

Saucon Rail Trail Oversight Commission Meeting Minutes
March 25, 2024 at 6:00 PM – Hellertown Borough

I. OPENING

A. Call to Order :

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm by Jeremy Mack.

B. Roll Call:

Eric Bartosz, President (Upper Saucon Township)
Jeremy Mack, Vice-President (Coopersburg Borough)
Sarah Sumoski, Secretary (Hellertown Borough)
Terri Fadem (Hellertown Borough)
Peter Jarrett (Upper Saucon Township)
Cris Miller (Coopersburg Borough)
Dan Edelman (Lower Saucon Township)

II. PUBLIC COMMENT / CITIZEN NON-AGENDA ITEMS

There was no public comment on non-agenda items.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT / AGENDA ITEMS

Trail Improvement Projects

1. Jerry Holum asked about the cleanup of branches off the Rail Trail. He suggested a volunteer captain could be identified from each township to help organize volunteers in each section. The townships already do maintenance on the trails, for larger issues such as downed trees. Sarah Sumoski offered to contact the representatives from each Township to determine their maintenance schedules for the trail. A organized cleanup of debris could be held mid-late season.
2. Jerry Holum asked about donors for mile marker signs. Jeremy Mack shared that donations are always welcome, but there are no current calls for donations to replace existing signs until all mile markers have been installed. Jerry Holum noted that a mile marker sign north of Meadows Road has fallen, Jeremy Mack indicated that Eric Bartosz has the sign and is working on re-installing.
3. Jerry Holum noted that the bridge over Saucon Creek, north of Meadows Road has some loose railings. Terri Fadem shared that this is an upcoming Eagle Scout Project that was recently approved by Hellertown Borough Council on March 18, 2024.
4. Jerry Holum suggested the addition on lean-to storm shelters at key locations along the trail and also suggested this could be an Eagle Scout project. Key concerns were addressed by the Saucon Rail Trail Oversight Commission including: pushback from residents due to the potential for the homeless population taking shelter, limited space along the edge of the trail, and the need for ongoing maintenance of such structures.
5. Jerry Holum suggested Lower Saucon Township may have leftover COVID relief funding that could be used for the Saucon Rail Trail. Terri Fadem offered to speak with the Lower Saucon Representative on the matter.

IV. PRESENTATIONS / TRAIL BUSINESS

A. Vision/Future Plans

1. Upper Bucks Rail Trail – No new updates at this time.
2. Bethlehem Update – Greenway Trail Gap – Terri Fadem mentioned the City of Bethlehem is in process of purchasing a tract of land in Hellertown from Norfolk Southern, this is the land that will connect the Greenway to the Hellertown Rail Trail. Funding is part of the DCNR grant announcement.

B. Trail Improvement Projects

1. "RR Signs" additions to signs – Eric Bartosz received hard proofs of material for the signs. Final proofs will be coming soon. Final product will be shipped to Upper Saucon and both Upper and Lower Saucon will complete the installation.
2. SRT Bridge over Preston Lane – No new updates at this time.
3. Mile Marker status – Jeremy Mack is working with three Lehigh Students who will determine the location for each marker. After the locations are determined installation will begin. At this time no final decision has been made as to whether the posts will be made of wood or metal.

4. Geology Kiosks – Peter Jarrett has noted the following conditions for each location:

Landis Mill Road: Pedestal is in good condition and signs are clean.

There are two stone implants missing and 1 metal disk missing.

Meadows Road: The pedestal is off center and needs to be cleaned. The

rocks are covered with heavy vegetation and a buildup of soil.

The markers are not visible.

Hellertown: This location does not need attention.

Peter Jarrett is planning to contact Dr. Frank Pazzaglia at Lehigh University for his input and guidance as to which rock features should be exposed. He also suggested incorporating 4-5 steps for a better, birds-eye-view of the rocks at the Meadows Road location. Jeremy Mack indicated that volunteers could help with vegetation removal, given there is on-site guidance. Sarah Sumoski, suggested we could utilize photos from the installation to show volunteers the extent to which vegetation should be removed.

Notable things to consider: Rocks may need to be powerwashed, this was completed by either Lower Saucon or Hellertown at one time. It was also suggested to contact the Lower Saucon Parks and Recreation Board for input on an invasive species removal.

5. Native Plant Garden – Peter Jarrett is in contact with Maryann. A call for volunteers was posted on the Saucon Rail Trail website and Facebook pages. At this time there are 3-4 volunteers that Maryann is in contact with to assist. Jeremy Mack noted he can continue to post requests on Facebook for volunteers as needed.
6. Grist Mill Signage - Sarah Sumoski Spoke with Larry Sutton with the Hellertown Historical Society. He is interested in installing and funding signs to showcase the Grist Mill and historical bridge. Eric Bartosz will contact Larry. Peter Jarrett suggests SRTOC receives final proofs for approval before any installations.

C. Upcoming Events

1. Hellertown -Lower Saucon Heritage Day: May 18 – SRTOC is planning to set up a table and provide new railroad signage at the event. Eric Bartosz will reach out regarding

any need for a certificate of insurance for the event. Event organizers do not need to submit as event permit to the SRTOC.

2. DeSales University Bridge Opening – Eric Bartosz will request information from Upper Saucon Township on the opening event and ability for SRTOC to participate and include a Rail Trail sign in the vicinity of the new bridge.
3. Lutron 5k **Motion** by Peter Jarrett to approve the May 2, 2024 event (Rain date May 30, 2024), seconded by Terri Fadem. **Motion Passed.**

D. Other Business

1. Saucon Rail Trail Market – Will open again in time for the Hellertown-Lower Saucon Heritage Day.
2. Data collection of future events – No new updates at this time.
3. Sarah Sumoski noticed the signs along the Hellertown Marsh are very weathered and difficult to read.

E. Website / App – Jeremy Mack plans to update the minutes/agendas pages on the SRT website.

V. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS ITEMS

- A. Previous Meeting Minutes of January 22, 2024 – **Motion** to approve minutes made by Terri Fadem, seconded by Jeremy Mack. **Motion Approved.**
- B. Financial Report as of February 29, 2024 – **Motion** to approve by Terri Fadem, seconded by Cris Miller. **Motion Approved.**

VI. COMMISSIONER INDIVIDUAL STATEMENTS & UPDATES

- A. By Municipality: There were no new updates.
- B. Other Business: There were no new updates.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Terri Fadem to adjourn the meeting at 7:23 pm.

The next meeting will be held on April 22, 2024 at Coopersburg Borough at 6:00 pm.