



Oakland County Trails Advisory Council

Oakland County Parks and Recreation Administration Office
2800 Watkins Lake Road, Waterford, Michigan

Minutes

November 18, 2009

The meeting was called to order by Kristen Myers, Chair, at 9:06 a.m. in the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission Room. She congratulated Stephanie Marchbanks of OCPR on her new position of Recreation and Trail Planner.

PRESENT:

Kristen Myers, Kristen Wiltfang, David Burley, Stephanie Marchbanks, Dot LaLone, David Evancoe, Brian Marzolf, David Moutrie, Jenny Frederick, Janet Waters, Kristen Bennett, Sharon Greene, Mindy Milos-Dale, Andrew Mutch, Sgt. Larry Bireta, Norm Cox, and Jon Noyes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of minutes from August 26, 2009 was moved by Dot LaLone and supported by Kris Bennett. The motion passed on voice vote.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

No additions were added.

TRAIL NETWORK UPDATE

Paint Creek Trail—(Kristen Myers)

Kristen reported that the Labor Day Bridge Walk was successful. Updates were provided on maps and signage at new locations on the Paint Creek Trail. She talked about the a commercial film use policy update; updating the Paint Creek Trail policy and focusing on environmental stewardship by working with Six Rivers Regional Land Conservancy on National Trails Day.

Polly Ann Trail—(Troy Farwell)

(No update at this time)

Clinton River Trail—(Brian Marzolf)

Brian talked about the vegetation management next to the high school and how the students are participating with planting native flowers. ITC has been in the area of M-59 and Woodward, east of Opdyke, as part of their regular line-clearance program. Staff

Oakland County Trails Advisory Council

Minutes

November 18, 2009

from the Water Resources Commissioner's Office, PEDS, Wade Trim, City of Pontiac, and Friends of the CRT walked through Phase IV of the CRT from Woodward to Opdyke Rd. The Rochester portion of the trail at Diversion Street has been re-routed. Kristen W. answered questions about the pedestrian overpass at Telegraph Rd. Cost estimates for Phase IV of the trail are expected soon from Wade-Trim.

West Bloomfield Trail—(Dave Burley)

Dave reported that ITC will be in W. Bloomfield soon to conduct line clearance and plant management (removing ash trees in particular). They received permission from West Bloomfield Twp. Planning & Development to remove branches.

The Michigan Airline Railroad property sold; a company purchased it's debt from the bank that held the mortgage. The acquisition section of the railroad is moving forward.

Dave met with the city manager of Sylvan Lake Village regarding help with installation of memorial benches and brush/tree removal in the village. Sylvan Lake has little money and only 1.5 people on their DPW staff; West Bloomfield offered help and will use the Friends' group to assist. Dave indicated that while it's the efforts are not specifically for the West Bloomfield Trail, it's still important to help them maintain their open space.

Lakes Community Trail—(Deanna Magee)

Kristen Wiltfang reported that the Trust Fund Grant application was submitted last week for the matching portion.

Huron Valley Trail—(Chris Doozan)

Kristen Wiltfang reported that Lyon Center Drive—east intersection is doing well. The final paving has been completed around Ring Road; although they are still working out some issues with the flashing beacon. MDOT is planning construction of the I-96 bridge over the trail in 2010.

Headwaters Trail—(Dot LaLone)

Dot reported that the Canoe Color Tour went very well – they are starting to pick up more canoers. There is new signage in place but they need to install two additional kiosks at the Fish Lake Rd Landing.– two more are to be put in Fenton The Holly residents and businesses were filmed for a “shout-out” with Good Morning America. The segment will be televised on Friday, November 27 on Good Morning America. They will also be working that weekend at the Dickens Festival in Holly.

Woodward Corridor Trail—(Todd Scott)

(No update at this time)

Oakland County Trails Advisory Council

Minutes

November 18, 2009

I-275 Pathway—(Jeff Edwards)

Kristen Wiltfang shared with the group that the I-275 Pathway received some leftover stimulus funds for improvements. The trail will continue along I-275 south, between Sibley and Meadowbrook Roads, and connect to Oakwoods Metropark. She also thanked everyone for their assistance with working on the annual Trail Summit held this year.

Other Trail Information Reports:

Sharon Greene of the Highland Equestrian Conservancy (HEC) spoke about the 4 acre, 80' wide by 0.5 mile long parcel that was purchased adjoining Highland Oaks County Park. There was a ribbon cutting in September. The goal is to have this parcel be the start of a trail connector between Highland Oaks and Rose Oaks.

Sharon also announced that there is an issue on the trail from Proud Lake Rec Area to Kensington Metropark. The light at Milford Rd., near the Dairy Queen and the equestrian/bike and hike trail crossing has confusing red and green signals and is creating a safety hazard. The O.C. Road Commission for Oakland County is now involved.

Presentation: 'General Safety Tips for Trails and Life' – Sgt. Larry Bireta, Oakland County Sheriff's Office

The Oakland County Equestrian Mounted Division is the largest in the state. There are 21 riders and 30 horses. They anticipate having almost 30 members next year. There is training in progress now at Oakland Community College. They are part-time deputized officers with their commanding officer being the Oakland County Sheriff. He stated that the horses are also deputized. They take riders and teach them to be mounted officers at Addison Oaks, Independence Oaks, Groveland Oaks and Paint Creek Trail. They are out at least 1 day a week at these locations (excluding holidays). Their goal is to provide an approachable, positive, and visible police presence. They ride and patrol in pairs. Mounted police officers have the benefit of seeing more because they are several feet up off the ground. Horses can also outrun mountain bikers!

