

SAUCON RAIL TRAIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Monday, April 12, 2010
Time: 5:03 PM
Location: Lower Saucon Township

Present: Jack Cahalan, Lower Saucon Township Manager; Charlie Luthar, Hellertown Borough Manager; Tom Beil, Upper Saucon Township Manager; Dawn Kresge, Coopersburg Borough Manager; Donna Bristol, Lower Saucon Township representative; Frank Pazzaglia, Hellertown Borough representative; Jennifer Wescoe-Schaninger, Coopersburg Borough Representative. Guests: Roger Jurczak, Susan Katz, Susan Anderson, Jerry Holum, Erin Frederick, Lehigh County Conservation; Paul Bealer, Valley Voice.

Jack said he sent copies of the minutes around from the last meeting around. If you have any corrections, please let him know. Otherwise, they will be posted on the Lower Saucon Township website for reference.

- **Grants/Master Plan/Trail Development – Update** – Jack said we need to bring everyone up to date on what happened with the grants. Erin was helping us with a DCNR grant for trail development. There was a meeting at Erin’s office, which he wasn’t able to attend, with Lorne Possinger from DCNR. At that meeting, the information came out that DCNR had some difficulty with the length of our lease. DCNR likes entities to have 99-year leases at a minimum. We only have a 30-year lease with SEPTA. Following that meeting, the planner from Lower Saucon Township was in touch with Lorne and in that conversation he asked Lorne about the right of reversion that SEPTA has in the lease which says that whenever they want to take the track back to resume rail service, they notify us and take the track back. Jack said he personally thinks that the chance of rail service coming back on this line is remote, but that’s in the lease and part of the agreement that we all agreed to with SEPTA. Lorne said that would be a deal killer. We were thinking of working with SEPTA to try and extend the lease to a 99-year lease. It would be the same lease except it would extend the term and the same conditions would be in here. Then this other news came out and that really put a damper on our grant opportunities with DCNR. We are holding this meeting tonight at an earlier date as we were hoping to review the draft of the grant application that Erin was going to work on which needed to be submitted to DCNR by April 21, 2010. That has now all gone out the window. Grant opportunities now are anything else other than DCNR. Charlie said we could pursue foundation grants and some other non-profit kinds of things which wouldn’t necessarily have a deadline, but it’s kind of disappointing. Our Solicitor called him and said he was talking to Joe Devaney, the Solicitor for SEPTA, and they didn’t seem to have any objection to extending the lease. We could have done that. Frank said if we look for foundation funding or otherwise, do we now need to put into our developing master outline a plan for this contingency if this is to revert. Instead of losing it, do we need to start thinking about developing it to something that can be adapted to a rail trail? This is an idea that came up very early, and then we kind of forgot about it and said we’re not going to consider it much because we think that the possibility of SEPTA asking for it back in the next thirty years is quite remote. He’s wondering should we revisit that again or move on and say it’s remote? We understand why DCNR doesn’t want to take a chance of putting resources into it, even though that chance is remote. We should develop it as a “rails to trail” rather than a “rail and trail”. Donna said we do have 30 feet, so there is the possibility that the ten feet we are going to use for the trail, instead of putting it right in the center could be put where the most scenic place would be which would be along the creek. Frank said there’s the consideration that should SEPTA take it back and even agree to a rail and trail, they may choose to take back one side versus the other because of infrastructure, where they would put up poles or run electricity. He doesn’t know what side that would be. It would always be the same side as you are going up and down the trail. He did a little bit research on lines as these rails and trails do exist. One that exists is Lehigh Gorge State Park. The first part of the biking trail you are right next to the Reading and Blue Mountain Railroad. There’s even a point where you cross the rail and there’s no special crossing or anything. After you cross the rail, the rail and trail completely divert. There’s no physical barrier. You literally can be standing right there when the train goes by. The track is higher than you are. There are no Jersey barriers or any kind of physical barriers. There are a number of these rails and trails that exist in PA. He doesn’t know infrastructurally, if it would be a much more expensive thing to develop than what we are talking about.

