

SAUCON RAIL TRAIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Monday, September 27, 2010
Time: 7:00 PM
Location: Hellertown Borough Hall

Present: Donna Bristol, Lower Saucon Township Manager; Dawn Kresge, Borough Manager and Jennifer Wescoe-Schaninger, Coopersburg Borough; Tom Beil, Township Manager, Upper Saucon Township; Charlie Luthar, Steve LaBrake, and Frank Pazzaglia, Hellertown Borough. Guests: Roger Jurczak, Teresa Mackey, Jerry Holum, Al Horvath, and Jerry Holum.

Jack Cahalan arrived at 7:55 PM.

- **Trail Development Issues (Surface, Signage, Crossings, Barriers, etc.) – Update**

Dawn said next year Coopersburg will do Phase II, and the following year they will do Phase III where they can connect with Upper Saucon. It will probably be another year, so for next year's budget, which she is currently working on now, she will start to put some money away, and then the following year, they will begin their project. Then Upper Saucon will be down there to meet them.

Charlie said in Hellertown, they've had an estimate for the Water Street Crossing, and it's about \$35,600.00 to get it done by Signal Services for the flashing lights with push buttons that will tell people there is someone crossing the path. They are going to meet with a person from Signal Services and try to see if there is some way they can have their Borough people do some of the things so they don't have to spend all of that money. The other crossing at Walnut Street just looks like it needs painting. It is not going to require all the fancy bells and whistles that we have to do on Water Street. They are asking for County Open Space money. There is some money that is allocated to the Borough for Parks and Recreation, acquisition of land, and if they had that, they'd have a little bit left. The Borough has applied for \$45,000.00 that would cover the entire Signal Service system, outsourcing it which they hope not to do. They might be able to save some money doing it in-house or applying for \$45,000.00 to cover that cost plus some of the development cost with the bollards and swing gates. Jack also went out and got estimates for the 750' of fencing along the rail trail which also includes the crossing on Saucon Creek that the Borough shares. That part is in place and we're going to work together and cover the cost from the Borough for that portion. We'll also look at the crossing here on Silver Creek, which is right off of Water Street. Initially, they were thinking of chain link fence, but there was a good bid from the company who is doing the wooden fencing. He doesn't have the design of that, but from what Jack told them, it was going to be an inclined top rail. The price was decent, so they may end up going for something like that with the crossing they have on Water Street. That's a good sign. In terms of getting their part together, it's going to depend on how quickly they decide how much their Public Works can do and how much they have the outside contractor do. They are still hopeful they can have some of this trail open this fall. Jack is pretty well set. It's just the matter of the two Public Works departments getting together and doing the surface. In Hellertown, they have a little bit of an approach at both of the crossings that have to be paved. They will have to try to figure that out. They may end up with just gravel initially until they can get into the proper weather to do that. Things are progressing, but not just going as quickly as they'd like.

Charlie said as Dawn was mentioning, Tom from Upper Saucon is already starting some of his work. Dawn said they started Phase I at the very beginning and she's not sure how far it comes down. She knows they had some issues with the golf course and a company there. All of that got resolved now. Charlie said they had problems with PennDOT. They still haven't gotten PennDOT's total clearance for Water Street.

- **Fundraising/Brochure – Update**

Jennifer said she, Donna, and Jerry Holum had discussed this. Jerry is working more with the railroad timeline from the North Penn Railroad. Jennifer, Jerry and Ryan Mack have worked together in terms of

