

SAUCON RAIL TRAIL OVERSIGHT COMMISSION MEETING

Date: Monday, June 25, 2012
Time: 6:00 PM
Location: Lower Saucon Township Council Meeting Room

Present: Lower Saucon Township: Roger Jurczak, Jerry Holum, Chris Garges
Hellertown Borough: Steve LaBrake, Joe Pampanin
Coopersburg Borough: Perry Layton (absent)
Upper Saucon Township: Joseph Geib, Sara Pandl

- **Call to Order/Roll Call – Chair**

Roger Jurczak welcomed everyone and had all the representatives introduce themselves.

- **Public Comment**

Roger Jurczak said the first item on the agenda is public comment and for those of you who are here this is generally reserved for public comment other than what is on today's agenda. Roger said due to the fact that we do have representation for the trail events and that's towards the tail end of the meeting why don't we carry that forward and ask that those representatives speak to us at this time.

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- **Trail Events**

- **Request from Jamie Gottschall and John Bolesta to host the new Balance Mile Race on Trail on Sunday, October 7 (UST Park & Recreation Commission already granted approval)**

John Bolesta said we have a race currently scheduled for October 7th Sunday morning. The race finishes in the Upper Saucon Township Park but the race begins on the SRT, if they get approval. He said it is a one mile race. It's going to start in the area of Washington Lane between Landis Mill Road and Spring Valley Drive. They are here for approval of that, and we have a few questions. Jamie said now this is for the Autism Society of America who is our main benefactor and the race will be called the New Balance Mile. She said the reason we are starting this in Upper Saucon Township is because there are so many 5ks in the area and there is not a mile race to be found in the Lehigh Valley. The closest one is Perkasio and there are so many colleges here and people to run the mile race that we just thought we need one here and it will be a pretty big deal if we can get it approved. They filled out the SRT Special Event application and the event was approved already by Upper Saucon Township Parks & Recreation board. Roger asked how many people do you have coming? John said anywhere from 150 to 300 but we are running four different separate mile races going off every half hour: a men's mile, women's mile, elite men's, masters men, elite women's open and masters women. So every half hour or so the path will be occupied during those periods of time. There should not be more than 50-60 runners in each race. Sara asked where they are going to park? John said they will have signs to let people know who are casually using the trail that the event is going to be going on ahead of time. John said they would also post them at the kiosk there and at the road crossings and access points just so people have more warning. There was a discussion about having an ATV vehicle with a race timer riding 50-100meters ahead of the runners. Steve LaBrake said the races usually start and finish at the same spot. He said the one rule we've been pretty hard and fast on is no motorized vehicles on the trail. John said that timing would be a courtesy for the runners and if they want to use it as a qualification for other events. If we continue to hold this each year you set a record and this would give you something to break the record for next year. They want to be accurate plus if it is approved, USATF to come out and ratify the course. So then timing has to be accurate. Jamie said you don't have to use timing chips or anything like that as they are expensive. She said they will just have a gun start finish with someone recording your times. John said when they come across on the finish line they will be recording the times. John said so the ATV would take the timer back to the starting line. John said another issue is the yellow gates at Landis Mill Road and the other are state roads and they are planning on closing them every half hour for two to three minutes at max. If they can just have volunteers to stop traffic to let the runners. Joe said that's a PennDot thing and you will definitely have to bring that up to them. You want to call it assisted crossings. Chris said I have the form and it doesn't seem like a big deal. My race would be basically one lump of people crossing at a time and traffic would be stopped a minute or two then a lot more sporadically when they are coming back because mine is a 10K, a lot longer race. Chris said you would need to have advanced warning signs signage for both crossings and then at least one volunteer in

