

SAUCON RAIL TRAIL OVERSIGHT COMMISSION MEETING
March 26, 2012, 6:00 p.m.
Coopersburg Borough Hall
Coopersburg, PA 18036

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL- Roger Jurczak, Chairman

Present were: Chuck Hampton, Hellertown Borough
Joe Pampanin, Hellertown Borough
Jerry Holum, Lower Saucon
Joe Geib, Upper Saucon Township
Roger Jurczak, Lower Saucon Township
Steve LaBrake, Hellertown Borough
Pete Jarrett, Upper Saucon Township
Erin Frederick, Saucon Creek Watershed Association
Jack Cahalan, Lower Saucon Township
Perrie Layton, Coopersburg Borough
Susan Anderson, Upper Saucon Township
Dave Willard, Lower Saucon Township
Cathy Kichline, Hellertown Borough

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Samantha Falcone, Representative of the Southern Lehigh Girl Scout Service Unit 749. Being that it is the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Girl Scouts, Ms. Falcone proposed that the local girls scouts mark the anniversary by providing an interactive piece of art or perennial garden in the Upper Saucon or Coopersburg area of the trail. Another possibility is that the Girl Scouts be part of the rail tender program and be responsible for maintenance of a specific section of the trail. The Scouts will be providing the funding.

It was suggested that a garden where the bank between the trail ramp and the old railroad grade at the Southern Lehigh Park could be a possible project.

SRTC will be in contact Ms. Falcone about a possible site in the future.

3. ITEMS REQUIRING COMMISSION APPROVAL

Minutes from February 27, 2012 meeting.

Motion as made to accept meeting minutes of February 27, 2012 as presented. Motion was unanimously approved.

February Financial Report.

The balance as of February 29 was \$6,626.96. The receipts for the month were \$3,018.00. There were no expenses in February. Mr. Cahalan reported that the bank would waive the monthly checking account fee. Previous fees would be refunded.

A motion was made to accept the financial report. The motion was unanimously approved.

Bills to Pay (if any)- None. It was noted that no contract has been received from the web hosting site and that a contract would need to be received before payment could be made

Website Designer did not attend the meeting

Girl Scouts 100th Anniversary Project (See Public Comment.)

4. TRAIL PROJECTS

SRT Website (see Other Issues)

Trail Markers. No new news to report.

Benches.

Lower Saucon--more benches, 7 locations have been identified and the 7th bench was sold. In the next couple of weeks all of the benches will be delivered.

It was noted that the benches in Hellertown placed on the East side are hit with dust caused from bikes because of the prevailing wind. Wind should be considered when placing benches in the future.

Is there a product that could be used for dust control around the benches?

Guidelines stated that benches should not be facing residential homes.

Hellertown has 4 benches installed at this time and four are planned for the second phase. One of the new benches will be placed by the butterfly garden.

The trail's one year anniversary is in May.

Bingen Station History

Discussion of Bingen Street Station was deferred from the last meeting. Jerry Holum was on vacation and unable to do anything for this meeting. He suggests all of us do a history search. We can bring it all together and Jerry will put it on the website. Jerry wants to include in the history the Septa \$2 million contract that removed the rails and ties in the summer of 2008.

Jerry Holum will scan and email to members [Saucon Rail Trail: A Brief History](#), with changes, to Jack and Sara for distribution to everyone.

Approval of Trail Events

The oversight commission will have the Saucon Trail Events form that individuals and organizations can fill out and submit to the group in order to hold an event on the SRT. The form is similar to what each municipality has to approve for events within their jurisdiction. The completed form would go to Sara at her work address as Secretary and she will distribute it to the group to review. Jack will add a distribution list added at the bottom. We also discussed an agreement at the end of the form that people sign stating that they understand the registration guide lines

Jack had questions regarding the intergovernmental agreement accepted by the four municipalities. Nowhere in the agreement does it have the word "approve" for the events on the rail trail:

1. Does each municipality retain the right to approve events on the rail trail?
2. Does it need to be sent to each municipality supervisor and council for their approval?
3. Is it too many steps for a group to have to go through?

According to Jack Lower Saucon Council gave its support and felt that the SRTOC is capable of reviewing and approving any events based on the rules already established by each of the municipalities.

The form should be available at each of the municipalities. It would be appropriate for the completed form to be directed to Roger or Sara. The document would be eventually be on the SRT website, downloadable with instructions and then emailed to Sara. A line showing approval or disapproval of the event needs to be added to the form and a copy of the form will be returned to the organization along with the appropriate municipality.

