

SAUCON RAIL TRAIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Monday, November 22, 2010
Time: 5:06 PM
Location: Upper Saucon Township

Present: Jack Cahalan, Lower Saucon Township Manager; Donna Bristol, Lower Saucon Township Representative; Bob Kassel, Assistant Manager, Upper Saucon Township; Steve LaBrake, Hellertown Borough Representative; Charlie Luthar, Hellertown Borough Manager; Dawn Kresge, Coopersburg Borough Manager and Jennifer Wescoe-Shaninger, Coopersburg Borough Representative. Guests: Carolyn Lidie from Upper Saucon Township; Josh Popichak, Hellertown - Lower Saucon Township PATCH.

Jack said copies of the minutes from the last meeting have been distributed. If you have any corrections or additions, please let him know. He will then post them on the LST website. Steve said he can also post them on Facebook.

Jack distributed copies of the draft meeting schedule for 2011. The meetings will continue on the 4th Monday of every month; two meetings will be at 5:00 pm. and every third one will be at 7:00 pm. We did that to accommodate some residents. Jack said if this is okay with everyone he will post the schedule on the Township website. The representatives agreed that there will be no meeting in December 2010 and December 2011. The next meeting will be January 24, 2011 at 5:00 pm at Hellertown Borough.

Jack asked Josh to explain the Hellertown – Lower Saucon PATCH. Josh said PATCH is a company that establishes an informational website. They are just in the process of setting up these sites throughout the Lehigh Valley. He is the editor of the Hellertown and Lower Saucon area PATCH site. They just launched last Wednesday, so they are brand new. They are 24/7 and offer everything your local print newspaper would offer, but give more availability and activity on line. They have a page on Facebook and Twitter. They are also going to be establishing an Upper Saucon PATCH in the near future and will be live on the Internet. There will be a total of twelve PATCH sites in the Lehigh Valley. It's a good thing for communities as they are filling a void. You do need to establish an account and it's real easy to post things on the website. For the most part, if you are posting an event or an announcement, it is not monitored, but is subject to review by the editor. Donna asked how are you going to communicate this to the communities? Josh said a lot of it is word of mouth as they are brand new and social media helps a lot too. He hopes the municipalities will do some advertising and marketing in one form or another. Jack said check it out, it's very good. They've done some reporting on Lower Saucon and Hellertown activities and it's up on the site the next day. Josh said they want to be a real outlet with journalists and freelancers. A lot of these people have degrees. He said check them out.

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

Dawn from Coopersburg said their trail development is the same as it's been. They are not doing anything. They are having a Council meeting tomorrow night and the first item is the budget. She did put a little in there to start stashing some money away for the Rail Trail. There is no tax increase. She will see what happens when Council gets a hold of the budget. Hopefully, in 2012, they can look into grants and funding and start their portion.

Charlie said they are in the starting position and cooperating with Lower Saucon Township. They did finally get drawings back from PennDOT for the shared use crossing on Water Street and will be working with Signal Service to put the necessary pedestrian crossings in. The estimate is about \$35,000.00 to do that. There's another \$10,000.00 that they anticipate on Walnut Street and that doesn't require the flashing lights. They did apply for a grant to the Northampton County Open Space fund for \$45,000.00 to cover those crossings. It's part of the bond issue from many years ago. They also put in another request in for \$22,000.00 for a pool feature at their swimming pool which consumes the balance of that allocation to the Borough. There's a meeting next week to try to justify their request with the County Council's Advisory Committee and hopefully,

they will get approval and be able to start on that. They are doing to do some roadwork and fencing with Lower Saucon Township. The fencing will cover the Saucon Creek Bridge and also probably the Silver Creek crossing as well. It's the wooden fencing that Jack had shown you previously. Jack said that work will be completed by the end of the year. They need to get a pre-construction meeting set up with the Public Works Directors and they have to move some Jersey barriers off of the bridges. The second bridge spans the Saucon Creek at Old Mill Road and that will also be completed. We also awarded the bid to another fence company to install bollards and gates at the Meadows Road and Old Mill Road crossings and at the future trail head access site. That will also take place during December and should be done by the end of the year. After Hellertown gets finished with the flashing signal work with PennDOT, they'd like to work with them on the surfacing for the trail. They are waiting for the analysis of the slag material to use it as a surface material. It looks like springtime is going to be more feasible for opening our section.

