



Oakland County Trails Advisory Council

Oakland County Parks and Recreation Administration Office
2800 Watkins Lake Road, Waterford, Michigan 48328

Minutes

November 17, 2010

The meeting was called to order by Kristen Myers, Chair, in the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission Room at 9:04 a.m.

PRESENT:

Brian Marzolf	Auburn Hills Parks and Recreation
Cory Johnston	MI Source
Jeff Edwards	MDOT – Metro Region
Andrew Mutch	City of Novi
Tad Krear	OCPEDS
Kristen Wiltfang	OCPEDS
Stephanie Loria	OCPRC
Jacy Garrison	OCWRC
Jonathon Schechter	Oakland Press
Mindy Milos – Dale	Oakland Township Parks
Heather Muzzy	Orion Township Safety Path & Environmental
Kristen Myers	Paint Creek Trail
David Evancoe	RCOC
Merrie Carlock	City of Southfield
Joe Ketchum	West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation
Jason Iacoangeli	White Lake Planning

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of minutes from July 28, 2010 was moved by David Evancoe and supported by Kristen Wiltfang. The motion passed on voice vote.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

No additions were added.

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TRAIL NETWORK UPDATES

Paint Creek Trail – (Kristen Myers)

Kristen stated that they have actively started a 501(c) 3 Friends of the Paint Creek Trail group. Meetings started in July and are meeting the 4th Thursday of each month, except this month (due to the holiday), will be meeting (tomorrow) 11/18. Also stated, that they have a very nice group and a lot of great ideas.

For National Trails Day they are planning a trail-wide cycling event, which will possibly be held in May.

Polly Ann Trail – (Troy Farwell)

Report not available from Troy Farwell

Clinton River Trail – (Brian Marzolf)

- Brian stated in Rochester they have a new access point to the Clinton River, near Main Street and Diversion Street. The improvement also included a rain garden near the parking lot that will treat stormwater runoff.
- Rochester & Rochester Hills held a successful “Great Michigan Race” event on the CRT.
- The bridge over Telegraph in Pontiac is still under construction and will not open until next spring.
- Rochester Hills is making improvements to the trail intersection at Adams Road and Technology Drive.
- Planning an Arbor Day Event on the last Friday of April that will include the City of Auburn Hills, Avondale Schools, ITC, and the Friends of the CRT.
- In Sylvan Lake, the razor wire fence has been removed and volunteers have created a native plant garden along the trail.
- January 18th Open House to obtain new members and gain feedback on the Look and Feel Project. The last meeting on the “Look and Feel” project will be held December 7.

West Bloomfield Trail – (Dave Burley)

Joe Ketchum (representing) stated that they are still in the holding phase for the purchase of the westward addition of the railroad, which extends to Haggerty Road. They were told on 11/16 that they are waiting on DNRE for the release of funds. As soon as funds are released they will be ready to purchase.

The railroad track was abandoned and is no longer active. They are waiting on the company to come and pull the rest of the tracks that are in the trail section, which is over 2 miles of track. They have already pulled the tracks at the intersections of Halsted Road and Walnut Lake Road.

Joe noted that regarding the status of the railway acquisition for the Commerce/Walled Lake/Wixom Trailway group, there is still one business that uses the rail line.

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Headwaters Trail Inc. – (Susan Julian)

Report not available from Susan Julian

I-275 / M-5 Metro Trails – (Jeff Edwards)

I-275 Metro Trail:

- M-14 to Meadowbrook – Construction of that the portion is complete.
- Hines Drive south to Michigan Ave – That portion is nearly complete, that was a total reconstruction and will be open sometime in December.
- Michigan Avenue to I-94 –Is under construction and is closed, will not reopen until October of 2011.
- I-94 to Sibley Road - This portion is closed and is currently replacing bridges. They haven't identified funding yet to repair the trail between the bridges, and the connection to the Metro Parks at the south end. Bridges will be complete by the fall of 2011 or earlier.

M-5 Extension:

- M-5 from 13 to 14 Mile Road: Extension of that (the west side of M-5) portion was opened w/ ribbon cutting a month ago by Novi.
- M-5 from 14 to Maple Road: The portion from 14 Mile up to Maple Road will be under construction by 2012. Next step by MDOT is to talk with Novi and work out the local connection from Meadowbrook Road to 14 Mile and across to M-5 to connect it to the I-275 pass.
- Andrew Mutch from City of Novi added that they are on board, will just be a matter of figuring out the logistics, the path is pretty clear, and should happen sooner than later.

Woodward Corridor Trail – Todd Scott)

Report not available from Todd Scott

Lakes Community Trail – Deanna Magee)

Report not available from Deanna Magee

Huron Valley Trail – (Chris Doozan)

Report not available from Chris Doozan

Other Trail Information Updates:

Oakland Township Trails Open House: (Mindy Milos-Dale reported for Oakland Township)

They had 30-50 people attend the open house regarding changes in priorities for their Township Trail Master Plan. They gave proclamations to two people who had donated easements. Mindy typed up comments yesterday and there were a lot of good ideas.

Kristen Myers asked if there is another open house planned. Mindy responded that this is an annual event. For every year that they update their trail priorities they have an annual open house to inform all residents of any changes to priorities.

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Mindy and her colleagues will be getting together to discuss the new ideas that came out of this open house and update their CIP plan and move forward from there. This winter they will be busy acquiring easements.

(TIGER) Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery Grant --

(Mindy Milos-Dale)

There was only one project that received the Capital Improvement Grant in the TIGER II round in Michigan. That was a very large bridge project of \$13 million which consists of bridges in Ann Arbor that need to be replaced. It was a multi mobile project, so not only was it for the automotive bridge but also to have pedestrian access as well. There will be another round of TIGER Grants in the spring 2011; right now there are two transportation grants pending approval toward the grant. Not sure which one will pass, one has more money than the other.

Orion Township – (Heather Muzzy)

Heather stated that during the last OTAC meeting she asked for input on design/funding the pedestrian bridge at Indian Lake Road and Lapeer Road. It will meet different requirements than usual for fencing. Oakland County Planning staff was very helpful and it has taken many months to find a way to construct it for a reduced cost of \$18,000. The Township approved it Monday night and will possibly be completed before the snow falls.

Also, the Township approved to move forward on finishing the pathway loop on Baldwin Road to the roundabout at Indianwood Road, and then east there are some starts and stops that exist. This will be the longest stretch that Orion has done, completing the loop that connects to the Polly Ann Trail. Existing pathway is present continuing on Indianwood Road east of the Polly Ann Trail; south along Joslyn; and then back across Clarkston.

The safety paths committee really wanted to construct a section that was that would be very difficult and expensive, located east of Joslyn heading toward to Lapeer, making a nice connection to the Paint Creek Trail. They would build more paths, except they require some monies in reserve for use as matching funds for future grants. Unfortunately most of the grants require 8ft and 10ft paths, but there is barely room for a 4 ft or 5ft path.

Invasive species (phragmites) in the park and along the paths is causing growth of moss on boardwalks. They prune at the edges and it grows back. Come spring they will need to do a serious brush cutting a couple of times to get it under control. They also want to educate the community about ways to combat this problem.

Kristen Myers asked for an update on the trail connection through Bald Mountain State Rec. Area., along Kern Road.

Heather responded that the State is cooperating and has created a long lease for a portion of their land. The land hasn't really been used in the park, except for a narrow dirt walking path that goes to a subdivision and to the Paint Creek Trail. There were no overgrown trees and they only need to cut down two small trees in order to improve this pathway with crushed limestone. Heather added that this pathway will also create a loop that will connect to the Village of Lake Orion.

Kristen added that this is a very nice improvement and will be a nice connector for the Paint Creek Trail and Paint Creek Ridge subdivision.

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City of Novi – (Andrew Mutch)

Novi has started their process to develop their Non-Motorized Transportation Master Plan.

Andrew stated that they've had two public meetings with about 30 to 35 attendees each, and have also implemented an online survey through the city's website. The last meeting was the rollout of the preliminary design plan for three levels of improvement: 1) Regional trails through Novi and connecting to neighboring communities; 2) Network of bike lanes across the city; 3) Utilizing neighborhood connectors - existing streets, pathways, subdivision, parks, schools - to provide a way for people to get across the city without having to ride on main roads.

Survey findings indicate that because of the way Novi is spread out, they have more people biking rather than walking, which will be a focal point in their master plan. Will have the final master plan by December and will incorporate that in their Capital Improvement Program. Intend to share this with OTAC.

Independence Township– (Cory Johnston)

Cory stated that despite budget cuts, Independence Township has maintained their safety path millage. The township is working on conservation efforts along their safety paths – to replant disturbed areas with native plants.

PRESENTATION: Trail Summit Evaluation Summary – Kristen Wiltfang, OCPEDS

Trail Summit was held at Addison Oaks with 78 attendees. Attendees were very critical of the food this year and last year, overall everyone enjoyed themselves. Session and tours went very well. Kristen passed out a summary of the survey results.

