

SAUCON RAIL TRAIL OVERSIGHT COMMISSION MEETING

July 23, 2012, 6:00 p.m.
Hellertown Borough Hall
685 Main Street
Hellertown, PA 18055

MINUTES

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

Present were: Chuck Hampton, Hellertown Borough
Joe Pampanin, Hellertown Borough
Joe Geib, Upper Saucon Township
Sara Pandl, Upper Saucon Township
Roger Jurczak, Lower Saucon Township
Steve LaBrake, Hellertown Borough
Pete Jarrett, Upper Saucon Township
Tim Paashaus, Coopersburg Borough
Jack Cahalan, Lower Saucon Township
Cathy Kichline, Hellertown Borough

2. PUBLIC COMMENT- None

3. INFORMATION ITEMS

4. ITEMS REQUIRING COMMISSION APPROVAL

a. Minutes of June 25, 2012, Meeting

A motion was made by Sara Pandl to approve the June 25, 2012, minutes as written. Motion was unanimously approved.

b. June Financial Report

Mr. Cahalan-The balance as of June 30, 2012, was \$6,479.29. Lower Saucon Township, Hellertown Borough, and Upper Saucon Township have paid their dues for 2012. There are bank fees on the statement but they will be returned. The money that was paid to The Computer Bin was returned.

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

4a.

c. Bills to Pay (if any)- None

d. Saucon Rail Trail Website Contract

Mr. LaBrake- The Computer Bin no longer wants to work with the Committee. It has been recommended that we go to another source. My second choice was 110 Front. Their price was reasonable and they are local. I would like to hand the project over to them rather than starting over.

Mr. Jurczak- I would also like to continue the work.

Mr. LaBrake- They were happy to send another estimate. I would have to speak with them about a timeframe for completion.

A motion was made by Peter Jarrett to allow 110 Front Street to continue with work previously completed on the website for a fee of \$1,200.00 and a \$95.00 yearly hosting fee. The motion was unanimously approved.

5. TRAIL PROJECTS

a. SRT Website

This item was previously discussed.

b. Benches

Mr. Jurczak- Does Upper Saucon have any benches available?

Mr. Geib- We have 4 currently placed and could probably put a few more out.

Mr. LaBrake- I think we should also look into historical markers that people can also donate. We have looked at them through Eternal Products.

We also have a Boy Scout who would like to build another kiosk in Lower Saucon Township.

Mr. Jurczak- What is the status of the marker for the marsh?

Ms. Kichline- We are looking at installing the marker in August or September. There are some invasives that need to be removed and Terry Boos indicated that would be the most appropriate time.

c. History of the North Penn Railroad

Mr. Cahalan- I think that the Committee should get the Historical Societies involved to help develop the markers.

Mr. Jarrett- The Pennsylvania Historic Museum Commission could probably help with funding the markers.

Mr. LaBrake- I visited the gentleman who does monuments in Hellertown [Robert Moll]. Most of his sandblasting is done in his shop. It would be difficult to bring his machines out to the rail road equipment. He said that he would do it if the equipment could be taken apart and brought to the shop. I do not feel that it is a good idea to take the items apart.

Mr. Jurczak- I think that someone involved in railroad preservation might have a better idea.

d. Water Fountain

Mr. Cahalan- A running group would like to donate money toward a water fountain at the Reading Road trailhead in Lower Saucon Township. There is a local water service line close by. The water authority said they would not charge us for the hook-up. There would be a charge to run the line to the trail head and it would cost about \$1,500.00. We also asked the Planner to add the fountain to the plans for the trailhead. We are looking for a fountain which is ADA compliant and winterized. We actually found one that had a pet fountain. It is in the \$1,500.00-\$2,000.00 range. I am not sure the individual was willing to donate that much. I will email Mr. Jurczak a list of prices.

Mr. Jurczak- I asked him how much he was looking at donating and I believe he was more in the range of \$500.00-\$1,000.00. They can still contribute and we can seek other donors.

6. TRAIL MAINTENANCE

Mr. Jarrett- Are we going to do fall maintenance clean-up? I remember hearing that the fall is a good time for herbicides.

Mr. Hampton- DeSales students have expressed an interest. I think we should localize within each community. Hellertown may want to concentrate on the marsh, Lower Saucon Township on the trailhead, and Upper Saucon Township on clearing brush. I think early to mid-November would be the best time since most of the vegetation has died off.

Mr. Cahalan- Have we heard from the people doing the Saucon Creek Mapping?

Mr. Hampton- I am going to their meeting tomorrow and should have more information if the meeting is held.

I read that a few trees came down last week?

Mr. Cahalan- A few trees came down toward Bingen and one at Meadows Road. They have all been removed.

