

SAUCON RAIL TRAIL OVERSIGHT COMMISSION MEETING
September 24, 2012, 6:00 p.m.
Upper Saucon Township Building
5500 Camp Meeting Road
Center Valley PA 18034



MINUTES

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

Present were: Steve LaBrake, Vice-President, Hellertown Borough
Pete Jarrett, Upper Saucon Township
Jerry Holum, Lower Saucon Township
Sara Pandl, Upper Saucon Township
Joe Pampanin, Hellertown Borough
Joe Geib, Upper Saucon Township
Tim Paashaus, Coopersburg Borough
Jack Cahalan, Lower Saucon Township

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

- a. Lee Weidner provided public comment about ATVs and dirt bike intruders on the Trail in Hellertown, near Bachman Street. He feels this is a public safety issue, since the intruders have harassed Trail users (including a woman and a baby), and caused ruts on the trail by spinning their tires. These incidents tend to occur between 3:30 and 6:00 PM weekdays, and 8:30 or evenings on Sundays. Joe Pampanin said that there are about three areas where the intruders can enter the trail, and that although Hellertown Police will try to add signs and block off these access points, it can be very difficult to completely keep out these intruders.
- b. Judy Krasnicke – Saucon Creek Watershed Association: Ms. Krasnicke would like the Commission to get a master site plan together for the Trail, including native plants and removal of invasive plants. She would be willing to work with a subcommittee and the PSU Master Gardeners to get this accomplished. She also distributed pamphlets from PSU Extension about *Invasive Plants and Landscaping with Native Plants*.

3. INFORMATION ITEMS

- a. Update on Eastern PA Greenways & Trails Summit – Steve LaBrake took some conference attendees on a ride on the Saucon Rail Trail after a day at the seminar. Having the seminar nearby at DeSales University allows attendees to really get to know the Saucon Rail Trail. Steve LaBrake brought up some good ideas from the Summit:
 - The Commission should partner with friends in the health industry, like St. Luke's, to promote the Trail for wellness.
 - Partner with the local library for Storybook Trails, to promote literacy and wellness. Young readers would walk along the Trail, reading excerpts from books posted at kiosks as they progress.
 - Use QR Codes on the kiosk and at interpretive signs, to allow users to quickly refer to the web for additional information.
- b. Dedication of Memorial Plaque to Carolyn Lidie – The dedication was held on September 20 in Hellertown. Roger Jurczak said a few words about Carolyn and unveiled a plaque in her memory at

the kiosk on the Trail in Hellertown. There will also be additional native plantings at this kiosk and in Grist Mill Park.

Joe Pampanin also suggested that the Commission think about the perceived “permanence” of the donated items on the Trail. In the event that the Saucon Rail Trail would revert back to SEPTA use, the Commission and Municipalities should have a plan in place to relocate the donated/sponsored items (mile markers, benches, etc.). Although donators believe that the items would be a permanent fixture on the Trail, municipalities should stress that they would be reused in a different location in such an event.

- c. Flyer for New Balance Mile Race of Saucon Valley on the Trail on Sunday, October 7. When approving events in the future, the Commission should request more weather-proof notification signs on the Trail. Additionally, the Commission would like to approve the postings/advertisements at the entrances to the Trail.
- d. HCM Foundation Donation – HCM Foundation had a very successful event, and donated \$250 to the Saucon Rail Trail Oversight Commission. Roger suggested that these funds be put towards the purchase of a water fountain at the Reading Road wayside.

The Commission would also like to start a prioritized list of wants/needs for projects and improvements on the Trail. When a donation is received in the future, they can easily refer to the list and make the necessary improvements. The Commission should also think about which outside partners they would like to work with, and also devise a plan to outline which municipality or group gets their interests met first.

The Commission will brainstorm and prioritize projects at their next meeting.

- e. News Article: Hellertown Targets Rail Trail Intruders: see Public Comment above.
- f. News Article: Corpse Found on Popular Bike Trail.
Article on the Thun Trail in Cumru Township, Berks County.
- g. Spring Valley Sportsmen Fall Turkey Shoot. The Sportsmen will have another shoot in November, and will post the Trail with a notification sign. The Commission discussed other types of signs that the Sportsmen could use to notify the users. The Commission approved the notice the Sportsmen provided.
- h. News Article: Scout Proposes Kiosk at Tumminello Property.
- i. Eagle Scout candidate Vincent Behe of Troop 311 will look to install a kiosk at this future Hellertown Borough park property, near the Trail. The scout has a short timeframe to complete the project.

4. ITEMS REQUIRING COMMISSION APPROVAL

- a. Minutes of July 23 Meeting
The Commission approved the July minutes.
- b. August / September Financial Report
The Commission accepted the Financial Report for August and September. Jack Cahalan noted that all the bank fees previously charged to the account have been returned.

- c. Bills to pay (if any). None.
- d. Lehigh County Green Futures Fund grant application.
Upper Saucon Township will be applying for grant funding to complete Phase II of the Trail from the Upper Saucon Township Community Park to Coopersburg Borough. Joe Geib requested a letter of support from the Commission, to which they obliged.

5. TRAIL PROJECTS

- a. SRT Website Update
Steve showed the Commission a draft of the website. The Commission liked the site so far, and only asked that the consultant add functionality to “report a problem” and a tab for “News and Advisories”. The municipalities were instructed to provide descriptive locations for the mile markers, to be added to the website.
- b. Benches. Nothing to update.
- c. Water Fountain Donation
The Commission is looking to continue with the water fountain installation at the Reading Road Trailhead.
- d. Reading Road Trailhead Sketch Plan
Jack Cahalan presented a sketch plan for the Reading Road Trailhead in Lower Saucon Township. The Commission provided some feedback about the placement of the bathroom, kiosk, trash receptacles, and water fountain. Jack will have a revised sketch at the next meeting.

6. TRAIL MAINTENANCE

The Commission discussed some current maintenance issues:

Mowing: There needs to be a prescribed schedule made for Lower Saucon Township uses Hellertown Borough’s sickle-bar mower for mowing. Upper Saucon Township does not have as much area to mow compared to Lower Saucon Township and Hellertown Borough, but also knocks back some intruding plants when necessary.

Mile Markers: Grass around the posts should be replaced with stone, to make it easier to maintain, and to prevent damage to the posts from weed trimming.

Washouts: There are persistent washouts near Meadows Road in Lower Saucon Township and Landis Mill Road in Upper Saucon Township. The municipalities are working on a long-term solution for these areas.

7. TRAIL EVENTS - None.

8. OTHER ISSUES

- a. Saucon Rail Trail Mission Statement
The Commission feels there is no need for a mission statement at this time.
- b. Seasonal / Annual Maintenance Schedule
Jack will put together a draft maintenance schedule for the municipal crews to follow.

c. Direction / Discussion to review need for Trail Patrol for special events

The Commission would like to put a page on the website for those interested in being goodwill ambassadors of the Trail. These volunteers would have a liaison to the Commission, and would help spread the word about – and participate in special events, including road crossings. Jack will work on a structure and examples.

d. Direction / Discussion on Refurbishment of North Penn RR historic structures

The Commission decided to table any additional work until next month. However, the Commission would like to meet with Dale Woodland of Souderton for some history of the NPRR for the website. Perhaps Dale would be available to do a public presentation on the history as well.

9. NEXT MEETING- October 22, Lower Saucon Township

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM