

SAUCON RAIL TRAIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Monday, October 25, 2010
Time: 5:00 PM
Location: Coopersburg Borough

Present: Donna Bristol and Chris Stromski from Lower Saucon Township; Dawn Kresge, Borough Manager and Jennifer Wescoe-Schaninger, Coopersburg Borough; Tom Beil, Township Manager, Upper Saucon Township; Steve LaBrake, Hellertown Borough. Guests: Roger Jurczak and Jerry Holum.

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

Upper Saucon Township – Tom said their trail is under construction. It's the section that goes from their park to the Lower Saucon Township line. It will be finished by the end of the year. The contractor is working out there now. It's a 12' wide path. It's a crushed stone surface. The signs will be installed. There's a road crossing at Spring Valley Road with a flashing warning device, which is part of the contract. He said they should be ready to go with that section by the end of the year.

Hellertown Borough – Steve said they have joined with the Township on the safety wooden fences for the Saucon Creek bridge at Neighbors and we will ask the same contractor to do the Silver Creek crossing along Water Street. The Water Street rail trail crossing is with PennDOT right now. Charlie sent a Mylar drawing earlier this week. At this point, they have not met with the Signal Service people to see what the Borough can do to bring down the cost of moving the pedestrian light and installing the pedestrian light on both sides of the road at the crossing. It's approximately \$35,000.00 and we're sure we can reduce it if Tom Henshaw from Public Works does some of the work. Walnut Street is simply some road markings and the crossing controls, bollards and gates, which we can do after purchasing the materials. The Borough and the Township filed a joint application to the Gaming Authority for a second grant for the uncommitted funds. The Borough submitted ten grant applications in this round and eleven grants were submitted jointly with Lower Saucon Township. We had 70% of the applications all together in the first round and may beat that percentage in the last round. Regarding the trail surface, the two Public Works groups will be doing that as soon as the safety rails are in place. Jack previously told him that he spoke to Roger Rasich and the two departments can do the work. The only question is the composition of the surface. There's a question on the slag and a chemical analysis is being done. The contractor for the fencing will be on the job in late November, early December and the other things will fall in place most likely after that.

Lower Saucon Township – Donna said there are no updates. The report that Steve just gave covers Lower Saucon Township also.

- **Fundraising/Brochure – Update**

Jennifer said there are no updates on the fundraising.

- **Logo, Website, Etc. – Update**

Jennifer talked to Jill about the logo. They talked about the changes that were suggested and her style is very clean, simple and a pretty much to the point deal. She found that integrating all these different aspects of it would compromise her style and approach to graphic design. Although she really appreciates the opportunity, she's not looking to change any of the logos. Jennifer talked to Jack about it and he said he has someone he works with that does graphic design. It's going to have to go through all the approvals and everyone has to be on the same page. She and Jill are going to work on the brochure and lay everything out. As far as the logo, she's going to say thank you, but have somebody else do it.

Donna said she talked to somebody about the graphics and making it go around like we discussed and they said it's very difficult to do that. Jennifer said Jill presented all these logos, and what she gave is what she gave and she respectfully bowed out. Donna said there is a possibility we could use the one everybody liked and just make the two lines that go across like a railroad track and leave it like that. Jennifer said you want the logo

simple; you want it to the point. She doesn't want to make it confusing to the eye. You see it and that's what it is. It depends what everybody else likes and to try and get everybody on the same page. She asked if everyone liked the one that they were going to make it into tracks, it's to the point and so forth. We haven't had anything else that is that professional looking. She would make a recommendation that this one be taken to the individual Councils and that be what we go with. Jennifer said that's a great idea. Donna talked to someone and it is difficult to wrap something around like that.

Tom said if the majority of people want it wrapped around and there's a technical problem with that, we ought to look at another technical source of expertise who can wrap it around. Jennifer said she likes it simple and sweet and to the point. It's what everyone agrees on. Jack had said to look at other opportunities to see what they have to offer as well. She loved what was presented and would go with that in a heartbeat, but everyone else has different opinions. Donna said she's sure there is a company which could wrap it around, for a cost, but we don't have any money.

Jennifer said it was going to say "get on track with history and health" which was great.

Steve said he put up a Facebook page and there are already 83 fans. It's catching on pretty quickly. He put on a few pictures and it's definitely a more informational thing. He put on some notes from the last meeting so people can have a reference point on where we're at with everything. He'll do some updates tomorrow. There's an area for people to ask questions. This is free and it's up.

Donna said before we get away from the logo, what do you want to do with it? Steve said he thinks we should wait until all the Borough Managers are here. There's nothing pressing on the logo at this point. He was hoping we'd have something so he could put it on the Facebook page. Jennifer said she thinks the sooner the better.