each direction one volunteer directing the runners through so I think you need at least three. Chris said how long do you anticipate the entire use of the trail portion to be? Not counting your registration not counting your awards afterwards so like two hours to run everything? Jamie said we have a half pint fun run at 10 o'clock that's and a 400 meter dash and we do that within the park around on the path. Then from 11 until 12:30, around 90 minutes, we are going to have the races. It's only going to take most runners 6 minutes at the most to go from where we start to Landis Mil. So we are going to be using that part of the park for a max total of 40 minutes. Chris asked if you get into more groups will you run them 20-25 minutes apart because of the time? John said possibly. We may have some people walking the race but I think most people can run / walk faster than 20 minutes then we have to wait for that person to finish, and bring the clock back to start, and then get them started again. So right now it seems we could do it faster but we can make adjustments if we need to. We could combine some of the races. Joe said I am not seeing an issue with this you know does anybody see issues with this? They can provide the information on the park map and post that on the bulletin boards at the park. That way the park users know to avoid some of these areas. The other issue was the appropriate vehicle for the race timer and it was agreed that a bike would be the option. They will look for someone to donate a trailer made specifically for a bike and will put their name and race information on the trailer. John said Steve we should just verbally go over the details: it's a one mile race with approximately 150-300 people participating, event date, no rain date, start time finish time we have starting point and ending point and we know the park. He said it will be on the park side not library side. Steve asked if the participants are provided with water? With food? One of the issues is how will a medical emergency be handled? I guess that would all be the Upper Saucon Ambulance Corps. Steve said the aid stations, tables, would be at Upper Saucon Park. What about provisions to remove trash generated by the event. Joe G. said the Township's park crew that comes through every morning and handles stuff like that but if you generate your own stuff I mean we have a can or two there and a dumpster at the park. Jamie said we can bring extra garbage bags. Steve said what about provisions being made to remove signs and markings? John said they will need volunteers to do that. Steve said that he mountain bikes in a place where they have a race every year that nobody removes stuff and it's frustrating and leaves everyone bitter. Steve said we already talked about safety at crossings, the need to have the gates opened; there is no rain date correct? Roger said I have a question where is the start point? He said I'm looking at the map and I see two points. John said the start is at the top. The finish is in the Upper Saucon Township Park. Roger said I guess one of the questions is how are people getting to the start point. John said they will be pre-running from the finish to the start yes. They will be giving them information on this with the race packets and also before each race saying please be careful as you are going out to the start. Roger said they had a concern about the people either on the trail that typically run/walk the trail. It's on a Sunday so if it's a nice day you are going to have a lot of people out there that would normally be out there and then you have let's say 50 people who are going to be getting ready for one race heat. You don't really have a designated spot like a parking lot or trail head. John said not at the start at the finish. Roger said I don't have any problem with the finish. John said we have to talk to PennDot about that. People could get dropped off or we could bus them from the finish to the start at Spring Valley Road. Jamie asked if they could rent a pot-a-john and put it at that Spring Valley? Are there any rules for that? Joe said portable toilets could be arranged and that might be a better place to logistically drop people and then they can warm up coming back towards the starting point. He said we will have some volunteers at Spring Valley Road advising people about the race plus we will need to post notices a week or so before the event. Sara said do we approve at this time or do we have conditions we want to see met so that we can act on it, or is it all being handled in the townships. Roger said conditionally we are in favor of it I guess they still have to fill out the application. Sara said do you need action tonight or as long as we say we are conditionally in favor of it would you bring it back next month. I don't know if the timing is for you. John said well, they are looking to start advertising this race soon and it's going up on the websites, billboards, racing websites, a lot of advertising. He said within the next two to three weeks they would like everything out. Joe said I think some of the questions that are still just out there, that we want answers for, which I guess you could get for the next month, of course get the plans to us, the routes in the park, that's more for the township, stand, and what your solution is going to be for the clock on the bike. Sara said and then I guess PennDot too. John said, Chris, how long does it take to get a PennDot approval. Chris said I think it said something like they just want to know 6 weeks in advance. Chris said PennDot won't approve you until you get municipal approval for the event. Chris said so we need to get a letter to them and then they can ok it. Joe P. said I would agree with Roger that it's conditional. I think that the amount of activity you have there bothers me to some degree. I mean you have those runners running at a fast pace and it just seems there's not going to be

enough room. If they can have some kind of conditional bus transportation I would think that would be adequate. He said my concern is this, it would be, if you've been on the trail on weekends, you have the regulars. Some of them are on adult tricycles because of their stability and they are using the trail for their exercise and are there on a Sunday. And if they are there on a regular basis and we are giving this event the trail to use, what do we say to the people you can't use the trail on Sunday because we are having a race. I don't think that's ever been the intent of closing the trail. I mean we've talked at the farmers market, having a trolley go down the trail, and that's really been pushed down hard because trolley going up and down the trail, the trolley is 8 feet wide it's a 10 foot trail. John said they are going to have volunteers at the start saying we are having a race today, if you wait a few minutes wait until the race starts then you follow through. Then, we are going to call ahead and say to the volunteers again, ok we are going to start the race in five minutes hold everybody back. Let everybody clear and then we'll go again. I think we can handle it that way. That way we keep traffic moving, but there's a momentary pause and I think people who exercise on the trail won't be too affected. Sara said I think I'm all for it if we can work out these issues with the port-a-john, the road crossing and are we allowed to time people. Joe G. said and about the gates and getting them open the days leading up to, we have a key that we can lend you for those locks. Jamie said do you inform the police department too. Joe G. said I will. Jamie said how much notice do we give the police, the fire. Steve said and I think your municipality said it's supposed to be in a certain time before the event so they can notify emergency personnel. He said this event just affects Upper Saucon and they have already conditionally. Joe G said, he will let the police know through internal modes and you will have to talk to the ambulance corps and let them know unless they also want to be on site. Steve said if you can get some volunteer fireman to do it that's worked also fire police. Roger said what about the insurance liability perspective. Jamie said we are under the umbrella policy for the Autism Society of America. Joe G said I think the township still needs the waiver. Roger said so are we at the point where we need to just get those details on the sheet, or the form, the insurance aspect, the logistics of that we discussed. Chris said you should just list Upper & Lower Saucon Townships and PennDot. Roger said I could let you know when we receive everything, that's before the next meeting, and that way you can sign off on the application. He said Sara signs for the SRT as the secretary but it needs approval. So why don't we take that vote now. All in favor hands in the air, opposed, ok. Just a matter of you fulfilling your requirements and getting that information to Joe. and Sarah. Motion passed unanimously.

- **Request from HCM Foundation (Chris Garges) to hold 10K run on Trail on Monday, September 3 (UST Park & Recreation Commission already granted approval)**

Roger said alright, Chris. Chris said mine is pretty simple. We've already gone to Upper Saucon and got their approval, we are going to start at the Upper Saucon end of the trail. I put a limit on 300 people. I'm not sure what we are going to get, being a first time event. I also put a time limit in for anybody 15minutes per mile or slower. We are basically going to close all support to the course and still allow them to walk and finish. We would start at 8:30am and be off the trail by 10:00am, and this being a longer race, you will have the biggest group at the beginning and by the time you get though Spring Valley Road you are going to be pretty thinned out. I don't anticipate any issues with oncoming traffic. We will have a lead cyclist out there to kind of warn people. There will be cone somewhere between Old Mill and Meadows Road. We will have a volunteer there. We will have three volunteers at each intersection, PennDot intersections, Spring Valley/Landis Mill. We will have one at the turnaround. We will have a water stop at the trail head Lower Saucon trail head. The guy at the turnaround will be sweeper to clean up anything discarded. Everything will be cleaned up and taken out of the trail head where the water stop is and all the post race events would be off the trail at Upper Saucon Park. Sara asked if the loop is it out and back. Chris said it would be out and back. Chris said, I found some railroad spikes we are going to have as awards. We are going to try to make it a community event that hopefully happens every year and we can start to donate proceeds back to the Rail Trail Commission. Sara asked if there will be vendors there or anything like that? Chris said that's not a plan right now but just a setup under the pavilion. We talked about talking to Inside Scoop and maybe having ice cream in there like a Root Beer Float, something different. Sara said its Labor Day weekend? He said yes it's Labor Day Monday morning so I would envision we will be in and out pretty quick. Steve asked one heat out and back? Chris said yes one heat one out and back, no kids run. Sara asked no strollers, no dogs? Roger said slow people doing a 10 k, how long would it take. Chris said I put an