creating some sort of timeline of how the railroad developed. Regarding the fundraising and sponsorship, they are looking into presenting a brochure which will integrate information and fundraising all together. She showed the layout they are looking at and what they would do is present it as having information for each municipality and correlate different parts of the rail trail to historical aspects of each municipality so it's more of an educational, informational type experience for people on the trail. Within this brochure, they will have a map of the rail trail, but will also have on the back, a format for the corporate sponsorships. They have different parts of it which are Level 1 down to Level 5, and eventually Friends of Saucon Rail Trail will be \$100 plus. With this main brochure, you have Level 1 "Engineer", optimal sponsorship is \$5,000; Level 2 would be "Conductor" which is all relationship to the railroad and is \$750.00; Level 3 "Brakeman" at \$500.00; Level 4 "Signal" is \$300.00; and Level 5 is "Passenger" at \$150.00, and then "Friends of Saucon Rail Trail". This part of their prototype of the brochure would be part of the main brochure which would integrate everything in. The great part about this layout is that they can help promote local restaurants and businesses that could be potential sponsors on the brochure. That's a huge benefit in the fundraising aspect of it. This is all aesthetically pleasing also. You don't want to go to a kiosk and have a bunch of pages of information. This is something that is very helpful to people who are visiting the Rail Trail. As far as any interest, they had talked about St. Luke's Hospital. Jennifer hasn't gotten in contact with them yet, but she's looking forward to doing that to see what level they are interested in. Frank said there was someone from St. Luke's who handles most of the public relations, who is coordinating with the Bethlehem Greenway efforts as well. It has to do with health and wellness in the community and people getting out and walking and biking. Sometime in the future, our rail trail might be able to connect to the Bethlehem Greenway.

Jennifer said focusing on the fundraising aspect of all of this; they are still creating the structure of how to approach that. It's important to have the layout, a logo, and a website before we go to the company. She thinks it's important we have the structure laid out and everything in place so we have some substance to offer businesses and companies. She said if you are interested in looking at our draft layout, please feel free to look at it. Jennifer, Jerry Holum, Ryan, and Donna had talked about the North Penn Railroad timeline. She said you'll see later on what they created about the development of the railroad.

Charlie said we have an Eagle Scout who is interested in building kiosks. Roger said the scout has not been very communicative, but that relates to being 17 and being busy. His gut feeling is that in as much as he made a commitment to the Eagle Scout committee for his project, there's a 6 or 7 page form they have to go through and layout their wording, so on and so forth. It was detailed and involves two kiosks. Basically the design was published on the web and it gave very fine details as to sizes, the only difference is that on one of our kiosks we want to have a "green" roof. Carolyn Lidie has secured the trays and she is in the process of planting them. That has required an adjustment in the size of the kiosk that will go in the first location, which is Water Street Park. He's been out of town, and hasn't been able to get together with the scout. The scout has talked about going to some of the lumber companies in the area and is proposing to ask them if they want to supply some of the materials. There is a bit of work to get done before we can go out and ask for supplies and we need to have something in place. He needs to get a bill of materials in place. Roger will work with the scout on it. He hopes by the next meeting, we'll have this in place. The scout will be doing both of them. Donna said when she went to the Ironton Rail Trail meeting up in Whitehall, they had an Eagle Scout who did a kiosk and it took him a year just to do one. It's a lot of work. Roger said the backbone information he heard is the scout's grandfather is in the lumber business, and his father is a carpenter. Steve said if it's one big kiosk, that's very large and it's at least 12' x 16' wide. These aren't that big. As far as constructing a kiosk, he could do that in a day. It's not that difficult to put up a kiosk. Donna said the one at the Ironton Rail Trail that the Eagle Scout submitted slides of what he did was really nice. Charlie said the Eagle Scout was in the audience at their Borough Council meeting and they called on someone right ahead, and he wanted to do his presentation. Borough Council did approve it, but they want to see the drawing as they didn't see them yet. Donna asked how many different kiosks are you going to have along the trail? Charlie said Water Street is one of them and Walnut Street is the other. The scout volunteered to do two of them. Donna asked if they were planning on doing a kiosk at every intersection or just busy intersections? Charlie said those would be the two key intersections at this end. Frank said originally, we had talked about a logical place for the kiosks would be at the big parking places so the two that Charlie just mentioned are the two big parking places from this end of the trail. We

identified some further south of the trail and it would be nice to have a kiosk at all of them. Donna said each kiosk would highlight what is close to that intersection. Frank said he would imagine the kiosks would have a map of the whole trail, and say “you are on this part of the trail”, and something uniform on each of them, and something unique to that area. He would think you would want to have a map of the trail and where you are. Donna said when they talked about kiosks, they were talking about listings of restaurants, places of businesses, etc. that were within walking distance of that particular parking area. Frank said that’s a good idea. Steve said you were talking about this earlier, are you going to have a pdf file of the brochure? Jennifer said yes, they will have a pdf version.

Steve said as we don’t have a website, should we put up a Facebook page to get information out at this point. It’s free of charge. It would be a real easy thing to do to communicate out to the public. Jennifer said if people really want to know, that’s an avenue. Steve said it will be interesting how many people latch onto it and how quickly. Jennifer said a friend of hers said it would be great if they could have a subcommittee later on called “Friends of Saucon Rail Trail” and this would be a subcommittee of all volunteers, which is a brilliant idea. There are already two people who are excited to help and that is something we can build on. That would be one of the avenues to support that. Steve said the Ironton Rail Trail has a page. It’s easy enough to put up the page. They can make a few of them administrators and one can go on and post information. Charlie said what exactly does that do? Steve said it just would be a communication tool. They could update people on what’s going on, what they are waiting on. We could put up pictures of certain things we have, maps, any kind of information we want to send out to the public. Frank said imagine a web page where a number of people can access and actually modify it, add material to it, have online interaction, and it sits there and people can comment on it. It’s sort of a common place that a small number of people are administrators and can adjust it in a major way, but anyone else who wants to join, joins in and they have a forum for exchanging ideas. Jennifer said it’s great for announcements. It’s a great communicative tool. They have one for the 5K and it’s very good for businesses. Steve said the Ironton Rail Trail has at least 300 to 500 fans. It’s real easy to put information out to a crowd who already has interest in it. He will at least start the page tomorrow. It’s a huge tool and great for business and it’s free. They can post a map and put some pictures on it. Jennifer said they do need to make some changes as it’s not perfectly accurate. Erin is always helpful on that. Steve said as parts are done, they can put it on the page. It will be clear that it’s not a finished project at this point. Frank said are you sure people aren’t going to then think they can use the trail? Donna said make sure to tell them it’s not done. Jennifer said this would be purely informational. Charlie said as long as it’s spelled out clearly that it’s not ready yet. He’s hoping there is some parts open by the end of the year. Jennifer said to progressively start out, we have one. Steve said the only reason he was asking about the pdf is if they are on our website, they can print it off. It’s their printer, their paper and their ink. Jennifer said they can see how tonight goes, and when she meets with her friend, they can sit down and start laying everything out as she has the framework of it. She showed another example of a map we might be able to do. Steve said for people using the trail, they can print out a map with all the historic keys on it. As they are going, they could carry the map with them. This is away from the fundraising. Jennifer said her idea was integrating both of them.

- **Logo, Website, Etc. – Update**

Jennifer said what you are about to see are several examples of logos. They were created by Jill Brown, Jill Brown Studios in Bethlehem. This your first option that they could use. She asked if anyone wanted to discuss it? Charlie said on the copies he made, it’s not visible here, but you have rails sitting behind here. Jennifer said yes, they are green rails sitting in the back. She said the right one they could put on signs to correlate with other information. The colors are not coming out. If you could look on your pocket there, those are the colors they would use. Donna asked what the symbol stands for? Jennifer said the circle, you know how the trains have that big circle in front of it with a number, and the 8 represents the miles. There is a compass on the back. Donna said the first one represented the track, she didn’t get that, but she thinks that if it had crossbars, then she would have gotten it, and it would look like a track. Charlie said when he was looking at that, he was looking at No. 1 or No. 2 for simplicity. Donna said No. 3 where it says Saucon Rail Trail is easier to figure out what it is saying than SRT. Steve said he likes the SRT idea, but it seems very classic. He loves the compass - color wise, but if you are doing anything, the more colors, the more expensive it is. Donna said you would then start to associate SRT with Saucon Rail Trail. If it

appears on other signs like Mile 1, Mile 2, then you can associate SRT means that. There are some logos that you have no idea what they stand for. Steve said even mileage markers could be SRT with a 1 or 2 below it. Charlie said that would work very well. Steve said if you have mile marker in green with SRT, it's still keeping it simple and will start to identify SRT. This would be very simple to do. We should think long term about if we ever go connect with Bethlehem. He met someone from Bucks County Bicycle Coalition and they are approaching it to take it to Coopersburg. They want to connect into this and make it longer. If it goes into Bethlehem, the mile markers will have to be done. Frank said the SRT would define our section and then if you connect to another section like Bethlehem, it would be something else like the Bethlehem RT or something like that. Someone said for the markers, are there any historical markers from the railroad that we'd be able to use for mileage? Frank said there are some signal towers that are still there. He doesn't believe any of the mileage markers are there except for one which is mile marker 53. Someone said couldn't we do SEPTA mile marker 51 through 59. Donna said she thinks that would confuse people. Part of the reason for mile markers is to calculate how far you rode or you walked. They may never get a connection of 53 miles. Charlie said they are all well done and the simplicity seems to ring a bell with everyone. Teresa said the only comments she has, she likes the first one, but she was wondering how it would be if you took Saucon Rail Trail and put Saucon on the top and Rail Trail on the bottom. She also likes when fonts are mixed. They both look Arial. People would be able to read it easier. When you get away from the Arial, it's a little hard to read sometimes. It seems like there is a lot of white space. If you put a box around it, and took the words and put it around the circle, maybe it would be a little cleaner, a little more compact. Steve said he does like the font on No. 3. Donna said since Teresa was talking about different fonts, she likes that font too. Teresa said it's a nice clean font. Steve said No. 3 looks too much like the Ironton Rail Trail logo. He does like No. 4, with the compass, and there are a lot of neat features. Frank said there's a lot in there that have either personal health or economic health, and he's happy with that, the whole health aspect of the trail. Donna said why not a track to a healthier you rather than a path? Jennifer said yes. Charlie said the "healthier you" reminds him of Lehigh Valley Hospital. Frank said if St. Luke's or Lehigh Valley Hospital wants to be a community partner, that would be something that would attract them. Charlie said it sounds like people are interested in the health aspect of it. Jerry said you are talking about health, but there's a lot of history also. It's going to be a big part of the pamphlet. Charlie said do you have some thoughts how to knit that together? Jerry said "get on track to history and health". Donna said that's perfect. Frank said get on track to history and health. They are just iterations of phrases. Jennifer said she just wrote two paragraphs about the history of the rail trail and they will go further into the timeline that was created. It needs to be also confirmed by our local historians to make sure everything is accurate. A lot of times they talked about railroad enthusiasts who, historically speaking, refer to the North Pennsylvania Railroad as the Reading Railroad. It's important to put in North Pennsylvania Railroad as that's where it all started. As you can see, as time goes on, then North Pennsylvania Railroad was completed to Bethlehem in 1879 and was leased to Philadelphia and Reading Coal Company. She gave a timeline of the railroad up until the present time. Charlie said it was well done. Jerry said we have to get something in there about the contract being given by SEPTA to tear out the rails. SEPTA sold that contract for how many millions of dollars, so we should have that in there also. Charlie said we should have some of that as we were involved when they were coming through here and for remediation of the tanks. There is probably some documentation of any environmental remediation. Jack had actually found something on the internet where they announced that. Jerry said he thinks that is really important. That's when the rails were pulled up. Frank said did that happen in 2009? Jerry said 2009. Charlie said they will work on that and check back. Jerry said SEPTA sold that for about \$3 million. Charlie said in summary, they went over the timeline, a face book page, and four logos. Frank said if we are going to go with a face book page, it would be appropriate for a logo to go on that page and identify the project. Tom said he thought the idea of having the Saucon Rail Trail wrapped around the No. 1 option was good. Maybe it would be helpful, decision wise, if we could get that implemented as the No. 1 option has a lot of desirability. When he looks at it, he sees the SRT real clear. If it was wrapped around, it would get your attention, it would be circular and it would be all inclusive. Donna said the cross tracks need to be put on it also. Jennifer said she would take it back to Jill and get another logo for everyone to take a look at. Jack suggested we have all the Councils and Supervisors look at it. Frank said can we make a recommendation that the Councils see the Saucon Rail Trail one and have Jill do another one, and run it by Council? Jennifer said she will get in touch with Jill and Jill will send it back to Jennifer. Jennifer will email it to everyone, and then move forward with the Townships and Boroughs. Jack said it can then be brought back to the next Rail Trail

meeting to see if anyone has any issues. Frank said you can still go with the Face Book page. Charlie said there was also a timeline “Get on track with history and health”. Jerry had a lot to do with that.

Tom said about a week ago, they awarded the bid to construct Phase I of the Rail Trail which was from the Township Park east to Lower Saucon Township line. Phase I will be constructed by the end of this year. It will be a 12’ wide path and it will be a fine crushed stone path. Someone asked how many streets does that cross? Tom said it crossed Spring Valley Road where there will be a flashing warning device, which PennDOT is requiring, and it crosses Landis Mill Road. Landis Mill will just be painted with some signage. It’s a little under two miles and it was \$360,000.00. They were anticipating \$500,000.00, so the bids came in better than expected. If you want a bid, now is the time to do it as people are looking for work. Included in the bid was, not only constructing the trail, but also removing some of the poles that fell down, putting the fencing up where there are steep drop-offs, and also signs and gates at the road crossing. They are hoping it will be done by the end of November, but definitely by the end of the year. The parking they have will be at the park. The trail will connect to the trail at the park. That’s the only place to park now to get on the trail. There will be an ADA compliant ramp up to the rail trail. Teresa asked where does the Lower Saucon line end? Someone said it ends by the gun club. Jack said there is no access for Lower Saucon as of yet, they are negotiating for trailhead access on Reading Road. They talked to the owner about leasing it or buying it. They are going to put a gate there to keep people from driving on the track. Jerry said it’s the spot of the old depot. He asked if all the other municipalities and boroughs going to be taking down telegraph poles that are on the border. Jack said Public Works is going to be doing that. Tom said they found some that fell over and are a hazard to people walking on the trail so those that are still up are coming down. As part of the contract, there is removal of signals and signal boxes and that’s part of the contract. Charlie said they are going to do that also, but in-house, with Public Works doing the work. There is a debate about Water Street and using some of the poles that come down. A lot of them are okay, but some are not in good shape.

Steve asked if there were pictures of the depot? Jack said they have one at the Township. Steve said he’d like to get a hold of some of those pictures for the Face Book page. They will put anticipated dates on Face Book also. Jack said on Meadows Road they don’t need flashing lights, which will save them a lot of money. They are ready to go when they get the gates and bollards up, the fencing, and the last thing to do is the surface. They are still on track for the end of the year. Charlie said they have a problem in Hellertown as there are a lot of places you can access the trail. The problem they are going to have is how to prevent people from going in at other places, from a vehicle standpoint. They will have to work on that as they really don’t have a good solution yet. They’d hate to go wooden fence for all that distance. They will probably have Jersey barriers before they have the gates in place. Regarding the poles, it isn’t much to take them down. Roger suggested using the poles and having them raised up and put them along the trail as a barrier for vehicles. Jerry said some are in really bad shape. He asked if there was any thought of Hellertown expanding Saucon Street with a small bridge that would reach the trail that would allow people to walk from there into the downtown area, especially to restaurants. If there was a bridge there, you could get to places like Braveheart. It’s next to the Wale Apparatus place. It would be a perfect place for people to get off there and go to the restaurants. Charlie said it’s been talked about having people patronizing the restaurants. They didn’t look at a specific area. In the PA Communities Initiative grant the Borough got, they are looking a streetscapes and definitely the Water Street area would be one place where there would be public parking and they’d encourage people to come up to the main downtown area. They also talked about Depot Street as another possible place. Steve said through the Walkable Community Committee, they discussed that and one idea was to put a parking and seating area within two blocks from the restaurant district. That was definitely discussed. Someone had a beautiful plan for a nice bike park. Charlie said it’s something they would like to do. They haven’t looked at the locations yet, but that’s one to look at. There is actually another design there that will have more resistance on because of loss of parking, but it was suggested the street be made one way and it would run down from Main Street west and there would be a bike path on one side. Joe said that was Saucon and Depot streets. On Depot, they have the angled parking. Charlie said both Saucon and Depot streets would have a bike lane was which was in that plan. It still hasn’t gotten past the Planning Commission and Joe has to ask the Council for that. Joe said they are all in the plan, but it’s just a matter of finalizing as we get grant money available. Tom asked if this bike trail was something separate from the Saucon Rail Trail? Joe said yes. It is integrated with the rail trail

concept, but even without the rail trail, they are still looking at bike paths into town. Charlie said the idea was to try to make a loop in the downtown area and it would actually connect with Lower Saucon's plan to have a cross-country type of a trail. Joe said a rail trail certainly makes it easier, but it was an idea in itself as part of the transportation study that was done. Charlie said that whole study was to try to get people out of their cars and walk and bike instead of blocking the whole Main Street up with so many cars.

Jack handed out some sketches of the gates and bollards and also the fence detail that the Township will be installing in their section. The fence detail is the one that was bid out.

Charlie said a lot was accomplished this evening.

- **Other Issues**

- Jerry asked what the Borough's plans were for the south end of the rail to trail at the bridge as there is working going on down there. Charlie said they did tear down one building that vandals were breaking into at the Tuminello property. Jerry said right off the trail itself. They were bringing a lot of soil in and dumping it right next to the trail. Charlie said he didn't check with Tom recently, but he knows they were trying to fill in one area because from the Tuminello property, the triangular piece they were working with Northampton County Conservation District to try and make it some sort of an environmental center. Jim Wilson from the Conservation District was trying to get grant monies for them to plant various kinds of species of plants, make a riparian buffer. Because it's in the floodplain, you have the 100 year floodplain, the 500 year floodplain and an area not in the floodplain. That would be something where kids could come in and learn about it. There also is a plan in that sketch to take a small footbridge wide enough for one of those vehicles that Jack talked about, across the raceway and up the incline to reach up to the rail trail, more for an emergency purpose. He doesn't know if Tom has been moving dirt lately, but there has been dirt moved there to try to make that path zigzag up the side. It wasn't going to go straight up, it was going to go back and forth a couple of times. Jerry said what side of the railroad tracks are you talking about? Charlie said the east side. Jerry said he's talking about the other side. Charlie said the other thing they did do was they were working on the 537 sanitary sewage project with the Township. The Council's approved going in and doing some test borings in there. He doesn't know of any dirt movement. Jack said the dirt that was dumped along the side of the trail when they did the culvert repair, prevents anyone from accessing the trail from the Grist Mill fields. They had a Parks & Recreation meeting there and were going to go up to the rail trail and discovered there was no access. They had to go up to the end where the Grist Mill was. Charlie said there is a path there, but it's not the best path, and it's only a footpath, not for a bike. He will find out and let Jerry know.

- Next meeting – October 25th - 5:00 PM @ Coopersburg Borough

The meeting adjourned. The time was 8:22 PM.