Jack said to go back to the beginning when we first contacted SEPTA; he doesn't think we know what SEPTA's position is on this. A shared use trail was mentioned by a gentleman from a rail coalition in Philadelphia early on when the rails and the ties were still there. They recommended keeping one track and removing the rails and ties on the other side. He thinks that was their way of preserving rail travel for the future. He doesn't know that it went anywhere. He doesn't know what SEPTA's position is. Tom said he doesn't know if it makes a whole lot of sense to plan for a rail and a trail as we don't know where the tracks would go. We don't even know if SEPTA would allow us to have a trail next to their rail line. They might say they don't want any liability here. We don't know what parameters we are talking about. Donna said she thinks rail and trail is a new idea. Tom said SEPTA only has two successful rails to trails transfer in their history. Jack said one was in Montgomery County. Jack said if we were to pursue this with SEPTA, he would be afraid it would take us through another whole lengthy and expensive process with SEPTA's legal department. Their answer, as Tom said, could be a flat no, they're not interested. Donna said if this should happen in the future that they want to take it back but will give us part of it, it just means we have to run gravel on a different section of the thirty feet. Tom said in the lease agreement, it's not necessarily just a train SEPTA can put back on whole right-of-way. They have a whole lot of options. They could do busses; they could do other forms of transportation. To plan for something that we ultimately have no idea about and for something that SEPTA has no idea what they are going to turn it into would be a wild goose chase. He doesn't think it makes sense to plan something like this. Frank said those are his sentiments as well, but he wanted to get it out and make sure everyone is on the same page. Tom said we're better off spending our time if SEPTA does take the rail line, then let's make sure whatever we put there can easily be removed and converted back to a rail line. His engineers are looking at putting a fabric down over the stones that are there now, so it's easier to restore. If they would take it, we'd have to restore the rail bed to its original condition. Whatever we do, we have to make it easy to remove if SEPTA wants it back. We want to make it something easy to remove.

Charlie said he talked to Joe Hoffman about grants, and they are going to continue to look at other options and maybe apply for other foundation grants and so forth. They will try to see what is out there. Joe has a lot of knowledge about these kinds of things. Maybe we can try to work on DCNR. Charlie was encouraged when Joe was talking about extending the lease. He thought we were getting a positive reaction, but this is opposite of what he expected to hear. We can't give up totally, but it's not a good sign. They will keep looking. Jack said let's say the right of reversion wasn't there, is the lease a problem with DCNR or do they want us to own the trail? Frank said Lorne told them specifically in the meeting that they prefer 99 years to thirty, but he could live with thirty. Then it was the reversion that was a problem.

- **Trail Development Issues (Surface, signage, crossings, barriers, etc.) – Update** – Charlie said that he and Jack looked at their section last week. They started down by the border with Upper Saucon Township. It's a great trail. The potential it has in it is fantastic. It does not appear to be that bad in terms of the Hellertown and Lower Saucon sections. There are some safety issues and we have work to do on them. The crossings are an issue. Jack said they have the bridge they share with Hellertown behind Neighbors, and then there is a second bridge down at the Old Mill crossing. They are still looking at fencing for those crossings – some sort of safety type barrier. The Public Works Director met with a couple of contractors and they are still gathering information to give to us, so we don't have a final recommendation to bring to this body or a cost for the railings. What they are hearing is that putting the chain link fencing on top of the Jersey barriers might be good as a temporary solution, but it's going to be expensive. If they are temporary we will have to remove them and put something permanent down. They are still weighing the cost of something that is permanent that would be attached to the bridge structure versus the temporary solution. For the surface they are still looking at a modified type of mix that is inexpensive and packs well. They put a sample down by Reading Road and that held up pretty good over the winter. That is the favorite although slag, which Hellertown has in abundance, was suggested as an alternate surface. They put down a sample section of slag at the Grist Mill which is about 15 to 20 feet long. It does have some big chunks. If it was used, it would be crushed. There are two issues with the slag which have not been resolved yet: a chemical analysis and the statements they heard were about odor associated with slag. Frank said he thinks the concern is when you take that slag and crush it, particularly if you pulverize it and there are any chemicals in it, you've just increased the surface area, so that's probably where you get yourself in doing that. Otherwise, it's pretty inert in its current state. Jack said those are two inexpensive surface materials which

could be put down for Hellertown and Lower Saucon sections by our Public Works Departments. They could be rolled and compacted fairly rapidly. We could have a surface that would be adequate for people to walk and bike on. It would be ten feet wide and would hold up as a starter trail and get us into year two of the trail usage. The third issue is the crossings. There are two in Hellertown Borough and two in Lower Saucon Township. For the Borough, one of them is PennDOT crossing. Charlie said they submitted, as Upper Saucon did, a drawing of the crossing on Water Street. They are waiting to get a call back from PennDOT. They tried to emulate the same thing on Walnut Street. Jack said the two crossings that he has are at Meadows Road and Old Mill Road. Old Mill Road is basically a dead end road. There's no real through traffic on that road. The Meadows Road crossing is an issue as the section that comes down past Jerry Holum's house comes around a little corner and you're right on top of the trail crossing and that is a potential danger. They are looking at that and getting a variety of recommendations from the Engineers and Planners on how they are going to handle that. Some of them are expensive which is a concern to him and the Township as they only have a limited budget to spend in year one. They are trying to maximize that money and come up with the best bang we can get for our buck. If Meadows Road is a problem, it may force him into recommending that they not go south of Meadows Road with the trail in year one and instead focus on the section of the trail that goes north from Meadows Road up to Hellertown, which is a pretty substantial stretch of trail. They would not open the trail across Meadows Road and south down towards Old Mill in 2010. Frank said the only issue is people won't listen to you. Jack said it has to be pretty well blocked off and posted. He's just laying that out there as a possibility because if there is a concern about this crossing, they don't want to open it up to just get the trail open and then have safety issues with it later on. Susan Katz asked what happened to making Meadows Road one way? Jack said the Township Engineer proposed that several years ago and there was a host of issues that would have to be addressed such as access to the Meadows banquet facility and there would have to be a turn-around area for trucks. That was also tied into a recommendation for a traffic light out on 412 which is not being planned. They have also heard suggestions for stop signs and speed humps and they are evaluating all of them so they can come up with a solution that will address these issues. The Township Council will have to review and approve them before they can be installed.