Tom said eventually what the four municipalities are going to have to take to their governing bodies the final logo, so someone has to make it the way we want it. We need to find a logo. We should have the slogan, and also a cost breakdown. In a cost sharing proposal, with everyone splitting it by 25%, we'll need a final cost for what it will cost to produce the logo and then we each take it to the governing bodies. We get it approved and get the cost-sharing approved and now we have a way to pay whoever does the logo. Jennifer said the great thing was Jill was doing it for free. Tom said sometimes you get what you pay for and it seems like she doesn't want to create the logo we approved. Jennifer said she is respectfully bowing out. Tom said maybe she'll change her mind if she knows we are going to pay her. It's only fair that who we bring on board makes the logo we want. We don't want to restrict the logo just because they are doing the work for free. It's not that expensive to create a logo, so let's get the one we want. Then the four municipalities could share the cost. Steve said he is not skilled on the computer, but he went on the Print Shop program and wrapped it around. He's sure there are plenty of programs out there and we should be able to do it. Tom said there's a graphic designer in Coopersburg and he can email Steve that person's name. He has another one also in the Macungie area. Both were recommended to him. He will email them to Jennifer tomorrow. They will want to do the work for a fee. They will put it in a pdf so we can put it on the website. They'll give whatever format you want and we can do whatever we want with it and make it real easy for the brochures, the website, and letterhead. Steve said his wife is an architect, so she may know of a program.

- **Other Issues**

Donna said she is on Lower Saucon Township's Parks and Recreation board and they voted unanimously to go to their Council and recommend that we allow horses on the trail. When she went to the Council meeting, there were a lot of questions and issues that need to be addressed. They wanted to know what rules and regulations the parks that allow horses had. They researched that and there are twelve different parks in this area that allow horses on the trail, some of which are Jacobsburg, Nockamixon, and Green Lane. Those are State Parks. There are some Township parks and two Rail Trail parks that were listed as allowing horses. One of the first issues that came up was what are we going to do about manure on the trail. It creates a mess and so forth. We researched that and asked how can we get around this issue? She thought the only type of bags were for carts like in New York City. They did find out that somebody does make them. She showed the different types of horses and showed what the bag looks like and what you are purchasing. You can dump it into garbage bags or

whatever. To give you an overview on rules and regulations on different parks, some of them will say things like whatever you bring in, you take out. If you are walking a dog, if he poops, you bring along a little bag and take it out with you. If you are a walker and have trash, you take it out with you. All of these rules and regulations go along with that aspect. If you are riding a horse, you clean it up and take it with you. The horse people call it "Leave No Trace". You go in and you go out as if you were never there. When you start going through each of the park regulations, it just repeats itself over and over again. Each park has pretty much the same rules and regulations. No motorized vehicles. Whether you are a hiker or a biker, you should clean up after yourself. If you don't, you get fined or arrested. The last part, are just some trail tips like trail courtesy, meeting different people on the trail, who has the right-of-way, those types of things. Basically, she just gave you a quick overview. The only thing that she'd like to put in is that everybody in different areas are taxpayers and if they abide by the rules, then why should they be eliminated from the parks. If horses become a problem, then you could deal with the problem. Evidently, the State, County and Townships parks that allow it haven't had any problems with horses as they have been doing it for years and years. They had mentioned different things on what they would do if horses were allowed and one was picking up insurance. There is an equestrian organization that provides insurance for horse riders for \$35.00. They can get up to \$1 million in insurance if someone is injured. With all the parks she checked with, no one has ever had any injuries with horses. The people who are afraid of horses are the people who don't know about horses. They do a program at her farm with the Easton Orphanage and they bring in kids from the City. They are scared to death of horses when they start. They train them how to work with horses. By the end of the eight weeks, the kids are hugging the horses.

Dawn said they are waiting for a decision to be made about horses being permitted on the trail? Donna said we are supposed to make a recommendation on whether we think they should or should not be on the trail. This was the reason for all the research and this body should also make their recommendation. Some of the municipalities don't have parking for horse trailers and what the municipalities want and the reason they want some kind of recommendation from us, is they want continuity. If Hellertown says yes, and somebody gets on their horse and rides to Lower Saucon and they said no, we don't want horses on our section. You need to have everybody say okay, we'll try it out and see how it works. Maybe it's only going to be people who are close enough to ride who will use the trail. That's why this group should think about making a recommendation. She's presenting this to the committee. You can look over the materials and make a decision. Dawn said at some point, we'll put our vote in. Donna said it's just in the form of a recommendation. Then whoever goes to their particular Council, they tell them they would like horses to be allowed on the trail. Dogs are a problem too, but they are allowed on the trail. Dogs are sometimes left off the leash and they let them run. Horses are always under control. There's always a rider on them. They have had this discussion in the past, but nobody says anything. Tom said he would suggest you deal with trail rules in general, not just dealing with horses, but the use of horses. You want to see how other places deal with these issues and then make a recommendation on trail rules and come up with a list of rules, and say this is what this Committee endorses. The Managers will then take them back to their boards. Hopefully, what will get adopted by each municipality will be the same rules, but he wouldn't count on that. That's okay, most of them will agree on 95% of the rules. The 5% maybe like the horse issue will be somewhat controversial and you may have some municipalities that want it and some that don't. Donna said if you get past the poop bags, there are a list of each park and what the rules are. It will list the rules and regulations. What they found when they started to go through it was somebody came up with a good set of rules, and then everyone else copied it. There is a lot of similarity.

Tom said these all seem to be State parks and all the State parks probably have all the same rules. It's a good starting point, but you probably want to look at municipal trails and what rules apply to them. He's done a little bit of research and he found them all across the country. There are actually rules for Rail Trail projects. The end result needs to be 1 through 15, these are the trail rules. The rules should be adopted by ordinance as if they break the rules, there is a penalty. Otherwise, you just have rules and can't back them up. The Solicitors draft an ordinance officially adopting the rules and then the rules will be posted at various locations throughout the trail. Along with that posting it will say violators are subject to a \$50 fine, or whatever the fine is. People then know if you violate the rules, you can be cited for a fine. That's the process. Steve said between now and the next meeting, we should come up with some rules. For example, it is open from dusk to dawn, are mountain bike riders allowed to ride at dusk, the leave no trace behind policy, who has the right of way, etc., etc.

Tom said with his dealing with boards, issues like horses are going to give them heartburn. What he would suggest how you deal with the horse issue is that horses will be allowed on a trial basis. Here are the rules. At such a point in time, we are going to take another look at the horse issue and a final decision will be made. If you don't do what the rules say, they will not be allowed on the trail. Donna said that is something she had suggested. Tom said let's do it on a trial basis as it has a better chance of giving it a shot, and then have an end date. We can even post that as part of the rules that horses are allowed on a trial basis. Steve said set a six month period. Donna said it could be posted on the website. Tom said we are not misleading the horse users so they know this is a trial basis. If you don't behave, this is going to end. Dawn said that really makes it fair for everyone, even the horse people, and she thinks that is a good idea to do it on a trial basis. Every resident in the four municipalities are taxpayers.

Tom said you need to pin down the wording for these rules. It's important because this sets the stage. The police are going to have to identify who are violating the rules. If the rules aren't well written, the police can't interpret it. You are going to have all kinds of strange situations where people don't know if they broke the rules or they didn't break the rules. Dawn said do we want someone in our group to present it at the next meeting or how do you want to approach it? Steve asked Donna can work on the horse specific rules and the rest of us will come up with some general rules after doing a little research and we can talk about it at the next meeting. After that, then finalize the list of rules. Donna said she can research the rules and regulations for rail trails for bikes and walkers, and so forth, and just print that out.

Steve said do we plan on closing it at dusk? Tom said they haven't really thought of that. Donna said we talked about it at our Parks and Recreation Board meeting. At Polk Valley Park, they are going to put up a sign saying "dusk to dawn". Steve said a dusk to dawn rule would be the best policy and if they want to enforce it, that's the chance we are taking. If someone is commuting after dark at 6:00 p.m., he wants to promote that. Dawn said that's a great idea. That's how you get to and from. Steve said if it goes to Bethlehem eventually, he'd like to see a bike parking area at the bus stations for people going to New York. Dawn said its environmental friendly, and those are all pluses there. Steve said that's part of that dusk to dawn that we've got to figure out. Donna said she's heard students asking about when the trail was going to be open as they wanted to use it to get to DeSales. Steve said it's a huge commuting tool for people to use. Donna said what if you are on the trail way out and it starts to get dark. Tom said he walked a section of the park the other day and the sections that go through Upper Saucon there are tall trees on both sides of the trail, so he's not sure how dark it will get on the trail. Steve said it's going to get dark. Will you have kids partying on the trail, yes, probably. Donna said someone just has to call and report it. She's in two different hiking clubs and they have volunteers who walk the trails and yes, they do have trouble as one of their shelters is too close to the trail and they do have kids go down there and party. Steve said most of the police forces have bike patrols as well so they can enforce it.

Someone asked about the intermunicipal agreement. Tom said they've put it on the back burner, but he's working on it. They decided to move forward with the construction of the trail first. They will be getting back to the agreement and he hopes to have it ready for the next meeting. Donna said one of the reasons for the intermunicipal agreement was to try to get fundraising. We found we couldn't get the fundraising, so that's why it's been slowed down. Tom said the agreement is going to be tricky as some of the municipalities are going to want the costs split 1/4th, 1/4th, 1/4th and other municipalities are going to want the costs split on how much trail, others may want costs split based on population, so he can see it's not going to be an easy go with the intermunicipal agreement. The four governing bodies, his sense is they are going to fight over it, which means the attorney's are going to fight over the intermunicipal agreement. It's going to be a long drawn out process, at least that's his opinion.

Steve said the Ironton Rail Trail (IRT) has an intermunicipal agreement from early on. They seem to have a pretty good thing going. The nice thing about the IRT, a lot of the projects they are doing their own like fundraising and dealing with a lot of the expenses of the trail, as a group. When they put a bridge in over a particular road, they got a grant. Tom said he has the intermunicipal agreement that Coplay, Whitehall and North Whitehall have entered into and it's a pretty good intermunicipal agreement. It doesn't fit our situation perfectly. How the committee that is formed and how it is funded is going to be another tricky provision in the agreement we have to work out. Someone said with the trails construction, it could be ready by end of November or December, is it possible to have the intermunicipal agreement signed and the rules and

regulations. It seems the rules would have to be adopted across the four municipalities if they are going to be enforced. Tom said ideally, you would want the rules to be the same for all four municipalities. That's up to the governing bodies of each municipality. You could wind up with four different sets of rules. What's important is that each municipality adopt a set of rules and those rules are enforceable in each municipality. It might be confusing for the trail user that one set of rules apply to one section of the trail, and different rules apply to another section, but from an enforcement perspective, if you're in Upper Saucon, you've got to follow Upper Saucon rules and if you violate them you are subject to a fine. It doesn't matter what Coopersburg has or what Lower Saucon has in terms as their rules, as a trail user, you've got to be aware you are in Upper Saucon now. This involves posting the rules when you enter the municipality and you are subject to those rules. You'd like them to be all the same rules, but it's up to each governing body to determine what set of rules they want to live by. Jenifer said will at some time it come to continuity for all four municipalities to have a general listing of rules? Tom said that's our goal, but the way the governing bodies work, each one is their own independent entity. If they don't want to follow the rules that you recommend, they don't have to. They are elected to set the rules of their municipality. It doesn't matter what the other municipalities are doing. They are elected and they get to chose what rules apply to their municipality. Someone said he doesn't see it's going to be that complicated to draw up a set of rules and have four municipalities agree. It's just common sense park rules. Tom said 90% of the rules would be fine in all four of the municipalities. Ten percent may have a hard time getting the four to agree. That's just the nature of municipalities. He thinks we're going to get as many park rules in the four that are alike, but there may be a few that are different and we'll have to live with that. We'll make the pitch as Managers to our governing bodies, but at the end of the day, it's up to each governing body.

Steve said Roger has been a Boy Scout who is getting the kiosk done. They are talking two kiosks for Hellertown. They have an architect who will present drawings. Donna asked if each kiosk will be the same? Steve said one will have a green roof, but other than that they are going to be identical. It's up to the other municipalities if they want our design as they have the drawing. It's a pretty basic kiosk. Tom said one of the nice things about Ironton is they have brochures that list the rules and it's on a big kiosk with a map of the trail. Steve said that can easily be done at some time. If it's behind glass, no paper will be blowing around. It's pretty hard to not follow the trail. It would be cool to have on the website a walking history tour of the trail that you could print out and take with you or just geographical or historical features which would be printable. That way they would be responsible to print it out on paper. Donna said wherever there is a historical site they should see, there should be a plaque on the trail telling what it is. Steve said on the map trail, it would have a reference point and a number.

Someone said did everybody see the drawings on the signage and the pavement marking that was on the Lower Saucon webpage? He brought copies along. He showed where the Old Mill crossing was. It shows an illustration of the bollard and the swing gates. It shows elevations. You may have seen this. Tom said at their road crossings, there will be gates and people will have to get off of their bikes. You have to weave in and out of them. Someone asked what about the horses? Tom said he didn't know; it might be tight. Donna said if you can get a bicycle through, you can probably get a horse through. Tom said there's a locking mechanism on their gates that the EMS will be able to open. Tom said they had a Scout build a real nice kiosk down at their park. Upper Saucon purchased the materials and they did a real nice job. Jennifer said if she tells Jill there is money involved if she does the changes for the logo, would that be okay with everyone? Tom said sure; ask her if that changes her mind at all. There might be potential that the municipalities would share the cost of this. Donna said get approval first before it is final. Tom said tell her to give you a quote so you can take it to the other municipalities and make a recommendation for the municipalities to pay for it. We don't expect people to work for free.

Donna said at the next meeting we are going to have the complete rules and regulations covering everything. Steve said everyone come in with their suggestions. Tom said we can look at it, and everyone knows what they are. We can change it and then it's done. He needs a final product to take to his municipality.

- Meeting adjourned. The time was 6:04 PM.
- Next meeting – November 22nd – Upper Saucon Township @ 5:00 p.m.