hour and half cut off on here. So it's a 15minute mile roughly and we would not pull them off. We just stop the support. He said so far we have some good support from local and bigger, from Brooks Running, The Finish Line, and Power Bar. The local multisport club is going to kick in volunteers. Sara said who's the sponsor? I'm a board member for the HCM foundation which is an Emmaus High School graduate who lost his father to cancer who now started a foundation a couple years ago that provides services for local people in the area that are dealing with cancer. So literally, that can't get a ride to treatment they will pay for a bus or people who are going through treatments and can't work and we'll pay for rent or that type of thing. So all the proceeds will go to them. The race is being run through HCM who puts on races to raise money. We raised three thousand dollars at the Super Bowl 10k that I direct in Allentown on Super Bowl Sunday. I direct a bike race that we raised \$500 that we did last year here. That's were all the money goes. Chris said one thing I want to ask is if we are allowed to use the Saucon Rail Trail logo. He said something on the back that says thank you to our sponsors and partners I've seen that on other municipal races and on our website. We are working on the race website now through our HCM website so. Steve said we own that logo at this point. Chris said we have a Facebook page for our event so we could put your logo on the Facebook page. Sara said I like pint glasses instead of the t-shirt. Chris said for awards I am going to use railroad spikes. Roger said ok so we have a second trail event. All in favor, everyone says I, no one opposes. Motion passed unanimously. Roger said ok so you've got an approval. Chris said one thing we didn't touch on and you touched on a little bit is the medical emergency plan. I am going to notify Dewey and the Upper Saucon Ambulance Corps ahead of time and all our volunteers will be directed to use 911. Steve said depending on if you dial 911 from your cell phone and depending on what county you are in your volunteers need to know where the mile markers are and the closest road access. Chris said yes good point.

- **Other Issues**
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- **Request from Donna Long to have Lower Saucon Township install privacy fence along her property's Trail frontage**

Roger said ok I think we are down the list. We have a request. Chris said I did print out some photos. Roger said ok we have a request from Ms. Donna Long with regard to a privacy fence along her property. Has everybody had a chance to review Ms Long's letter? Are there any questions from any of the Commissioners? Sara said I just want some history on how the privacy fences or how that occurred in the first place in Upper Saucon. Was that a condition of the trail going in? Joe G said Upper Saucon did not install privacy fences. Our fences are the split rail fence, the three rail fence, and we choose to put that in any grade where we have a drop of three foot or more off the side. Joe said the fences were for safety. We are getting into an issue of privacy fences when we go through the old Center Valley area, when we talk about Station Avenue where it goes from DeSales toward the old Centennial bridge and 309 at that crossing. On the Coopersburg side of that crossing there are homes whose second story is right up against the Rail Trail. We are engineering our plans to reflect privacy fences in that area probably a 6-8ft privacy fence. We have figured out what type of material we want to do but it is something in our plans for that phase 2 section. Chris said I can speak to my knowledge of what happened in Lower Saucon Township we looked at where there were homes as the trail was being developed in the initial stage. Where there were homes that were close or had such a grade that the people on the trail would look right into their main living area. That we actually have two instances on the trail that happened to be right next to each other. One is 17-1800 farmhouse that is feet away from the edge and the other one is actually their neighbor whose level is such that when come around the curb you would look right into their living room. So we put up a small section and the goal for the Township from day one was not to have a corridor of privacy fence but to respect as the trail was developed, since it was a change. Those couple instances, and they were the only two, we saw at that time and council took a look at the construction and talked to the property owners before it was moved forward. So that is how it arrived at how it was and I know there was a lot of thought and energy put into how it ended up the way it is right now. Jerry said is that a condition where because ownership had purchased the property when it was overgrown with what twenty years of non use. Chris said the change of use from what wasn't there to what is there now. That change in use factor coupled with proximity or extraneous conditions. Roger said Donna how long have you lived there? She said we just moved in there within the last two – three months. Roger said but you bought the property prior to the Saucon trail going in. She said yes actually it was being constructed when