A copy of the form goes to each municipality to be circulated so they will give use feedback as to what their safety requirements will be. That is the type issue that needs to be circulated to the municipality and then goes back to the organization as to what they need to do to get our approval.

Questions asked that need to be answered by the SRTOC before we begin allowing groups to use the trail and before the form is made public.

1. Do we restrict the number of participants?
2. Do we restrict the length of time a group can use the trail?
3. What type of groups do we foresee using the trail?
4. Does each group need to provide certification of liability insurance?
5. Do we allow non-commercial use of the trail?
6. Do we allow the use of motor vehicles on the trail for an event like a hayride?
7. How will the group provide safety of the participants on the trail and at cross roads during the event?

5. MARCH TRAIL MAINTENANCE

The Saturday March 24 trail cleanup was a great success. It was a very well received event. There were boy scouts of different ages. Twelve to 15 students from DeSales did a good deal of grunt work. There were about 30 adults, some came with children. There was a good turnout for the first trail maintenance event and a lot of debris that was cleaned out. Chuck was commended for his efforts for getting it organized and getting the turnout. Saucon Creek Watershed folks were there for the removal of invasive plants. Chuck suggested another clean up event in October.

The Commission discussed whether clean-up events should focus volunteer efforts on particular segments of the trail. For example, Frank Pizzaglio, Lehigh University, from Hellertown is interested in the stone formations and their maintenance so he can use them for the education of his students at Lehigh. Frank wants to come to a meeting to talk about his supervision of the cleaning and care of the stone formations by his students and others to be sure it is done properly.

At the area around the Saucon Country Club a lot of invasives were cleaned out and natives need to be planted. The Country Club offered funding to plant natives to block the Country Club for the trail. This could provide an opportunity to show people what a native habitat should look

like. The Country Club wants to block the ability of people using the trail see its members playing golf. Jim Romey, the grounds superintendent of SCC needs to be contacted.

Erin could come up with a planting plan of trees, shrubs and a native habitat to fill in the area between the trail and the country club. When the invasive plants were hauled out of there a space was left empty making the Club easily viewable from the trail. This could provide an opportunity to show people what a native habitat should look like.

It was asked if the Country Club will they reciprocate by blocking off their dump from the view of the trail? (Great Laughter) It is an eyesore.

TRAIL CHARACTER

Does the Commission have an overall vision as to how we want to manage the corridor? Should it look more like a wild habitat or a manicured park? The Ironton Rail Trails is a manicured park. What areas should be manicured or left as is, especially the areas that are already wooded.

Over the next month, people should think about how we balance maintenance and the natural habitat and bring their suggestions and ideas to the next meeting.

We have to be careful with wildflowers because many invasives are in wildflower mixes. Erin noted Ernst Conservation Seeds is a company based in PA that is used by the Watershed and is careful not to include invasive plants in their seed mixes

Questions were asked whether the trail should be paved in sections. The SRTOC does not have money for paving. It would be up to each municipality and SEPTA to do paving on sections. It was noted that paving would provide a multi-use aspect to the trail.

Many of these issues will clear themselves when the Commission develops a vision/mission statement. Getting the trail open was the first priority and now it is time to get some of this in writing as the Commission moves forward. For instance, Should the trail be rolled again? When it is dry the trail is extremely dusty.

TRAIL EVENTS

The Spring Valley Turkey Shoot will be held on April 15 from 12 noon to 5 pm. It is held twice a year. There is information posted in Hellertown and Upper Saucon that the event will be happening to warn trail users of the noise. Low noise shot gun shells will be used to minimize disturbance. This worked well for the Fall event. No complaints were received. The event will be posted on SRT Facebook page.

April 19th Regional Trail Planning Workshop. Roger, Steve and Ron Wordsby will be attending and its main purpose is to talk about the interconnection between the trails and efforts that will be beneficial to that aspect. Put on by the AMC.

Pathway to Progress is on April 28 not April 29. .

7. OTHER ISSUES

SRT Website

Joe will email Steve the map of the Trail after the Bingham Road access is added and Steve needs each Borough manager to send a set of their township rules of the use of the trail. It was suggested that Steve get info from the Valley Voice and the Chamber of Commerce for the Website. Memorial bench and mile marker info to be sent by Jack. Also to be included is a Calendar of Events and the Special Event application. Chuck will prepare the frequently Asked Questions for the Website.

As we move forward to finalize the Bingham Station history it might be the time to put up a placard at the station of the history similar to that at the Hellertown Station.. Possibility of a walking historic tour of the trail was also discussed. The history of the trail can be added to the website as we move forward. Steve is pulling photos of the trail from Facebook. Erin will send to Steve pictures of the trail clean-up. It was suggested that Steve include pictures of the Ribbon Cutting.

Jack noted that there needs to be a formal vote from the Commission to approve the contract from the Website Developer before the Developer can be paid. A formal, detailed contract of what the Website will contain has not yet been presented to the Commission and we need an actual document to be approved by each of the municipalities' representatives. A detailed invoice is acceptable in place of a contract. The Developer cannot start work until the contract/invoice is approved. It was asked if the commission has sole discretion on funds to pay for such things as the website. The Treasurer said yes.

We will formalize this at the next meeting with a contract.
Can Aaron come to the next meeting to do a show and tell?

Support Letter for Upper Saucon Township Grant Request.

Letter from Upper Saucon Township asking for a DCNR grant to do connections at the USCP an application for a grant. UST needs a letter of support from the Oversight Commission for the grant.

Joe provided a planning drawing that showed the areas in yellow that need grant funding for construction. One section goes around the parking lot to the other part of the trail to avoid navigating the parking lot and the upper lacrosse fields to connect to the trail bed. None would be happening on the SEPTA property; all work would be done on the Upper Saucon property. Engineering plans to be done this year. Phase 2 is two years away and is waiting for recreation fees from a developer to help pay it. The further the developer gets the faster phase 2 work begins.

It was noted that the trail right by the ball field does not have anything separating the ball players from trail users. Proximity of trail is really close to the ball game. There will be grass between the parking lot and the trail. Separation is necessary to avoid people getting out of their cars and right onto the trail.

Motion made and seconded to provide support letter. All approved.

Cathy mention that Tomenella property trail is to be completed by the summer without the bridge coming up to the trail. There is no funding for the bridge. Hellertown is looking for grant funding. Cathy will send plans to Sara for distribution.

Fundraising

There has been no correspondence from Richland or Springfield Township.

The group discussed fundraising options. One idea is to use 12 spikes that were found on the trail and sell them to people who would want a piece of the history. Because we don't own the spikes, we would have to get permission from Septa. Also, the insulators on top of the posts, could be removed and sold to raise funds.

There were earlier conversations as to how complicated fundraising could get and the equal distribution of the funding. It was discussed and concluded that the municipalities are providing support for administration but if there was a particular project, it would have to be approved by each of the municipalities and they would provide funding.

If a local group wants to provide funding for a particular project, it would be handled similarly to the funding aspects of the mile marker posts donated along the trail. One of the end results was decided that if they were earmarking a project in Lower Saucon TWP and the money would be earmarked for Lower Saucon. Before if it was undesignated it needed to go the municipality but if it designated to the SRT it could be put in the treasury and it could be used to benefit the whole trail.

Fundraising had two aspects. Put out a mailer or pamphlet encouraging people to make donations and the second was that some groups that would partner with us but wasn't sure what that meant. LL Bean approached the group and St. Luke's Physical Therapy in Hellertown were interested in partnering in RTC was unsure of the specifics since none were given. Would they want naming rights to certain sections? It will be discussed at the time. We did not want to give up the naming rights but we did want the money. The group is better situated to accept donations.

A large metal locker on the trail by meadow road and is adjacent to someone's property. The property owner would like to paint the metal locker to preserve it. We as a group need to have a position on what to do with any rail related objects. We have a number of large poles that hold the signal lights. This commission's responsibility is for the development and preservation that relates to the trail. If we are going to preserve something that requires substantial funding, how are we going to do that? If a group that wants to help, how do we go about letting them?

We need to determine this issue as part of the master plan/vision of the corridor. We need to develop a standard and have that ready for someone who wants to sponsor a signal and we could tell them how it would be restored. We can also supply a historic marker with a note as to funding source.

When are the T-shirts coming out? Could it be part of the website to have a paypal account so folks can buy T-shirts and caps. In the Patch, the SRT was given the honor of the most liked recreation area.

8. NEXT MEETING- April 23, 2012, Upper Saucon Township

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.