Tom said they have three crossings in their area. They are all state roads. Frank said at the Preston Lane crossing at the park, at one of their earlier meetings, they had suggested that if there were little side trails that would take you off the rail trail and down through the park to take advantage of the tunnel that goes under Preston Lane next to the library, then that road crossing is taken care of. Have you thought about that? Is it okay to come in and out of the park that way? Tom said yes, they plan to do that. A bridge there would be very expensive. Frank said it's a nice little diversion down through the park and tunnel. It's kind of cool and a nice thing to be able to do. Tom said they do have a plan. Donna said is there any possibility to do that at the Meadows and send people down to where the bridge is and go across? Instead of having them go across there where it's dangerous and fence it off so they can't go that way and bring them down along the edge of the road to the point where the bridge goes over and there is a stop sign, and have them cross there and go back the other side. Frank said she's saying when you get to Meadows Road, go towards 412 to the bridge. Cross at the bridge. There's stop sign currently at the bridge. You are using both shoulders, and then come up the other shoulder. The only problem is you have to go across the Meadows entrance in order to do that. Jack said the shoulders there are very narrow. Donna said you'd have to put a spilt rail fence there so people are forced to go down there. Frank said you could take people off the trail at the Tuminello property and they could go along Saucon Creek and under the Meadows Bridge and come up the other side. The only problem with that is all floodplain there. Donna said you can't get under the bridge. Frank said that's what he originally thought, but that is correct, you can't get under the bridge. Frank said that the Ironton Rail Trail has road crossings that are much scarier than Meadows Road. That does not mean that Meadows Road doesn't present a challenge because it does. He thinks that some signage and big stop signs on the rail trail saying all bike riders, pedestrians have to stop. Jack said they may look into a channeling process for the gates that will force riders to get off of their bikes. That would be used to get them to dismount and walk across the road. Frank said what would be a solution? Jack said blinking lights which would be triggered by a sensor on the trail. Frank said how about rumble strips across the road so people know they are approaching a dangerous crossing, especially coming down the hill. Jack said he doesn't know if they are recommended as there are all kinds of requirements. They are looking for ways to make that crossing safe. Tom said speed bumps seem to be the best. They had a couple in their Township. The rumble strips the neighbors don't like because of the noise they create.

Speed bumps are something your engineer would have to look at. Frank said it's more incumbent on the people using the trail to stop and to use caution to get across. The way that is laid out, can a large mirror be installed so when you are standing there ready to cross, you can see if traffic is coming down the road? Jack said he's not sure on that. Donna said what happens if there is a stop sign for the pedestrian and they walk out and get hit by a car. Jack said they have to take all necessary steps to make sure it's not a dangerous crossing if we're going to open it for public use. It's just a little bit of a wrinkle and we're going to have to be careful. We're committed to opening the trail this year, but have to find out about the crossing.

Dawn said they have one road to cross which is Station Avenue. They have to go to PennDOT and see if they need permits. They do have one section towards the one end, and she was talking to the Road Superintendent, there is a road embankment there. They are concerned with safety and kids there. They thought of a chain link fence, but are afraid kids will climb it anyway. They are trying to find another alternative for that. If anyone has any ideas, please let her know.

- **Fundraising/Brochure – Update** – Jack said Donna and Jen have been working on fundraising and a brochure. Jen has some handouts on the brochure which she handed out. Jen said fundraising has been on the back burner this past month. They are working on the brochure right now. She said this is something she is learning as she is going. Their main objective is to create the format in which they would like to do this brochure. It would be an informative brochure for people to learn about the Saucon Rail Trail so they have as much information as they can wherever they are so they can see the historical sites and the rules. On the front page, Erin had sent them a copy of the trail itself throughout all the municipalities. Please feel free to give feedback and thoughts about this. Her first idea is we need to simplify it. Any of this can change. She doesn't have an inside part of it yet, but when you open it up, she wants to put how the Saucon Rail Trail was evolved, whose idea was it, it's something very special, the description of it, where it starts, where it ends, all descriptive type information, the historical sites along the way, extra bonuses we could present like having an educational program with the school, have scavenger hunts for the kids, and sponsorships, what is involved in that, the logistical type things, where the kiosks are, where the portable restrooms are. It's important to let people know about etiquette on the trail. What's appropriate, what's not appropriate? It's always good to have it in writing. Donna did a fantastic job sending her pictures of the bridge. She'd like to simplify it. She'd like to have things for people to look at, like when the Heller Homestead started, just very basic things. On the back is Meadows Road Bridge. We can put where each historical site is on the trail and put bullet points where it's located. There are so many options they have.