The Mounted Division also provides search and rescue service. Sgt. Bireta stressed how important it is to always know where you are between the trail markers, have a cell phone with you and a small LED flash light. He shared ideas on how the park trail users can assist when they see something suspicious. People can use their cell phone to record details and if they have a camera feature, take a quick photo. Be observant at all times, looking to your left and right regularly. Dress for the weather and wear colors and/or stripes which help to see you at dusk. Plan for extra time so there's enough daylight. Use variety with your parking, trail routes and arrival/departure time so you don't create a consistent pattern. This can help to ward off a potential breaking and entering or personal attack.

Oakland County Trails Advisory Council

Minutes

November 18, 2009

The mounted division is available for special events. The average cost is \$8,285 (500 hour budget at \$16.57 an hour) for Paint Creek. Sgt. Bireta clarified how the trails are both equestrian and people friendly. Horse droppings are totally biodegradable--horses eat oats and grasses - not meat.

Presentation: 'New Bike Route Signing Systems' – Norm Cox, The Greenway Collaborative, Inc.

Norm presented a slide show and explained the history of the group and the current and future projects. He stated that if trail signage involves a road then it's regulated. The Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and the National MUTCD are almost identical. The goal of the manuals is essentially to provide consistency for way finding. The MMUTCD will be revised soon, and will address Guide Signs and Route Signs (Interstate Bike Route).

The AASHTO Guidelines (not a manual!!) will be issuing a new bike guide next year.

Norm has found that in doing work with St. Clair County's trail system, information kiosks are important to have at gaps in the trail.

Norm also mentioned that in Troy, their Trails Committee is broadened their description of what a 'trail' is; they also advocate for traffic calming efforts on roads that are in between trail linkages.

Discussion was held on using "yield" vs. "stop" signs on paths. Current and future developments include incorporating ADA regulations and bilingual signage. Future planning will also include universal non-motorized use icons for signage. Currently, just the bicycle icons can be misleading.

There was also discussion about current usage of non-motorized scooters or golf carts by people with disabilities. Norm stressed safety first until the law catches up. If someone is disabled and has an "Amigo" type of scooter as a personal mobility device, there shouldn't be a problem, as long as they adhere to a speed limit and the device doesn't take over the width of the trail. But someone using a golf cart with no physical need to could create a problem. Sound factor, speed and safety need to be considered. At a minimum, if the device is on a road, it must be street legal – by having flashers, headlights, and a reflective caution sign on the back. It was suggested that a type of special use permit be required for these devices on trails.

Norm can be reached at norm@greenwaycollab.com and www.greenwaycollab.com

**Oakland County Trails Advisory Council
Minutes**

November 18, 2009

Misc. Trail Information – Kristen Wiltfang

- New MDOT Road and Trail Bicycling Guides are available for the Metro Region.
- Oakland County Planning office completed their new Green Infrastructure Vision poster
- 2009 Trail Summit evaluation survey results are in
- OTAC 2010 meeting dates provided: (9:00-11:00 a.m. OCPR Commission Room, unless otherwise noted)
 - January 27
 - March 24
 - May 26 – Bus Tour – Location TBD
 - July 28
 - First week of October – Trail Summit
 - November 17

Announcements/Public Comments

Kristen Myers read a letter from Larry Falardeau, who thanked OTAC for his award at the Trail Summit. A local artist-made walking stick with the OTAC logo.

Kristen Bennett stated that the “Opt-In” or “Opt-Out” feature for the state park system financial subsidization has passed the Senate. This new feature will take place during a person’s vehicle registration time at the Secretary of State. The bill is going to the House at this time. Out of state park patrons will still pay for a \$25 annual or \$8 day pass.

The Secretary of State is looking at eliminating the current vehicle license tab system. They are also looking at marketing concepts to promote the new Opt-In feature. They will need 17% to break even on the money. The state is working on a method to allow patrons to Opt-In after the fact, once they used the park and previously Opted-Out. This new bill has been modeled after the program used by the Montana state park system and has worked very well.

Andrew Mutch from the City of Novi announced that their website, www.cityofnovi.org, has their updated Pathway Prioritization Analysis. Look under the “Community” tab for pathways and sidewalks. Also, MDOT is working with Novi on a future non-motorized transportation plan, which will be utilizing federal stimulus money. Bids will be going out soon for consultants.

Oakland County Trails Advisory Council

Minutes

November 18, 2009

West Bloomfield Township made an announcement on the sale of a micro mower, 3 ft. back mount onto tractor—good shape. Good for ditches, removing branches, etc. The mower will be placed on bidnet.com, if interested.

Friends of the Highland Recreation Area met last night and discussed the future trail head. Their website is www.friendsofhighlandrec.org. They have made great efforts in restoring the Edsel Ford Barn.

Jon Noyes formally introduced Stephanie Marchbanks as the OCPR's new Recreation and Trail Planner. He explained that her role in this position will have a 25/75 time split. About 25% of her time will be focused on promoting recreational connectivity (such as trails, non-motorized routes, walkable communities, etc.) for the Oakland County Parks system and the rest of the county. This includes being a liaison between OCPR and OTAC.

About 75% of her time will be spent advocating for recreational opportunities within the county, which includes collaborating with local parks and rec departments and working on a comprehensive recreation inventory for Oakland County.

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next OTAC meeting will be Wednesday, January 27, 2010 at 9:00 a.m. in the OCPR Commission Room.

Minutes taken by Sue Thibodeau, Administrative Services, Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission.