50,000 in cash and be responsible and someone comes back in 15 years and said they gave you \$50,000 in cash, what did you do with it? Come up with a gifting program and have items people can buy and know what it costs and these are what you can do. Frank said this is what it costs for a bench, this is what it costs for a tree. Tom said it would be called a gifting program and most of the things they buy is right off the state contract. It's things that you don't have to bid. The company can even set up the program. You can have the donor pay the company directly and the Township is just cut right out of it. Charlie said he's still worried about that we don't have an agreement with this group. That has to be put in place because there is something lacking. It's not official. Frank, Steve and Gail are not official members of the Steering Committee. They are here because we appointed them. We need to make that formal. There's nothing with the concept, "that's a good idea" and no reason not to put it on the website, but we still need to get that agreement. Steve said we're all in the same boat. Donna said if you put it on the website and people want to donate, what are we going to do? Jack said for now, the easiest way to do it is Option 2. Let's say someone wants to write a check for \$50,000, right now we don't have anything set up to handle any of that and where does it go. What portion of the trail does it go to? What happens if Olympus comes to Tom and says they want to write a check for \$50,000? Tom says that is great and thanks them, and if we don't have something worked out, that is going to be an issue. Frank said you have to have a list and the person can choose from that list. You have to also designate which municipality it goes to. Donna said why don't you prioritize it. Do you need your screenings first? Jack said it's more or less the things that are visible that you can put a plaque on. Tom said the people who donated things to their park, they come to you and tell him this was important to his wife. You need a new bench here, and that person wants a bench. He doesn't care that you need a soccer goal. This bench is important to her because my wife sat here. Pick a bench and say this is what it costs to buy a bench. Don't try to make a profit margin. It just gets bizarre. Frank said we could have a menu of things to buy with a price and leave it up to the donor. Tom said that's the way their recreation plan suggests doing the gifting plan. Come up with a list of items and let people chose what they want to donate. You need to come up with a list. Jen said Donna's list consisted of benches, fences, historical signs, kiosks, beautification trees and birdhouses, and then it also includes surface of trail. That one seems problematic but the others sound appropriate. Maybe there's some other that should be on the list that we haven't thought of yet. The state contract will let you know what they charge. Jack said there are trailhead access points that could be beautified by someone. Steve said they could put that menu right up on the website. Tom said eventually you put out a pamphlet or a booklet about the gifting program. Jack said Donna and Jen were working on a brochure. Steve said once we get this going, this is a secondary thing, but historic maps and trail maps, we should just make it a printable feature on the website. He doesn't know if it should be at the kiosk. He doesn't know if we want to deal with a bunch of paper that gets thrown away. Frank said they have them down at the kiosk in Ironton and he thought who is paying for the reproduction of these maps. Steve said if you have it on the website, a printable version, which should be good enough. Jack said he hasn't seen too many of them thrown away. Donna said how many people would print it out on their computer and remember to take it with them. Frank said this is a much better way to execute this than knocking on someone's door and asking for a check. It leaves it right up to the donor to put it where they want to. Donna said she doesn't know how to approach this if they go to different clubs, who should they give the money to? Steve said it's probably a 501c3. It would be easier enough for us to open an account. Their money is going into a general fund. Do we want to pursue this? Tom said do we want to reinvent the wheel. Someone is already making contributions to Ironton, and they are accepting the contributions, all we have to do is ask them and see how they are doing it. Donna said she will talk to Jack about it or she can go to the next meeting. There are going to be individuals who want to contribute \$20, so this has to be figured out. Frank said the most important thing to do is to contact Ironton and see who they do it. Steve said it's easy to open a bank account. Donna said if you are going to do different events on the trail, you are going to need an account.

Steve said we shouldn't really open an account until we are an official entity. Tom said they get audited and there are certain rules on how to bring money into your municipality. You can't go outside those rules. He sees you either working within our four structures or you going out and creating a nonprofit and you are going to do your own accounting, it's going to be your responsibility.

- **Other Issues** – Jack said he'll send out a message about the meeting change.
- Next meeting – April 12, 2010 – Lower Saucon Township @ 5:00 PM; May 24, 2010 – Hellertown Borough @ 5:00 PM; June 28, 2010 – Coopersburg @ 7:00 PM

The meeting adjourned. The time was 9:00 PM.