we purchased it. Jerry said you purchased May 2009 so that would have been prior to or planned trail going in. She said ok. She said I would like to add something too. This is something that just happened recently, as a matter fact on Father's Day. There is, the back of our property, between our property and the rail, there is a ditch, and it is a pretty deep ditch. On Father's Day we are in our dining room, we can see everything clearly, there was a mother and daughter, I am assuming a mother daughter, riding their bikes. The mother's on the closer end to our property and the daughter was on the other side. The daughter was looking and talking to the mother and not watching what she was doing and fell into the ditch with her bike. I think what is happening is, as I had mentioned, there was somebody on our property. Well I think the same thing happened with them. When they fall into the ditch it is just easier for them to get up on our property then it is to get up on the Rail Trail because our property is down, slightly just a little lower, than the trail so that's another thing that happened just recently. So it's not really even all for us, is also a concern for the users of the trail. Roger asked if Ms Long had any idea that the Rail Trail was going to be going in there when she purchased the home. Sara asked if Mrs. Long was expecting to have a secluded area in her backyard as a privacy area. Mrs. Long said she had an idea the Rail Trail was going to be going in but did not realize, we certainly did not realize, that I guess, when you live there you don't really realize that it is going to be that open, or that used. The Rail Trail is very popular and beautiful and on a beautiful afternoon it is actually crowded. I did not cut down any trees in the back, as a matter of fact, I planted more but they are not growing well, the deer are eating them. Sarah said my thought is, whatever we decide to do, if we are willing to do it for anyone else who asks, as we are setting a precedent to these circumstances. Roger said this is a Lower Saucon item. Lower Saucon Township would be paying for the fence. Roger said it's a privacy issue, are you looking for privacy fence or are you looking for split rail. Mrs. Long said if you are going to put up a privacy fence it should be done for us and the users of the trail for safety. I definitely want a privacy fence. Jerry asked if all commissioners are familiar with where Mrs. Long's property is. Jerry said if you come down through Hellertown to Meadows Road it's on the right. Sara said she can't picture it, but it looks like from the pictures your house is up higher than the trail. Mrs. Long said yes our house is up higher and our back yard is slightly lower then it goes down. Roger asked Chris if it's the opposite of what we have out at Bingen where we are looking down into somebody's house. Jerry said he think's that in Donna's note, she pointed out that they have had incidents where people have yelled at your daughter. She said yes. I don't want to be on the bad side of the users. Mrs. Long said the more she thinks about it, the more I see things going on, the privacy fence would probably solve just about everything unless of course we did something. Sara asked Mrs. Long if she has thought about putting a fence up yourself on your property line. Mrs. Long said she would but then we would have to do a survey and we are talking a lot more money right now and we are trying to get our house fixed up we do a lot of the work and the funds aren't really there. Roger said it sounds as though there may be a drainage related situation. Jerry, you live in the adjacent property and as I recall there was a washout problem in heavy down pours coming off of the property and that was PPL. Actually there is gravel always being deposited right under the gates. Has that issued been resolved? He said no in my estimation it hasn't been resolved, but it has been rectified to some degree but not resolved. Roger said I'm looking at this picture here. I did walk the area the other day and I wasn't aware, because of all the growth, that has started from the edge of the trail up to the property here, but it sounds to me from Donna's input that people have fallen off the trail due to inattention and there is nothing as a barrier that would prevent somebody from falling into the ditch. Now the privacy fencing that exists at Old Mill is on Railroad property. Chris said its right on the edge. Roger said its right on the edge, which would therefore put the fencing very close to and prevent people from falling into the ditch. And subsequently its and 8ft fence. Chris said is 6ft. Roger said it would definitely provide a safety aspect as well as visional. Jerry said it's 6ft plus it's a foot off the ground on the fences near Old Mill Road. Roger said don't take me wrong Donna but a spilt rail fence would take care of that danger. Steve said when the Ironton Rail Trail was here early on, speaking to us, part of their solution to privacy was planting evergreens as opposed to putting up privacy fence. We've had some offers from Springtown Tree Farm and maybe is it possible for us to get some evergreens, taller evergreens, from him and do a split rail fence as opposed to a privacy fence. Steve said I'm just looking at different options and you know it's kind of this fine line we are in where we haven't had to deal with it too much but I know the Ironton Rail Trial they were doing it with trees as opposed to privacy fence. Steve said the trees may need to be planted on Ms. Long's property. Roger said when the privacy fencing went in on Old Mill the issue was it was on rail property and so if we were to address this issue in any event it would need to be on Rail property and not on private property. The issue of trees, there is no way tress could be put in on the railroad bed because of all the ballast and so forth. So what we are really talking about here is a

potential safety issue of falling into that ditch and it sounds like we've had two incidents that could be attributed to that aspect and then there's a balance act. As to the split rail fence cost \$500.00 per section vs. \$1000.00 for privacy fencing and that's a judgment call that I would think council will have to make. Chris said I think Steve was talking more about aesthetics than cost when he said a little of both. He said there's a cost of pine trees if they wouldn't object to putting pine trees on their property as a buffer. Roger said a 6ft privacy fence really isn't going to do anything for you. Ms. Long said we are not really concerned with the top part of it, it's the lower part of the property. Sara said Steve I like your idea doing both that would effectively be accommodating as a trail user coming through there. Steve said he would contact the tree farm, but the complication is that the planting would be on private property and that might be issue. Roger said however, what I heard tonight was that on two occasions people have fallen on the trail or off the edge of the trail and I do know that that ditch is dealing with the water that comes down Meadows. Jerry said I will correct you there, it doesn't get it to the creek it gets it across my property, it doesn't get anywhere near the creek. Roger said we need to investigate further what the drainage and the dangerous aspects are of this ditch. Roger said we should get input from our Public Works Supervisor. Steve said I want to try to get some perspective here what a privacy fence is going to do because her house sits so high I am not quite sure it's going to help, it's going to reduce but I don't think you are going to get a total blockage of the trail. Ms. Long said you won't get a total blockage, that's not what I'm looking for. I just want the biggest problem which is the back. Sara said I think you want to be able to sit in your back yard and feel like you are not going to be bothered. Jerry asked Ms. Long if she would be satisfied with a 6ft fence, not the whole portion of it just the lower portion of it? Mrs. Long said yes as long as it's the lower portion. Chris said you still have to go back to the thought of consistency. Joe P said I wasn't here last year but the fences that have already gone in did they go though the Rail Trail? Roger said no the Rail Trail was not in existence as a commission. Sara said usually when you are establishing a trail like this you try to be a good neighbor and it's a change in condition. Steve said I know there are quite a few opportunities in Hellertown for people requesting privacy and I don't think the Borough is in a position to be installing them. I would be disinclined to have this committee approving a or having a say on these privacy fences. He said now, is it the commissions outright decision or would it go the municipality? Sara and Chris said it would be a recommendation. He said so this is advisory only and then it would go down to the municipality. He said so this as advisory only and then it would go down to the municipality. He said I like the planting trees idea with some split rail fence. Sara asked if there is a consensus we should do something, it's a safety and privacy issue, it's just really what the right treatment is. Steve said when Ironton came they spoke specifically about this and they definitely try to work the with the resident every time and do what they can. They don't like the idea of putting privacy fence up either and their policy has always been pine trees, which I kind of agree there. I do like the idea of the split rail of protecting people from falling in. Sara said it's a nicer look along the trail because its softer. Jerry asked Ms. Long if she had any signage on your property stating no trespassing? She said not yet but I definitely will. Roger said I think there needs to be some further input as to whether split rail or the type of rail fencing we have on the bridges meets the requirements for the safety part of it and that it would be beneficial to look into Chris Cummings' offer with regard to trees Chris said I can have Jack contact you if we are going to meet out there. Roger said the gentlemen that attended our meeting maybe about eight months ago was in the tree business and he might be able to do some planting. He said he wanted to donate some of his time and effort toward the trail. He said good point. He might be a good contact because he has tree experience and we might be able to spread it around a little bit. I don't remember what his name is I might have it. Chris said then we would just want to release the liability. Chris said so we can keep you in the loop Donna if you want to be involved when we go out there and that type of thing. She said yes just give me a call. Chris said ok. Roger said you didn't go before the council on this did you. She said Jack had sent me something. She said I should attend the next Council meeting. Roger said thank you Donna we will get back to you.

Information Items

- **City of Bethlehem receiving DCNR Grant Funds to continue Bethlehem Greenway towards Saucon Park, near Auburn Street & Traveler Avenue**

The City of Bethlehem received DCNR grant funds to continue the Bethlehem greenway. Steve do you want to verbalize that? He said I think everybody got the email. It was good news. It looks like the bridge at High Street

is going to be awhile for that final connection piece. They don't have funding for that bridge and until that bridge is done they aren't going to finish. The greenway is going up to Saucon Park so it is sneaking its way ever closer which is a good sign. Roger asked if he was given any sort of time table on that part or are they still waiting for grants. He said I think Saucon Park is going to be in the next few months. From my impression I don't know if it was a year, she didn't give me any sort of time frame. They have the approval from Norfolk Southern to take it there. So they have the grant to get to Saucon Park. So I think that we'll see by the end of summer, maybe fall. He said my observation was that up to the Lynn Street bridge they had lighting in place. He said beyond Lynn Street they had the infrastructure in place but not a trail. I mean its plowed, its leveled, it's got hay down, but it's not paved and the lights are just concrete bases only and that ends if its 2,000 ft. Sara asked if he talked to Darlene Heller? He said yes. I think she was trying to give me the general jist. Sara said I can follow-up with her. She said it's just the timing of the installations. She said I can talk to her. Steve said that whole bridge thing on High Street, it could still be years before we see anything. He said they don't have the rights from Norfolk Southern to extend it further at this point. Roger said would it be to this Commission's advantage to start thinking along the lines that whatever we've heard, to say is this last piece from Bachman's Street to Saucon Park is really up in the air, at least to that crushcrete place? Might we put together an alternate path that is not formal that uses the road bed that comes around Saucon Park and Creek Road. Joe P. said I know people are commuting along that already. Somebody posted on Facebook that if I was trying to commute to Bethlehem where would I go and I think somebody mentioned to get off and follow Creek Road to where ever I think they were telling him to go up the development on the Southside of Bethlehem, South Terrace. To go up Williams Street to get to south Bethlehem but once this is done you would go Creek Road and you would have to ride Williams Street and to where you go under 78 to get to Saucon Park. Silvex to Creek and then you can cross the bridge you know the metal bridge they've closed is walkable. Roger asked is it totally closed? Steve said is closed to vehicles. He said is that what the sign says, he said I think that the sign just says closed. Roger said I don't think you want to promote anybody walking or riding on it if that's the case. He said I think we would have to clarify that. I think the City of Bethlehem owns that bridge. Steve said yes but the back side of the ironwork would be where to connect into and I would think that would be something that is easily maintained. Steve said there is a bunch of single track paths going from the Rail Trail to the bridge to Water Street, High Street. Sara said it sounds like we need a map. He said I will bring a map to the next meeting.

- **Items Requiring Commission Approval**

- **Minutes of April 23, 2012 Meeting**

Roger said he had a few corrections. Roger said we need to define what our officer crew is called. President Vice President and Secretary no more Chairman. The January meeting notes called for the annual election of officers; President Vice President and Secretary. Sara said with those corrections I move for approval. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- **April, May Financial Report**

He said the April/May financial report. He said it still appears that Coopersburg has not anteed up or am I looking at this incorrectly. He said you are correct. She said has anyone talked to the manager there. He said I know our manager Tom Biel meets with him on a monthly basis just to go over stuff. I mentioned to Tom before one of the recent meetings to mention to Tim about coming to these meetings. She said are the Township and Borough paying \$1000.00? She said it's a year. He said I believe it was designated there was a time frame, I want to say by March. She said I was thinking it was April. He said ok it wasn't like next November? She said no. He said why are there bank fees? I would assume that was because of blank checks needed or something but what is the \$55.00, \$65.00? He said that was the initial charge which I believe Jack said he would go back and get that adjustment which that one is adjusted and the bank would adjust the first one as I recall. Chris said is that anything you want me to look into? He said if you would run it by Jack. Chris said ok. He said so the fund balance as of May 31st was \$6,328.76. Anybody have any questions as to the accuracy or any questions about the fund balance? So for approval of the May financial report all in favor, no one opposed, approved.