Donna said there is a Boy Scout in Hellertown working on the kiosks. A friend of Steve's is helping with some of the drawings. Steve said one of the younger architects in his wife's architectural firm needs to fulfill some requirements before they can get a license and has some time to work on it. Steve is meeting with her tomorrow to finalize a couple of things. Hopefully, they'll have some final drawings by the end of this month.

Bob said there's not much change in Upper Saucon. He thinks Tom reported about it last month. It's scheduled to be open by the end of this year.

Jack said Hellertown and Lower Saucon are submitting their rail trail development costs to the County Gaming Authority for funds that are available to municipalities that surround the Bethlehem casino. They submitted several projects in the first round and received some money and this time they are submitting it to the uncommitted round. Hopefully, they'll get some money for the Rail Trail. Charlie said in the first round we had to demonstrate it was connected to impacts from the casino.

Steve said the \$35,000.00 for Water Street, is that for everything? Charlie said just to move the lights will cost \$35,000.00. They are going to try and see if the Public Works Departments can do some of the work required and avoid some of that cost. The sad part about is it's not going to do them any good as no one is going to pay attention to them anyway. They plan on using the Jersey barriers that are coming off of the bridges as temporary fencing for that crossing.

Jack looked at the photos that Bob distributed and asked Bob if Upper Saucon Township was covering the full 30' width of the trail with gravel? Bob said he thinks they are covering 24' with a geo-textile and screenings and 3' on each side as a shoulder. They wanted an easy way to get it up if SEPTA ever wanted their trail back. Jack said your trail width is 12'? Jack said in Hellertown and Lower Saucon they are planning to install a 10' wide gravel surface down the middle which will be rolled and compacted, and on each side of that is going to be the leftover ballast stone from the railroad which is on there now. Whatever grows up there will be mowed. That's also the area that Donna is talking about for the equestrian use.

- **Fundraising/Brochure – Update**

Jennifer said she's been attempting to contact Mr. Johns, the Manager from L.L. Bean. He hasn't returned her call yet. Jack said that a friend of Frank's said the Manager of L. L. Bean would like to get involved with the Rail Trail, so Jack sent the email to Jennifer and she is going to follow up with it. Jennifer also contacted the woman from St. Luke's Physical Therapy group on Cherry Lane. Jennifer said that fundraising is really at a standstill right now. She would prefer to have everything in place before she goes to these places. As far as for the brochure, she was talking to Keri Maxfield who's a graphic designer from Hellertown. She's a very lovely lady and was supposed to be here tonight, but had surgery four weeks ago, so she wasn't able to come this evening. As far as her doing the brochure, she thinks we might want to keep it consistent with the graphic designer. Nothing is really happening.