Jack said Jerry Holum is here and he provided some additional historical information which he will give to Jen. Jen said it's such a celebration of our community. You could go crazy with it. In retrospect, she'd like to put in education programs and work with the schools and teachers, the administrators, and get their ideas, and move forward with that if she can get your permission. That will be a work in progress. The second page on the back, its historical sites. On the last panel they have the Saucon Rail Trail sponsorships which they had talked about earlier. That needs to be updated. She did make very minor changes, but it's important to put in. That's what it is in a nutshell. If you could let her know your thoughts, she'd be happy to hear them. Frank said it's fantastic and he really appreciates the effort. He said do you envision this as being an aesthetic thing or dynamic? Jen said dynamic. Frank said if it's going to be dynamic, how many times is it going to be printed and distributed? Jen said she's wondering maybe an annual update. Bi-annual would be overdoing it. As the trail evolves, things are going to change. Susan Anderson said on the Ironton Rail Trail, they have benches that have people's names on it. Frank said we talked about that at a previous meeting. Jen said it's a brilliant idea. Donna said this is a work in progress and they thought they'd cut down on the descriptions and put more pictures of the historical sites. Yesterday she went out and took pictures of a lot of those. These are historical sites that you can walk to from the trail. She has a question about it as she was doing it as she ran into people while she was taking pictures, who wanted to know why she was taking the pictures. When you have a historical site that is located on private property and its close enough for people to look at, should we ask for permission to put it in the brochure? Frank said yes, and it's a very important issue. It might be a beautiful historic barn along the trail, but maybe the owners are not interested in people standing and gawking. Some of that homework has already been done for us by the respective historical societies in the communities and that point has been brought up. The historical societies are populated by folks who are real interested in the history. They know who in the

community would be sensitive to this. He wonders if we should invite them to one of our meetings so we could begin to integrate them. They've been down the fundraising path before, so maybe we could begin merging some of our mission along with the historical societies. Jack said there are sections down further from Old Mill which is Ehrhart's Mill and that's a whole historic district of houses that are associated with the former mill. Those are private homes, so we are not going to encourage people to wander around on private property. Donna said they are on the historic register, and if you do that, you open yourself up to people. Jack said you are not encouraging them to trespass as they are not public facilities, but you can provide information in the form of signage along the trail to tell people that this is historic and give them the background and the significant features. Donna said at New Hope, they have a little thing in front of the houses and they'll say "Private Residence". Jack said if you see someone is residing in it, you aren't going to go and walk around the property. Donna said will we get some signs then? Jack said signage is probably something we're going to look at for a lot of places. Donna said when she talks to someone from Landis Mill Road, Landis Mill Farm is right there and it's close enough that the tract goes through and you can walk down and take a look. Frank said the Old Mill ruins are right off the roads there and it's posted no trespassing.

Susan Katz said trying to involve people in the general community, has there been any thought given to writing a letter and telling them what is going on. The trail is going to be used whether you like it or not. Having the history of the area down in writing is nice, but some of the people would like to know how far we've gone. It would be nice to see signs on the trail showing how many miles you've walked or mile marker signs.

Frank said at our last meeting, we thought it was really important to announce to the public who we were as a group and what our goals were. As you said, now people are going to start using this. We drafted a short press release and he contacted three local newspapers, the Express Times, the Morning Call and the Valley Voice. The Express Times never got back to him. The Morning Call took a subsection of our release and printed a short blurb in their outdoors section. The guy who writes about the outdoors enthusiastically said he's going to try to make your meetings as he thought it was great. Valley Voice has been back and forth a couple of times and we have representation here tonight, but nothing has been printed yet. Hopefully this press release will make it to the Valley Voice so we can have the people know. It just has the basic things in it. What it is, what we are trying to do, who we are. It just encourages people to come to these meetings or approach us.

Jack said Steve LaBrake isn't here, but he's been working on the website, and Steve has a gentleman who is working on the website. They have registered the domain name of www.sauconrailtrail.org and www.sauconrailtrail.com. Those will be given to this guy and he's going to start loading information onto the site. The website will have our minutes, information about the trail and updates will be on there. Frank said there should be links to each of the Township and Borough's websites. Jerry Holum said there should be some history of the rail, what it did in that era. He knows some of the information. Frank said it would be great if he could summarize it. Jen asked Jerry is he could give her some of these historical sources for the brochure. Jerry said he sent some things to Jack that people aren't aware of. For example, Bingen, that's a real historic area. The population of Bingen was over 3,000 people in its heyday, more than half the size of Hellertown. That was a real beehive. Jack said they are hoping to have a trailhead in the Bingen area. Susan Anderson said on the Allegheny Passage Trail, you can go on line and see how they made it part of a rail trail and see their history. Jerry said this is an historical walking district when you go along our trail in Hellertown and Lower Saucon Township. Jen said that's wonderful to integrate it with the school systems also.

Frank said something that would tie into what we are talking about right now – do you think it's worthwhile to contact the folks at the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor? Would this trail be something that could integrate with them? Those are folks who are very much tied into funding and into the history. They are very well organized. They have very well, maturely thought out ways on how to interact with the community and dealing with all these issues. The trail doesn't physically connect with the Corridor, but he does know along the Corridor you don't always need that physical connection. He knows the Director and he can contact that person and see whether they can give us some information.

Donna said the more information you get the better. She'd like to be involved in that. Frank said the reason it came to his mind is that Lehigh University has been in contact with them because they are looking for a demonstration place where an old mill or a mill race can be retrofitted for a micro-hydro project, where a waterwheel would be set to a generator to show how you can do alternate energy generation. The Delaware Lehigh National Heritage Corridor has identified a number of spots where this might happen. That's a way of linking our trail to a larger entity, which is tied into a lot of federal funding. It's part of a national park. Dennis Scholl is connected with this also.

Roger Jurczak asked where we were in regard to all of the legal stuff? Charlie said he would like to ask that also. Tom said they are still looking at the intermunicipal agreement. Jack said if you mean with SEPTA, they have all the leases signed and are finished with that. Charlie is talking about the local agreements that formalize the committee and really launches it. Roger said once the intermunicipal agreement is signed off, then the committee becomes official? Charlie said yes, that's where we stand. We nominated people to the committee, but it's not formalized until everyone signs the intermunicipal agreement.

Jerry Holum said what are we doing to protect the property owners who are adjacent to the trail? Are we going to do something? Jack said the rail line is owned by SEPTA. It's been there for over a 100 years. We are leasing that property and staying within their 30 foot right-of-way. All of our plans are within that right of way with the surface and the crossings. We are not talking about anything beyond that. He doesn't think anything they are planning on doing will encourage the public to leave the trail except at the marked trail access points or other entrances and exits. Beyond that, we would discourage the public from trespassing on private property. There will be information on the website, on the maps, on the brochures indicating where you can get on and off of the trail. Tom said he'd like to put 20 foot buffer strips between the trail and residents properties, but the more you spend on buffer strips, plantings, and fences, and railings, it's less money to put into the trail. Where are you going to put your money – on buffering or in building a trail? That's what this committee has to decide and that's the purpose of the committee. If there's a specific property where there is an issue and people are going off the trail and walking in that person's yard, we don't want that, so we're going to have to address that, but how do you address that? Do you spend \$15,000 on landscaping to address it or do you put up a sign? Jack said there are two separate issues. One is a privacy issue where Susan Katz and her husband have expressed interest in a barrier between their property and the trail. The other one is a trespassing issue. If someone is leaving the trail and trespassing on private property and that becomes an issue, that's something we each have to look at on a local basis. Tom said the solution to that problem is going to be different in every single instance. Every property is going to be different. We're going to have to deal with that on a case-to-case basis. There's no one solution here. Some you might be able to get away with a sign and some you may have to put up a rail or fence if it's a serious problem and people are wandering through people's back or front yards. We'll have to deal with that. What we are primarily concerned about is spending the money and building a trail, not buffering the trail from people's homes. Susan Anderson said most people who are on the trail, especially bikers, want to stay on the trail. They are there to bike on the trail. All the places she's gone, she's never seen anyone wander off. Frank said we stand to learn a lot from other rails to trails. There's some that go through more complicating townships and municipalities than we do. He thinks just reaching out to some of these rail trail people and ask them how they deal with the privacy issues, etc. You need to put the money into trail development. Have a plan in place for when the problems come up you now.

Susan Katz asked about police enforcement. Jack said that is up to each municipality and their police to decide how they will patrol the trail. It will be looked on as a Township or Borough park property and it will be patrolled like other park places. The trail is closed in the evenings. There shouldn't be anyone out there at night. There will be regular patrols by officers on bicycles. It's going to be monitored more than it was before. Frank said there are some places in Ironton where there are no buffers. You are just going on the trail and people's back yards come right up to the trail and other places people have planted a hedge or a line of pines to make a nice effective barrier. It seems like that particular trail pretty much heard what we might be hearing, there's a different solution to each problem, a case-by-case basis. Jerry said he'd think you'd want to take a more proactive approach than saying you are going to work on a case-by-case basis and notify these people who have property abutting up and let them be aware of it. Tell them if they are interested, we have signs available for them. You would make those people more comfortable and that's

one way to do it. Frank said we actually want to have plans in place and part of this is the communication to the general public. We wish this room was fuller with people so we could hear and know what we should be recommending. Susan Katz said you should put the meetings in the Sunday paper. Jack said they are posted on the Lower Saucon Township website. Frank said our press release says when the meetings are going to be held and that they are on the Lower Saucon website. The week ahead, we should start getting it out. Donna said there is a community event section in the newspaper. Frank said we'll have to start doing that. Dawn said in Coopersburg we have a newsletter going out and we can put it in there. Tom said we have to remember that this committee does not officially exist, so you're not dealing with a committee that has duties or functions or knows its role. The next step is not putting this in the newspaper, it's that all four municipalities have to get together and agree what this committee will ultimately look like and agree what the committee duties and powers are. Will they have the ability to spend money? Will they meet once a month? Will they meet twice a month? How many representatives from each municipality will serve on the committee? Is it two from each municipality? These are all issues we don't know yet. The next step in the process has got to be that the four municipalities finalize the inter-municipal agreement and decide on the makeup and the powers of this committee will be. Then they need to officially appoint the members and then the committee can start doing things like everyone here it talking about tonight. They'll know what their role is. Right now we don't know what the role is. It's great what these people are doing and trying to lay the groundwork, but you got to keep in mind where we are in the process. Once the official committee is formed, it will be like every other committee in the municipalities that we all represent. It has to be advertised, it has to be public, it can go in the newsletter, and it can go in the Morning Call. When a committee is formed, if we want to hold a hearing on safety issues or the impact the trail will have on certain areas of the township, we can put the mailing list together and send out a public notice. We really are in the very early stages of forming this committee. It's not finished.

Jack said even though we are not official, this Committee acts as a listening post and one of the things it's been doing is listening to people who are coming to these meetings, like Susan and Jerry who live along the trail, and we've been listening to their concerns so we can gather that type of information. That information does filter up to the Township. Donna is on our Parks & Recreation Board. We have a meeting later tonight. There are discussions there about the Rail Trail and this information gets back to the Council, not on an official basis, but we are acting as their eyes and ears to gather information. That's going to be an ongoing thing as we go along. Yes, we can't get anything decided on yet, but we are doing some important things as far as public outreach is concerned. Charlie said he thinks it's important to get the press release out to the public and that will get us off and running. Jerry asked why wasn't the rail trail posted with "No Trespassing" signs? Jack said he looked into that when Stephanie Brown made that request two meetings prior. He discussed it with the Solicitor and again, going back to the liability issue, we are not the owner of the trail. We are leasing it. We are not out there doing anything officially on the trail at this point. All we did was to block it off so there wouldn't be any access. We have to put up safety barriers on the bridges. We have not announced that the trail is open or that it's a public thoroughfare. We did not encourage that. He put a notice on his website stating that if people are walking on the trail, it's at their own risk. If anyone was going to post it, it would be SEPTA. They don't feel the need to do that. Charlie said then you can also institute rules and regulations. Stephanie was really strong on that and she had suggested about posting the property. He didn't know how many places you'd have to post as in Hellertown you can access a lot of locations, so you'd need a sign every ten feet. She did mention about posting the barriers at the end, but he doesn't know if that would have accomplished anything. If they can get it up and running in some sort of a format, the Hellertown part is easier than it is in the other communities and makes it safe. The rules of the committee will guide where we go.

Jerry said the Timko property in Lower Saucon, is the Township trying to buy that property? Jack said he can't publicly discuss those negotiations. Jerry said how about Hellertown, are they trying to get the access right by Neighbors? Charlie said what is considered the Tuminello property is one of them. They are going to be submitting a grant application to DCNR for funding a nature park there. It looks like it's going to be pretty expensive, so they are going to have to take a look at it and see if we are really serious. It will be an access way with a pedestrian bridge across the raceway to access the rail trail. Hellertown has a couple of other access points like the Grist Mill where there's lots of parking there and also Water Street. We're fortunate to have these access points. Jerry said Lower Saucon really has zero access points. Jack said that's why they are trying to acquire a trailhead access as they want to discourage people from just

pulling up along a street and parking on someone's front lawn. They hope to have that when the trail opens. Jerry said you really don't need it anyway then as you are going to close the trail at Meadows Road. Jack said he just said that's one of the things they are weighing. If that's the case, then yes, the access wouldn't be needed until year two. Susan Katz asked about property across from their house, it is like a quarry. Jack said yes, it looks like an old mine along Reading Drive. Frank said it's an old limestone quarry. Jack said if you look there, there are some trails that the fishermen use to walk down and fish along the creek. That's not something they are going to encourage. The problem with that as access is that when you get to where the rail trail is, it's about 30 or 40 feet above you.

Roger asked if there was any outreach to Bethlehem with their greenway? They have that portion that is paved from the new skate park. The other part is not open. Jack said Charlie can give us an update on the High Street Bridge. Charlie said the section between Saucon Park and where Blinderman's Scrap Yard in Hellertown is owned by Norfolk Southern. There's no connection with the city's greenway. The City has hopes of buying that somewhere down the line and then connecting with our trail. There is a 20 year lease between the Crushed Crete plant located off of Silvex Road. He doesn't know how much longer they have a lease there and if Norfolk Southern will renew it. Bethlehem is not really interested at this point on going after that segment because they are trying to do all the other work in that part of the city. Their Comprehensive Plan talks specifically about connecting further to the south in Hellertown. They definitely want to do that. Roger said what he was thinking was they announced in the paper that the greenway was going to go from Perkins up to the casino. Then there's a portion of it near the casino that's already been paved and has streetlights on it. It's not officially open. Jack said it was officially opened. There was a ribbon cutting by the Mayor and all the dignitaries were there to open the paved section. It was paid for by the casino. They have the money to do that. The rest of it is coming through grants and for the skate park; they are doing a fundraising campaign. The trails are going to continue beyond the skate park and go under the Daly Avenue Bridge and around to Saucon Park. Then on the other end, it's going to go down to the train station. Roger said don't they have the same liability issues as they haven't opened it and it's not a park? Jack said he doesn't know, but they officially opened it, and welcomed people on it with Segways, bicycles, and walkers. He sees people on it every day.

- **Logo - Update** – Jack said nothing new on the logo other than they sent the information out to the school districts. They asked them to get back by the end of the school year. Carolyn Lidie from Upper Saucon had contacted the Superintendent from Southern Lehigh and he contacted the Superintendent at Saucon Valley. Donna said what about the two Vo-Tech schools? Jack said they can open it to anybody. They were just looking for some ideas. Donna said they teach design. Jack said if anyone wants to submit something, they can. Saucon Valley and Southern Lehigh were notified. Donna said students of Saucon Valley do go to Bethlehem Vo-Tech. Frank said you know about the programs, you can go to the Vo-Techs and get them engaged. Jack said he has a sheet they put together and Carolyn looked at it and added some significant Upper Saucon historical features. There's no deadline on this. We don't have to cut it off on June 1. The designs we receive, we may come to this meeting and everyone may reject them and we can just keep going. Donna said it was just given to the school districts? Jack said yes, but if you have any ideas, he'd be glad to distribute it. Charlie said if you get feedback with this round, you can open it to the Vo-Tech and others. You might want to see what comes out of this batch. Jack said he can send it off to Vo-Tech.

Jerry Holum asked if we were saying that the trail cannot open until the agreements are signed? The first steps should be the Hellertown – Lower Saucon sections that are opened first. Jack said first off, Lower Saucon can open our section of the trail without having an intergovernmental agreement with the other three entities. We can just treat it as a park and use our own budget to put down the surface and put up the fencing. It's up to Charlie, who has a budget, to do that also in Hellertown. We all have to figure out what we can do. Dawn has to figure out what she can do, the same with Tom. We're all looking at this individually and have to figure out in 2010 - if we want to move forward and open our sections - what are these safety features going to cost and how much do we have in the budget? That's what we are all looking at and trying to get costs together and some recommendations for safety features. What he was saying was that he was looking at Lower Saucon's budget for the trail. If Meadows Road was too costly and was going to break the bank for 2010, he might recommend to his Council that we not focus on the trail south of Meadows and just go north and link up with Hellertown where you would have a section of about two

miles. If that's the best they can do for 2010, then that's all we will do. He just wants to put that out there as Meadows Road presents a real problem with safety. He's not prepared to jump in and say let's open it up so they can make everybody happy so they can get out on the trail, when we could have some real safety issues. That's something we're looking at. If they come up with a solution that fits within his budget, then they'll move ahead with that this year. That's his position. Charlie said their primary concern is the road crossings and the safety of the approaches at the Silver Creek and Saucon Creek bridges and making sure they are safe. In terms of logistics, they probably have it the best of all of the four communities. Frank said have you already asked your engineers to do some investigation? Jack said the engineers are working on this. He would say by the end of May they should have something. The Council will be looking at these recommendations. If they feel it's safe enough to cross Meadow Road without lights, then that's what they will go ahead with. It will be the experts who will make these recommendations. The one thing is it's our own budget and our own section. We don't want to do anything permanent that will compromise the full linkage of the trail. He doesn't want to create a trail in Lower Saucon that is not compatible with the other sections. Charlie said this is a starter trail so it can start being used. It's not going to be that good to start with.