- **Bills to pay (if any)**

He said I don't see any pending bills. Are there any bills that any of our Commissioners have? No ok.

- **Trail Projects**

- **SRT Website**

Steve said we are running into this major snafu. He said sorry to bring it up, its late. Aaron's ready to drop the whole site. Steve said because he cannot get the domain name transferred to him. He said he's been working with Scott at TDS. There have been conference calls with Jack and the computer people of Lower Saucon and Aaron and Scott at TDS. I don't know why but the domain name is not transferring. Aaron is requesting he log on to the TDS computer system which they are not going to let him log into their computer systems. This is been going on for two week and Jack has sent me emails. Sara asked who TDS is? Chris said Tech Data Systems. He said and I think we've tried to get Aaron and Scott to talk directly and it seems if they are saying Aaron doesn't know what he's doing. Aaron says they don't know what they're doing, it's kind of turned into this small nightmare of a project. Steve said Lower Saucon reserved the domain name years ago through TDS, Tech Data Systems. Roger said, so there was a transfer of funds? He said yes. Roger said and a check was written by Lower Saucon? He said yes for Sauconrailtrail .org and Sauconrailtrail.com. Roger said so they own the domain name. Steve said correct. Roger said so they are the driver on this? Steve said right but you got to go to the person who is holding that domain TDS and transfer that domain name to the Computer Bin so they can build the site up, but the transfer is not happening for whatever reason. Steve said it is a technical issue. Roger said has no one ever transferred a domain name before? Steve said it's crazy I get emails on a daily basis right now. Terry Booz said Saucon Valley Farmer's Market went through the same thing last year and I believe Aaron was the same person that you are dealing with and what happened was I guess our period expired before when things were going to be transferred and so the site had to be shut down and rebooted so to speak. Steve said after a 60day waiting period? Terry said yes. Steve said Aaron is at a total stand still at building our site until this gets resolved. Chris said they've been trying, it's not by lack of effort. Roger asked if this a matter where our attorney needs to jump in. Chris said I don't know if it's to that point. Chris said I think Lower Saucon's site does have some information on the Rail Trial and I believe Upper Saucon does too. Chris said Jack is on vacation, I believe he might be back tomorrow. Steve said I think it's out of Jack's hands. Jack really has nothing to do with it but I'm kind of feeding Jack these emails because I don't know what to do with it. I don't have the domain name so I think really somehow we need to get Scott from TDS and Aaron on the phone at the same time I don't know. Chris said well why don't I get an update from Jack when he gets in and we'll see where it is at and then we'll send an email out to everybody. Jerry said just a comment on that picture we are going to put on there, on that page you sent out to us could we get the train station this is the train station in Hellertown and that probably was taken as a result of the last commuter train that was going through Hellertown and this was probably taken in the early to mid 60s. Could we have one that's more historic like the Bingen Station that's on the back. Steve said we can have anything we want on, I just gave him the instructions pull any picture you want off Facebook if we want a particular picture on there. He said we can change that at a later time even after Aaron is all said and done. Jerry said ok.

- **Benches**

Roger said we touched on benches. Chris, I think you said that there was one more bench that. Chris said yes the last one in Lower Saucon was marked so it may even be in this week. Chris said that is as you come from Bingen Road toward Old Mill Road, there's that shear wall on both sides. Jerry said its right in there nice and close to the wall. Joe G. said Upper Saucon still has more spots and we can make spots. There is one at Spring Valley Road. There's one at Landis Mill and there's one at Washington. I think there's one at the top of the grade between the park and the trail. He said and then there is one on the library side for Caroline. Steve said there are at least fifteen or sixteen benches along a five mile stretch, and they are strategically located

- **History of North Penn RR**

Roger said next issue on here is the history of the North Penn Railroad. Joe G. said I'm sorry we didn't touch on kiosks. Joe G said we have a wonderful kiosk that was just installed at Upper Saucon Township. Roger asked if

that was a Boy Scout project? Joe said yes, a Boy Scout project using Marks's design. Roger said I saw the picture and was impressed. Joe G. said the Road Department did the stone work around the kiosk and it's got a green roof and we are going to get the map and everything else up in there soon. He said if you see on the clearing photo, we cleared out a lot of the underbrush and planted some natives and berms and lower brush because we had some sightline issues. There are some people that would kind of cruise down the grade and if you were coming and approaching you wouldn't be able to see it too well.

- **Water Fountain Donation**

He said since our last meeting I had a conversation with the gentleman, Eric Bartos and I see from conversation back and forth that Eric had spoken with you, Joe about a similar matter but what Joe had said was that Eric and some friends had talked about possibly donating a water fountain and I'm going to tell you what I knew about before I read Joe's input. He said the Lower Saucon trail head design has been modified to plan for a water fountain. There is water in the road right outside the trail head so we are talking about the distance of a house 50-60-75 feet and no idea what the cost might be. Chris said I can update that. I talked to the Lower Saucon Authority, they would not charge us the tapping fee they would basically only charge us for the material and then bill us for usage. It would be about \$1500.00 for material to get a line there and then it would just be the purchase of the fountain itself. Roger said concrete is sturdier but we are putting it in a somewhat secluded area on the trail. Chris said yes we just have to look at the prices on what the fountain would be. I mean these people want to put money toward a donation if Lower Saucon is going to develop that into a park anyway that basically be pretty much put into the development of the park. Chris said he'll have to get a price on different fountains and see what it would cost to run the copper back there. Joe G. said you are further than I am with this project because when I initially spoke to them I said you will have to pay for getting the water line which he was hoping to do it around the Washington Avenue access point which we could tap water from Augusta Drive. Roger said you are talking 1,500 feet? Joe G said right and so I wasn't able to discourage him with that idea. He said give me some numbers and keep going with it. Jerry asked where's Augusta Drive as compared to the Reading Road access? Washington, how far is that from Reading Road? He said probably a mile maybe. Roger asked if Mr. Bartos wants his fountain to be at Augusta. Joe G. said no he just thought that would be a decent location. Chris said that the trail head is going to be in the middle between Hellertown and Upper Saucon Park so our trail head would probably be a pretty ideal place to have one. Joe G. said and in the plans for your park it might be simpler to steer him towards your plans, you kind of already have numbers and your numbers are probably going to be lower than our numbers based on the length of water that needs to be run. Jerry said something else we should take into consideration when we have an offer like this on the table is that something that is missing on the Rail Trail is water for dogs. There is no place to water and I see so many people going off the trail just because their dog needs a drink. Chris said Upper Saucon has a nice setup on the back. The front is the fountain and the back is the dog bowl which I think is what we could go for as well. Roger said so you are in the process of getting pricing on fountains. Chris said yes. He said so if it's already in \$1500, in material to get there and you are probably talking \$500, maybe \$1000, for a decent one. Chris said that's what I would guess. He said and I don't know he said he had backers as a donator with him so I don't know if money is no object for him. Chris said well it's something if that number works for him it is something we can put into motion pretty quickly if we know the location I would imagine is going to be pretty close to the gate by the port o john. Joe G said I hope he will be satisfied with the one and not two maybe he just wants one in general and if he wants to get money to pay the second one we could do another one at our location. Steve said hopefully a third one in Hellertown it just kind of opens that up for another sponsorship opportunity to you know if you have them 2-2 1/2 miles down the trail, again then nobody is going into dehydration. Roger said Steve you may not have to worry about the Hellertown part because supposedly the Borough may be installing restrooms at Water Street. Steve said right, right under that one pavilion where the picnic tables are.

- **Trail Maintenance**

Roger asked if there is anything that needs to be discussed in regards to trail maintenance. Sara said I think everything actually I think it looks great. The new benches that Upper Saucon put in, the ruts filled it looks great, the last time I was on it was yesterday, it looks wonderful. Jerry said it appears as though the grass is starting to creep in now on the trail up to where we put down crushcrete and I think it's only going to get worse by next year.

I know Lower Saucon Township went out the other day and did some trimming. I believe it was Lower Saucon Township it might have been Hellertown but went down in to Lower Saucon Township but the foliage is starting to creep in and I am just wondering if we should think about expanding that base. I know Hellertown is 12 ft wide and the Township is 10 ft wide and Upper Saucon is 12-14 ft wide and it just doesn't seem to be consistent there and especially if we are thinking about these different events going on you know more of these running events, it goes narrow and wide it just doesn't seem to be enough consistency there. Roger said so noted, I know that when we discuss the general characteristics of the trail the conversation piece was 10 ft wide and was going to be everybody's guideline. I think what transpired was that Upper Saucon did their engineering and their choice of base materials and their approach was quite difference from Lower Saucon Township and Hellertown. I think Hellertown's decision was that as they were laying down product they realized they had a short distance and the price of the material was such that they went wider just because of that aspect and the fact they had the labor there and what you could say was that uniformly at least have a 10 ft wide base throughout the trail. In some areas it is wider. Your issue was with the maintenance, could something be done to give a wider base through Lower Saucon Township? Would that be an issue of trimming? Jerry said I think trimming is a part of the issue but an additional two feet especially as I said for many months especially over the bridges. The bridges are becoming a little unsightly now with all this grass growing over. Chris said grass growing on the sides or on the rails or anything? Jerry said yes the distance between the outside of the bridge and beginning of the trail just that two and half feet where the ballast stone is still there and the ballast stone has always been a buggabo for me because I continue to see people throwing stones if you don't cover that stuff up its just a matter of time somebody's going to get hit by it and there's going to be an accident and it certainly wouldn't be a lot of money to put the crushcrete across the bridges. Roger said that's an issue for the Township obviously. Jerry said but it's a matter that is being brought up here and I think it's something that will be conveyed but via the minutes if nothing more. Chris said I will discuss it with Jack. Jerry said but the bridges need some additional attention and the possibility of our recommendation is adding crushcrete in those areas, he said it's just the border area. I'm talking about the border. He said so they can't grab a big ballast rock and start throwing it over the bridges which make sense to me. Chris said you don't have to go the full thickness of the trail just fill in ok I will talk to Jack about it

- **Bingen Station History**

Roger said at the last meeting we talked about inventorying the remaining rail fixtures that are on the trail and in some fashion moving that forward to identify where they are and thinking how do I get them restored for future. These being there and what I'm talking about is the signal poles and the battery and/or control boxes that remain. What I did on Sunday was walked the trail from the County line back toward Hellertown and Joe it's my recall that I can't remember seeing any of the battery boxes or any of that that was in your end of the trail. Joe G. said I don't think there is anything good in our area. Roger said but I don't even think there was anything there, I haven't seen anything as I walked the trail. Joe P said what is the road by DeSales. Joe G. said it's Landis Mill. Chris said there is a cabinet at Station Road I am pretty sure. Roger said there used to be a station there so that would probably be a good reason why. Joe G said I know up on the hill above the Landis Mill crossing there's a little pavilion type thing but yes I haven't seen any many control boxes or anything. Roger said ok, I will submit this, I didn't make copies I just did one with a drawing. There's a signal pole south of where the Lower Saucon trail head is at but there is no lighting there. Then there is a signal pole near Walnut and then there is a double pole signal between Water Street and Bachman. Jerry said is that the real tall one? Roger said this is the one in Hellertown, it seems as though years ago we talked about cutting that ladder down so nobody could climb that. Steve said yes but the ladder still goes down to ground level. He said I talked to Tom about it about a month ago. Steve said you can just about see from Water Street Park as you are looking toward the end of the trail the northern most end of the trail. Roger said I would like to make a motion tonight that we formally take some action toward finding out how we would go about memorializing them and then hopefully a couple of people might get involved to find out what it would take to get them restored and you know the rail people when they built stuff they really built it forever and we have the benefit of at least those signal poles, the rail box, the battery boxes and control boxes. One is a four-shelf and the other is a three-shelf but I couldn't tell which one is a battery box or a control box. I could tell you where they are located and they are not rusted out that I could see total, so if nothing more you have a metal cabinet probably about 4-5 ft tall or taller by about 4 ft wide and about 2 ft deep and it appears they exist where there's a crossing and in terms of the signal lights they were usually involved with their nearest station and I think that in my view it would be this commissions lead to see if we want to do

something about them and prevent them from taking the route of the wooden telegraph poles which are starting to fall fairly regularly. The really big signal there would probably have to be commercially redone. The one at Walnut Street would be the best one to start with and then I don't know how far we would want to go with it. Are we talking about repainting it or are you talking to what are you looking at to fix it up? Roger said there are resources in the communities that could be a big help to us. I talked with Tom Henshaw who has gotten a lot of support from the monument company that is in Hellertown and it is my understanding that he has a portable sand blaster and to go to the site that they can access using the trail to get their equipment there and getting up and down the pole is matter of getting scaffolding and or ladders and it's sandblasting, priming and painting. These would be the specs that I would see applying for metal type devices. In some of our earlier conversations there were various agencies that said if you have a real big project we could sponsor that we would be interested in doing that. Steve said I remember LL Bean was interested in helping us with a similar type project. Roger said Jennifer had raised some interest at LL Bean so I am thinking companies like that or organizations like that if we said hey you know we need three grand to restore the signal lamp situation there in Hellertown, might that be something you can do? Steve said yea that's why we would put a "sponsored by" plaque. I view a "sponsored by" plaque there explaining what that piece of equipment. It's a shame that we somehow lost I think it was going to Old Mill Road, there was, just a sign with a W on it. Chris said I know there were a lot of the railroad buffs that were upset with the rails being taken up so I wonder if any of that energy could be turned into something positive. They may take some pride in and they may have a lot of knowledge. Steve said yea we can find some of them on Facebook. Jerry said I had told Roger briefly about the gentlemen down in Souderton and he was a big buff and he was the one that got me some information on North Penn Railroad and I was suggesting to Roger that we make contact with one of those people and have them come in and give us a little walk through on the history of the North Penn Railroad in combination with that, we certainly might get that link with them that they are going to be helpful with us and you know play as one team together. I think that gentleman was a retired school teacher and he actually did do lectures. Steve said you know it would be kind of cool actually if they had the Hellertown-Lower Saucon history they did couple of nights of it. Steve said right but it might be kind of cool to have an open forum and have the public come in an listen to if we get two or three people to speak on the history of the Rail Trail and have an open public forum one night for people to hear the history of the Rail Trail. Jerry said yes I had asked him once before when I was doing some history review and he said, I really can't help you out I really don't know that much about Bingen, if its Hellertown you are interested in I can tell you. Steve said but with an open forum we might hear a lot from the audience that we don't know about. He said sure. He said and you get some of these railroad buffs that might come in and give us a lot of information. Roger said that is just like I said earlier with these control panels and stuff we want to do that in the period colors that they had, you know what color were those boxes painted, purple, green, yellow, what were they? Jerry said but in addition to your inventory there are some items you should add there, you missed the boxes, remember the field trip we took. Roger said they are tool boxes, there is another one on Meadows Road at the intersection. There's one on Donna's property they are looking to restore, he had asked me the other week about restoring them. Roger said Donna's husband, Jim and he is looking to restore them. I said to him you have got to get a hold of Jack and we are trying to find out the period colors as we don't want to get them done and not get them done right. Sara said have any of the Rail Trail people done this before that are down the road from you? He said are their trail people? Roger said Quakertown, I think if we got in contact with those people from Quakertown they have a historic club down there and I'm sure they could help. Chris said then the next step would be to get SEPTA approval to work on the boxes. Roger said no I would disagree. I would say let's do it it's on our property, it on our lease, it's up to us to maintain. Chris said my other concern is chemicals and some of the battery boxes. Roger said in the box? All the batteries are stripped out all the electric is gone it's a raw shell. Chris said that we would probably want to get something from the attorney first before we started. Steve said it's some of those things we are dealing with, we are going to be rehabilitating the bleachers down in Dimmick Park and there's questions about what paint here, is there lead? Roger said oh yes, there could be something like that. Steve said we don't want them sand blasting that. He said I guess we've gone through just about everything that is on the sheet. Chris said is that something you want me to look into as far as what we would need to do from that standpoint? Roger said yes, do you want to hold on to this supplement thing? Chris said yes.

- **Next Meeting**

- July 23rd @ Hellertown Borough; August 27th @ Coopersburg Borough; September 24th @ Upper Saucon Township

Adjournment:

- The meeting adjourned at 10 PM.