Kristen Myers thanked Kristen Wiltfang, Stephanie Loria, and Mindy Milos–Dale, for a job well done. It was well run, well organized and everyone a great time.

PRESENTATION: M-59 Non-Motorized Improvements – Tad Krear, OCPEDS

Tad stated that Larry Falardeau (formerly with Oakland County Planning and Economic Development Services - PEDS) came up with this project sometime ago, when he attended a session describing MDOT's Contact Sensitive Solutions (CSS) approach and thought it would be a good opportunity to look at the M-59 corridor between Waterford, Highland, and White Lake Township. PEDS started looking at that corridor and the different communities to see if there is a way they can cross-leverage grants for improvements of various components relative to environmental features, natural resources, walks, safety paths, and trails.

Essentially PEDS looked at contact sensitive solutions (CSS) that highlight our natural resources. When you travel M59 you don't realize some of the beautiful things along that corridor. One instance is the Clinton River in Waterford, there is no signage that indicates that you are crossing a river. There are so many wonderful natural resources and there are many ways that we can enhance them along the corridor.

The Contact Sensitive Solutions System approach and the map PEDS prepared became the base and guideline as they went and talked with different communities about opportunities along the corridor.

They held extensive meetings with stakeholders involving Waterford, White Lake, Highland, OC Parks, RCOC, MDOT, and Waterford Chamber of Commerce.

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After reviewing the documents and looking at the traffic and the corridor the common issue is inadequate pedestrian access/infrastructure. There are no SMART bus routes, and no alternative means of transportation, which is surprising given the population density.

After reviewing the pathway maps and the Oakland County Equestrian opportunity maps, it became apparent that from the north and south there is a real disconnect and M59 creates a barrier. The equestrians really want to have better and safer access to the parks and the trails system.

After meeting with all the communities, PEDS created an "Alert Map" that identifies key projects that may be on the horizon. The map is also a tool to bring together stakeholders-specifically RCOC, MDOT, and people from different communities-and try to get these areas prioritized as projects in need of Federal aid. With MDOT there is a 7-year queuing period for projects to get into the system. It's very lengthy process, but helpful if some of the projects can be identified now.

PEDS also produced a sample project sheet that identified areas of concern. Sheet will list identification number, location, name of project, project lead, the project leads priority, agencies, are there special interest groups, what is the status of planning and what are some of the potential grants that will help to move these projects forward.

Waterford's Village Center could be a good opportunity to start looking at development along the river in that area. If a master plan was developed for Village Center, there are some opportunities to take advantage of constructing trails and access to natural resources. Right now a shopping center backs to the river. Tad stated that if we invert that and start thinking out the box of how to plan and redevelop the center in the future, we can enhance the natural resources and take advantage of them.

Also important are the Highland Milford Road and the White Lake Gateway projects.

Tad pulled research on MDOT's precedents and things that they have done recently, relative to CSS. MDOT is working on a design guideline for the Blue Water Bridge, an open crash barrier and a decorative rail that is transparent. These are small design considerations that go long way to enhance the view of surrounding natural resources. Also, by the Tanger Outlet Mall in Howell on M59 they did beautiful sound walls, native plantings and very wide boardwalks. Tad stated the last time he passed by he saw several different people using the trails system with bikes.

Also, Tad looked into different mechanisms to help improve streets and corridors. The Complete Streets legislation is targeted toward new transportation projects being designed with considerations for all types of users.

White Lake applied for a TIGER II grant, but was not awarded one. Other forms of grant monies are available, such as Highland Township's Safe Routes to School program, MDNRE funds, and MDOT's Transportation Enhancement grant program.

Tad stated that they did a very in-depth evaluation of all the existing conditions of Access Management along the corridor, which involved trying to walk the corridor instead of just driving through it.

There is an idea to dedicate and rename the section of M-59 at Highland State Recreation Area to Haven Hill Memorial Highway. Need a Senator to make a proposal and legislation to change the name. This would be part of the Gateway Project for Highland Township.

PRESENTATION: Michigan Complete Streets Legislation – Cory Johnston, President of Michigan Resource Foundation

Michigan Resource Foundation (MRF) is a non-profit organization that promotes the use of Michigan organizations to improve the natural and built environment. They bring together non-profit organizations, government, private companies, engineers, designers, and suppliers. With limited resources, MRF is trying to bring as many people to a project, which will result in a better chance to obtain such resources.

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Cory showed several examples for the need to improve unfinished walkways and pedestrian crossings, including pictures of walkways that were too narrow or unfinished in Clarkston.

Cory shared a two part presentation that was originally compiled by LSL Planning as part of a Complete Streets Workshop held September 29, 2010 in Genesee County. Part 1 described how complete streets are designed, planned and constructed for all pedestrians, bicyclists, motorist, transit riders and the disabled. Part 2 described ways to implement components of complete streets, via public participation, city council approval, and implementing the Complete Streets ordinance.

On Aug. 1, Gov. Granholm signed into law Complete Streets legislation to advance cooperation and coordination among transportation and local governmental agencies: Public Act 135, which amends Public Act 51 of 1951 governing the expenditure of state transportation funding; and Public Act 134, which amends the Michigan Planning Enabling Act.

Eight to ten Michigan communities have passed a Complete Streets Resolution. The focus of complete streets is to develop multi-modal corridors, instead of prioritizing only the movement of vehicles.

Cory compiled a list of organizations and websites containing information related to Complete Streets (attached).

MDOT has two years to form their Complete Streets Advisory Committee.

David Evancoe with RCOC stated that their Traffic Safety Director is on the Advisory Committee. The Road Commission is in favor of Complete Streets, but they are facing a funding crisis, which has resulted in a reduction of 107 employees compared to two years ago.

OTAC Annual Report– (Stephanie Loria)

Stephanie stated that Kristen W. sent out an email asking for a summary of accomplishments by OTAC members earlier this fall. Stephanie suggested that it would be a good idea to start completing an annual report to frame what we've done in a professional format. It will also be a good tool to reach out to future OTAC members and also to present to the Oakland County Parks and Recreation (OCPR) Commission. It will outline OTAC's purpose/mission, annual meetings, accomplishments, and annual goals.

Kristen M. stated that it will be a great document to share with the individual communities.

Kristen W. will resend sheet for more input, and for those who she has not heard back from.

Stephanie will aim to have a draft annual report available for comment by January 2011.

GOALS (OTAC Master Plan) – (Stephanie Loria)

Stephanie recalled the January 2009 survey that Kristen W. sent out regarding the OTAC priorities. The list of priorities outlined on page 106 of the OTAC Master Plan were presented; items outlined in yellow indicate what OTAC has accomplished or is currently working on. Stars indicate priority products as indicated by OTAC in 2009. Stephanie requested feedback from OTAC members as to what they really want to prioritize and accomplish. She suggested focusing on the outreach and the sharing of information through OTAC. She also stated that she would really like to see the Oak Routes map posted and or available at all major trail head kiosks, if it is not already. Will also like to have Jonathon Schechter to write an article in the Oakland Press on OTAC.

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OTHER BUSINESS – Stephanie Loria

OTAC Meeting Dates for 2011:

Feb 23 -- May 25 -- Aug 24 -- Oct 26

Motion for 2011 quarterly meetings Jeff Edwards approved, Brian Marzolf supported, motion carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Stephanie L. - Working to have the Oak Routes map to be interactive online with destinations, camping, restaurants, and hospitals.
- Jason A. – Lansing will be announcing Tuesday, November 30 and Wednesday, December 1 the projects that will be funded with MNRTF grants.
- Jeff Edwards mentioned that the MDOT's Metro Region is tasked with creating a regional non-motorized plan that encompasses Macomb, Wayne, Oakland, and St. Clair counties in 2011. It involves overlaying the non-motorized system with road and bridge projects to identify ways to help complete the trail/pathway networks within our region. RFPs will be going out after January 1, 2011, and public input meetings will be held. The Metro Region Non-Motorized Advisory Committee will be utilized as a steering committee for the plan.
- Jeff Edwards stated that the MDOT's Transportation Enhancement Grant program is already focusing on giving applications with complete streets considerations funding priority; they are trying to come up with some way to balance criteria for enhancements. There could be the consequence that less TE funding would be available for trail projects that are not located along roadways.
- Stephanie L. stated that Jon Noyes, OCPR Planning Supervisor, attended the Novi Equestrian Expo this past weekend. He handed out lots of Oak Routes Maps and Equestrian Trails brochures-both were very popular. A lot of people that were from out of state and out of county really enjoyed the maps and any trail opportunities Oakland County offered.
- Stephanie L. was invited to do a podcast by the Oakland County IT department on Oakland County Trails and the OTAC group. Will be out by next month.

The meeting adjourned at 11:11 a.m. motion by Brian Marzolf and supported by Kristen Wiltfang.

Minutes taken by Theresa Lowrance - Administrative Services - Oakland County Parks and Recreation; and edited by Stephanie Loria, OCPRC.