Tom said he has three things this committee should start thinking about for the next meeting. There are three priorities to deal with sooner rather than later. The first one is the trail width we are looking at and the surface? We need to have the subcommittee start to gather data. That's a critical question that needs to be answered. We can't build a trail until we know what width and what surface. The second issue is signage and road crossings. What signage do you want at the road crossings? What pavement markings do you want at the road crossings? Once we start building this thing, we're going to have to start dealing with the road crossings. We need to know what we are doing and hopefully all four municipalities will have uniform road crossings, otherwise people who use the trail are going to be confused. Let's get a uniform road crossing we can live with. They are all PennDOT crossings for Upper Saucon. The last issue he has is the privacy issue. Tonight we heard residents here that are concerned about the privacy issue. How does this committee want to deal with that? We need to come up with some kind of guidelines, let's start working on it. Someone has to come up with some ideas. Someone has to visit other municipalities. Talk with the people who did the Ironton Rail Trails. Let's find out how other people have dealt with privacy issues so we're ready to deal with residents in the future. We really don't have our act together as how we're going to deal with that. Those are the three main priorities that this committee should have within the next three months. Frank said this committee in its unofficial capacity has already put down on paper answers to two of those concerns. They are in the master outline. The first is that we said the trail should be ten feet wide and we showed elevation and plan to as to what that ten foot wide trail should look like. We recommended the No. 9 crushed stone as the best solution, but we're entertaining other possibilities as the material. Road crossings, they recommended there is a study that has already been paid for in Hellertown for the PennDOT crossing on Water Street and we said that all of the road crossings should adopt those protocols. That was done professionally by an engineer up to PennDOT standards and all the road crossings should have that kind of signage and painting. For your last point, we don't have answers on that yet. Tom said if it's an official recommendation, it should be in writing. Jack said how can we do that if we're not an official group yet? Tom said he understands the problem. Frank said the most official we could be is in writing in that master plan. Tom said he's worried about we're going to be starting rail construction and the Solicitor's and attorneys are not going to be ready. We're going to be in a position to move forward and not have the basic information we need to put this project out to bid. Maybe the answer to that is then we don't move forward and just wait until next year until the attorneys are done with the agreement. It took two years to finalize the agreement with SEPTA and he's hoping it doesn't take that long with the agreement between the four municipalities. It shouldn't take nearly as long as with the agreement with SEPTA. He's worried that we don't have that agreement in place. Jack said their attorneys haven't seen it. Give us something to look at and we'll have them look at it and will get it back to them as quickly as possible. Speaking of the trail in Lower Saucon Township, Jack said he can open it up without the intergovernmental agreement being approved. Tom said let's get an unofficial recommendation out of an unofficial advisory committee because it's the best we can do. Frank said can you tell him what they can do more than the master outline as that's our unofficial recommendation. You said something at the last meeting. Tom said you guys are unofficial, and even if you were official, your job is to brainstorm on these problems and make recommendations. Ultimately it will be the Managers and the Councils and the process in place that will make the final decision. To get this started, if you would like, he can distill out of

the master outline to speak to those specific three points and at least you can say here's this unofficial committee's unofficial recommendation. He can even do that tonight and get it emailed out tonight. Tom said a letter from the Chairman. Jack said we don't have one. Jack said regarding the privacy issues, they went out of their way to get the Ironton Rail Trail folks where to talk about those issues. They asked them how do you deal with that? We're still in the information gathering stage. He doesn't think we are prepared to make a recommendation. A recommendation will be for each community to look at it on a case-by-case basis. Tom said we have to do it as some point in time. Let's make someone responsible for dealing with that issue. Otherwise, what is going to happen, that issue is going to come up every meeting and there will be nothing to report on it. Jack said right now we have set up this unofficial group as a listening post for people to come and say they have a problem with privacy. We're not just ready to say here's the answer to our problem. Frank said we have to arm Council with ideas and it's our job to do that and figure out what those ideas are. Ultimately, privacy issues are going to come to the Council. Susan Katz said Bethlehem was giving away trees. Is there a grant or something like that which we could get trees? Jack said there are different organizations like the Lehigh County Conservation and some of the Watershed Associations that hold plant sales, but that is to foster their goals. Susan said if Bethlehem could get free trees, maybe we can also. Jack said we'd have to look at that and figure out what it's going to cost and how many people are going to get free trees. Charlie said there are options to look at because the Borough is getting trees on a 50/50 share. It's the TreeVitalize program with Northampton County. Those are for parks, but maybe it could be extended to something like this. We just have to look at those options.

- **Other Issues** – None
- Next meeting – May 24, 2010 – Hellertown Borough @ 5:00 PM; June 28, 2010 – Coopersburg @ 7:00 PM; July 26, 2010 – Upper Saucon Township at 5:00 PM.

The meeting adjourned. The time was 6:48 PM.