7. TRAIL EVENTS

- a. Request from Shannon Baker to hold 5K run on Trail to benefit the American Red Cross. (Upper Saucon Township and Recreation Commission already granted approval)

This item was tabled until the next meeting.

- b. Request from Jamie Gottschall to host the New Balance Mile Race on Trail on Sunday, October 7, 2012. (Upper Saucon Township and Recreation Commission already granted approval).

Mr. Jurczak- There were two applications at the last meeting. The form that we made was not filled out. If you are crossing a PennDOT street, you need their approval. We conditionally approved Jamie's request contingent upon receipt of the Special Event Form. We have not received the form.

Jamie Gottschall appeared later in the meeting.

Mr. Jurczak- A letter outlining your request is what is holding up your approval. When you cross a PennDOT road, you will need to send them a municipal permission letter to get approval. You will also need an insurance form.

Joe Geib offered to assist Ms. Gottschall with the forms.

Neither application will move forward at this meeting.

8. OTHER ISSUES

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

Ms. Pandl- Initially, the view was that the property owner was responsible but the opinion seems to have changed if a home was purchased with no knowledge of the trail going in, that there should be some shared costs.

Mr. Jurczak- It should come down to the municipality. Either the Committee should pay everything, the property owner should pay everything, or there is shared costs. Mr. LaBrake and I met with Chris Cummings of Springfield Tree Farm to get some feedback on trees. They do donate tree in certain cases but this would not qualify. The trees that the Long's planted were being eaten by deer. He spoke of the Green Giant Arborvitae. The deer do not like it and it grows fast creating a barrier in about 3 years. Even if we would put up privacy fence, it would not provide privacy at the house due to the grade. There is no room to put trees on the trail. The trees should be put up by the house. There is a large drop-off with a ditch off the trail. Apparently, people have gone down the embankment two times.

Mr. LaBrake- A split-rail fence would help with the safety issue.

Mr. Cahalan- I don't think there is enough room to put a fence without protruding onto the trail. There are other areas that have worse drop-offs than this property. We had a public meeting prior to the ribbon cutting, so owners were aware that the trail was going in.

Mr. LaBrake- A split-rail fence would not help solve the privacy issue.

Mr. Pampanin- The property owner should be responsible for the cost of privacy screening on their property.

A motion was made by Sara Pandl to not recommend paying for the installation privacy fence and to have the municipality look into safety issues. Because the planting will occur on private property,

the Committee will recommend plant species but not absorb the costs. Native plants are preferred. Motion was unanimously carried.

b. Discussion on Saucon Rail Trail Rules, re: Guns on the Trail

Ms. Pandl- I feel that we should defer to the municipality and the local police on this issue.

Ms. Kichline- I invited Officer Donato and Investigator Dattilio to speak on this topic.

Officer Donato- Municipalities cannot regulate the gun law. The current rule, as written, is not enforceable.

Mr. Pampanin- The municipality may not be able to regulate guns on the trail but could SEPTA since they are the owner and it is private property?

Mr. Cahalan will look at the SEPTA lease.

Ms. Kichline- Hellertown Borough will eliminate the word "carrying" in the park rules and the rest will remain unchanged.

c. Saucon Rail Trail Mission Statement

Mr. Cahalan- I believe the Intergovernmental Agreement covers the mission statement.

Mr. Jurczak- We will call it a Master Plan.

The Saucon Valley Conservancy was going to map the trail.

Mr. Pampanin- I think that the trailheads could be developed but let the in-between go more natural for lower maintenance.

Mr. Jurczak- Is Hellertown Borough planning on doing more to Water Street Park?

Mr. Pampanin- Yes, there will be a basketball court and bathrooms installed.

Ms. Kichline- There is no timeline. Dimmick Park projects are the first priority.

Mr. Jurczak- What is happening at Tumminello Park?

Ms. Kichline- That is currently under development. We were awarded a \$25,000.00 Lehigh Valley mini-grant to do additional buffering. We will be building a bridge over the millrace. We are going to apply to Lehigh Valley Greenways for partial funding. The rest would either be a DCNR grant or public money. The project, other than the bridge, should be completed this fall.

Mr. Jurczak- What is going on with the Bingen trailhead?

Mr. Cahalan- We are waiting for finalized plans. Hopefully, we will have it within a month and can take it to Council for approval.

Mr. Passhaus- A few local bike shops are collecting bicycles and appropriating them. We had 15-20 bikes that were given and are thinking about a charity or fundraiser associated with the trail.

Mr. Jurczak- Community Bike Works does that in Allentown. To get a bicycle, people will need to fix the bike, do community service, and learn about bike safety.

What is going on at the northern end of the trail?

Mr. LaBrake- I spoke with Darlene Heller from Bethlehem Greenways. They are taking the trail to Saucon Park and it should be open later this year.

9. NEXT MEETING- August 27, 2012, Coopersburg Borough

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.