- **Logo, Website, Etc. – Update**

Jennifer said she contacted Keri and she appears to be very, very through on how to approach this. Keri recommended that we think of three descriptive words how you would envision the logo to be. What she asked for tonight for us to decide on those three words and Jennifer will take that back to Keri and we can then correspond by emails. We need colors and shapes. They touched base on the shape two meetings ago so that's where we are with the logo. Think about it and come up with three descriptive words and colors and we can give to Keri. Carolyn said she has three words – “nature, exercise and education”. Jack said he has “scenic, historic and linkage”. Steve said “green”. One of the emails was close to the IRT's logo and green is a good color. Charlie said “green” is what came to his mind. Carolyn said the reason she added “nature” and “education” is in her Township they are pitching in to do a sustainable park and she thinks as we expand through this and the trail develops, we can clean up some of the invasives and do some naturalized wildflower meadows. We can pull nature down that corridor. She likes green, but likes adding “blue and white” also. Donna said if we add colors, won't it be more expensive? Jennifer said she thinks we want to add colors but in terms of shaping and all that, that certainly adds up in terms of printing. The consistent words she is hearing are “green” and “exercise”. Her words were “classic” and “earthy”. Jennifer said okay “green”, “linkage”, “historic” and “educational”. Carolyn said you don't have a lot of historical features along the whole trail. Jack said yes we do in Hellertown and Lower Saucon. Carolyn said Lower Saucon might, but Coopersburg doesn't. Jack said the Old Mill area is a very historic area. Part of the linkages are features that link historic areas to the trail like bridges that people can go across and go to various historic sites. It's not right there, but close by. Jennifer said the color could be green, blue and white. Do we want it circular? Jack said it's easier that way. Jennifer said the words would be “green”, “nature”, “linkage”, “history” and “education”. Talking about history, she and Jerry Holum met with three historians from the LST-Hellertown area, and they were amazing. They talked about the history within two blocks of the trail and gave descriptions of the areas along the route. Jerry is in the process of typing it up and then what they are going to do it take all that information and transfer it an informational brochure. On December 5th, she's meeting with Ted Zapac from Coopersburg and they will be going over this with her. They want to bring in people from the Main Street in Coopersburg. Ted also has a gentleman Jennifer can meet with from Upper Saucon. They almost have a finished product for the history of the railroad. Hopefully, by January she will have a final product. Jerry has been doing a wonderful job with the history.

Jack said at the last meeting, they were the letters SRT for the logo. Today he attended a PennDOT presentation on trails and they shared information on different trails and one of them, the Schuylkill River Trail also used the letters SRT in their signage. He doesn't know if there is going to be any confusion with us using the same letters. They are not copyrighted. Jennifer said she thinks we should keep it. Jack said they are not near each other. Carolyn said in the future more of the trails will be connected, so eventually there will be a map with all of them on there. Jack said we could run that question by the trail organizations about the SRT. The things we are going to be putting out on the pamphlets and on the website will have the name Saucon Rail Trail. The SRT will only be used for the logo. Maybe it's not an issue.

Carolyn said she talked to Southern Lehigh School art department. She showed the Committee what they had in draft form. She said she liked the way the letters went together and are linked if Jennifer wants to take them to Keri. She liked the way the S and R and T linked. She's sure the little man walking is just a graphics pulled up from the internet. Jack said regarding the services provided by the graphic designer, this Committee does not have a budget and we don't make any decisions about funding. If there is a cost that is offered, that would have to come here and have to go back to the municipalities for a decision. They don't have an agreement, so he doesn't know how we would divvy that up. Donna said what if there was a cost and you went to L. L. Bean and asked them to fund the graphics? Jack said that was one of the things we talked about if funding is coming from a donor, it would go to a specific municipality and be put into a park fund. It would come to Bob as L.L. Bean's in Upper Saucon and he'd put it in his park fund. We really haven't established how we are going to handle these types of expenses. Steve had a guy some time ago who was willing to do the website, and there was going to be a cost for hosting, and he told him the same thing - that there was no way to pay for it. Going forward, if Keri agrees to do this, and she says here's my fee, we really don't have a method to handle that. Steve said L. L. Bean could divvy it up to the four municipalities as well. Jack said it would have to be explained to them.

Donna said where are we with the intermunicipal agreement? Carolyn said she got the Ironton Rail Trail intergovernmental agreement and gave it to Tom Beil. He said he was going to try to get to it by the end of the year. Donna said we need to get this agreement done as it holds things up. The Iron Rail Trail agreement seemed pretty straight forward.

Donna said everyone should have received a copy of draft Saucon Rail Trail rules and regulations. The last meeting it was requested that she put together rules and regulations which she worked with Tom Butera from the Township Parks and recreation Board on. As she goes through it, if you want to make any notes of things you think should be added to it, please do.

Saucon Rail Trail Rules and Regulations – *because parks belong to the people, we all need to work together to conserve park resources and protect the park legacy for future generations.*

- Dogs must be controlled and attended to at all times on a leash not exceeding 6' in length. Aggressive and uncontrollable dogs are not allowed on the trail
- A horse or dog is only permitted on the right side going south, left side going north. This was to keep off of the main thoroughfare as the left side going north of the trail and not on the walking, biking area of the trail. Carolyn said isn't that opposite? Do we want them on the right side going north and left side going south? Donna said it really doesn't matter as long as we keep them off. It was done that way so they are on the same side going down and coming back. She read a thing on horses as they tend to spook if something comes up behind them, so it was basically better to ride a horse facing traffic. There's no motorized traffic on the trail but they like to see what's coming towards them.
- Horses are to walk, no running horses on the trail
- Hitching or confining horses in the manner that may cause damage to a tree or shrub is prohibited
- Droppings from dogs or horses shall be taken with the owner and taken outside the rail trail park
- Runners or bicyclists are to alert anyone they pass by saying "on your left"
- Parking areas are designated by rail trail and maps. There is no parking in any other areas. Horse trailers should only be parked in designated areas indicated on the map. Horse owners are to keep horse areas clean of any droppings and remove them from the park
- LEAVE NO TRACE practices. This means leave nothing on the trail but footprints and take nothing from the trail but memories.
- Please stay on the trail and do not litter. Whatever you bring into the park, you take with you which include dog and horse droppings. In the case of horses, we suggest you bring along garbage bags and saddle bags to carry it out with you
- Motorized vehicles are not permitted on the trail
- Be cautious as other users, such as mountain bikes or cross country skiers. Be courteous at all times
- The website shows historical sites along the trails. Some of these are private sites. Be conscious of people's privacy
- Alcoholic beverages are prohibited
- Do your part to keep wildlife wild. Enjoy wildlife from a safe distance. Do not feed or approach wildlife. Remember, you are a visitor in their home.
- Soliciting and posting signs are prohibited without approval of the Rail Trail Committee
- Campfires or overnight camping is not permitted on the trail
- Hunting is not permitted on the trail
- Anyone in violation of these rules and regulations will be prohibited using from the trail and may face a \$XX fine.

In order to maintain the recreational and educational qualities of the Rail Trail for all types of activities, users must not only follow the rules and regulations set up to protect the land, but also practice proper trail etiquette.

Donna said if you think of any areas they did not cover, let her know. The idea basically goes back to the idea of being considerate. They pulled a lot of this from state and county parks rules and regulations, but used only things that apply to us. Many of the state park regulations also cover lakes, waterways, boating, etc. Carolyn said there is no mention of handicapped and wheel chairs. Donna said we don't have accessibility. Bob said yes we do. The trail and our parking areas are handicapped accessible. Donna said where they say be cautious

of bikers or cross country skiers, you may want to also say handicapped including wheelchairs, people with walkers.

Bob said what about hours of operation? Donna said they talked about that at their last meeting and there might be a lot of people using it to go back and forth to work in wintertime and if you get out at 5 pm in wintertime, it might be dark already. Steve said are you telling people they can't commute on the Rail to Trail. Jack said you are going to have issues keeping the trail open after dark. Steve said he totally understands, but do we want to tell people that it's not commuter friendly? Jack said you can recommend it, but the municipalities have to approve it and enforce it. The trail will not be lit, so we can't encourage people to use a facility that's not lit. Bob said their park is closed at dusk, so if you have your vehicle there and come back after dark, you won't be able to get your vehicle out. There is a sign in the park indicating that. Steve said if he's riding at night, he's using lights and most commuters are doing that. It's a fine line to tell someone they can't commute after dark. Donna said how about if we say travel at your own risk after dark? Steve said he agrees the park closes at dusk, but the police looking at it have to be somewhat lenient. Jack said that's an issue we have to look at from a couple of different sides. One is the residents who live along the trail. They will have issues about people being on the trail after dark. One of the things about safety is we are going to putting gates and bollards up along the trail and they are not going to be lit. They could be dangerous to someone who is riding a bike in the dark. In addition, you are going to have at least 12 road crossings with traffic on them. We are trying to encourage people to stop and get off the bike. Those are the kinds of issues where you increase the municipalities' liability if the trail is used in the dark. Steve said the Lehigh River Canal, there are organized bike rides, there are homes along the edge, and he's sure it's the same thing where it says park closes at dark, but he doesn't see anybody getting stopped. Jack said he'll speak for the Township and our rules say that our parks close at dusk. Steve said it's a touchy subject with him. Donna said in relationship to that, she's been asked by students who go to DeSales University about the Rail Trail. All the roads by DeSales are very dangerous to walk or ride bicycles on and the students have been really looking forward to it so they can bicycle to class without being in danger of being run over by a car. Bob said there was an article about a trail in Salisbury with mountain bikers on it in the evening. Steve said with Salisbury, there is no medical access to the trails, day or night. It's a whole different picture. Our trail is totally accessible for emergency vehicles. Jack said the enforcement of this would have to be adopted by each municipality by ordinance. Under enforcement, he doesn't know if we could prohibit anyone from using the trail; we could enforce a violation and take it to the local magistrate and if he decides they are guilty there is an appropriate fine. Part of that finding may be that they are prohibited from using the trail but if that were the case, he doesn't know how that could be enforced and how you could keep someone off the trail? Donna said the question was, what are you going to do about it if people violate it? Jack said like any ordinance violation, you prosecute and it's up to the court to decide if they are guilty and how much they are fined. Steve said if you are going to print that rule, state that violators will be prosecuted and may pay a fine in the appropriate township. Donna said it should be assumed, you don't have to say that. Steve said you shouldn't put a dollar amount in there. Jack said also under motorized vehicles, you should also point out that you can have a motorized wheelchair on the trail. Donna said she will add that. Jack said this list is a great start. Donna said they will make all the changes, and go to the next step, which in some cases are the Councils. In LST's case, it would go to Parks and Recreation for their review and then to Council. They need to be put in place and would probably just fall under park rules. They need to be in place by January. Jack said speaking of park rules, Lower Saucon's and Upper Saucon's park rules currently prohibit horses in parks. Donna said when this goes through, they have to make a decision on this also. Charlie said the one thing that concerns him is the intermunicipal agreement, although Council is going to act on it, we still don't have the organization for this and it's important. When this comes back from Upper Saucon, he can see the attorneys in Hellertown, LST and Coopersburg looking at that language to see if they have any kind of problem. Maybe it'll happen real quickly, one month, two months, three months. In the meantime, we're all building trails and putting bollards up and everything else. We need to get that agreement signed and have a basic agreement. What you might end up is something generic and not as detailed as this.

Donna asked if there would be a kiosk when you cross over the line and those rules and regulations would be posted there. Steve said it's basically going to be where the parking areas are, not as you are crossing over to the next Township. Jack said the agreement can be done, but if you are going to do the rules, and set down certain actions that are prohibited and you want enforced, and a police officer is going to write you a citation for the violator, you need an ordinance that's adopted by the municipality that can be enforced in the

magistrate's office. That can be a decision each municipality may want to look at and we may have some differences, but he hopes not. Donna said we already have a difference in the width of the rail trail. Steve said the bollards may also be different. Jack said this is a good start and you may want to think about how they want to do it. If we are going to open the trail in the springtime, we do need to get this resolved. It will be opened as a park and has to be maintained and monitored as a park.

Charlie said this is not like a personal park for the Borough and Township, if you want enforcement, you are going to have somebody going from LST into Upper Saucon Township, you have to have something in common. You have to work towards that. Carolyn said IRT's agreement did not speak to rules and regulations. They really talked about the commission and how it was handled, how the members were assigned. They talk about budget and money and how that's managed; governing laws; the cost; the modifications; indemnities; and that's it. Jack said you should go to a trail like Perkiomen and ask them how they handled the agreements. Steve said IRT's should be simple enough. Carolyn said each township may say they are going to run it like their park rules. Donna said when they were researching this, looking at the different parks, a lot of those parks just referred to state regulations. All they would say were they abiding by the state regulation and you'd have to go to the state regulations and they cover everything. Jack said that's kind of a general statement. He doesn't know if any state rules would apply to local parks.

- **Other Issues**

Steve said there are 105 people on the Facebook page now. You just need an email and a password and can become a friend of the Saucon Rail Trail.

Meeting adjourned. The time was 6:24 PM.

Next meeting – January 24, 2011 @ 5:00 pm at Hellertown Borough.