



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

Minutes

February 23, 2011

The meeting was called to order by Kristen Myers, Chair, in the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission Room, at 9:07 a.m.

PRESENT:

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| Brian Marzolf | Auburn Hills Parks and Recreation |
| Sue Julian | Headwaters Trails, Inc. |
| Sharon Greene | Highland Equestrian Conservancy |
| John Crumm | Macomb County Planning and Economic Development |
| Todd Scott | Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance |
| Cory Johnston | MIsource |
| Stephanie Loria | Oakland County Parks and Recreation |
| Bret Rasegan | Oakland County Planning and Economic Development Services |
| Merle Richmond | Oakland Equestrian Coalition |
| Mindy Milos-Dale | Oakland Township Parks |
| Heather Muzzy | Orion Township Safety Path Committee |
| Paul Miller | Paint Creek Trail |
| Kristen Myers | Paint Creek Trail |
| Lois Golden | Polly Ann Trailway Management Council |
| David Evancoe | Road Commission for Oakland County |
| Chris Benedict | Springfield Township |
| Neil Willson | Springfield Township |
| Deanna Magee | City of Wixom |

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of minutes from November 17, 2010 was moved by Bret Rasegan and supported by David Evancoe. The motion passed on voice vote.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

No additions were added.

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ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON

The positions of the Chairperson and Vice-chairperson each serve a 12 month term. Elections will be held at the next OTAC meeting in May for a new vice-chairperson to replace former vice-chair, Dot LaLone.

Recommendation proposed to re-elect Kristen Myers as OTAC chairperson. Motion moved for Kristen Myers to continue to serve as chairperson by Deanna Magee and supported by Brian Marzolf.

CHANGES TO OTAC BYLAWS

Recommendation I

Proposal to change Article II Section 1 *from* '...countywide non-motorized trail network for the citizens of Oakland County' *to* '...countywide non-motorized trail network for Oakland County residents, businesses, and visitors'.

Recommendation II

Proposal for Article III Section 3, move Oakland County Board of Commissioners and Oakland County Business Roundtable *from* voting members *to* non-voting advisory members.

Recommendation III

Proposal of name change *from* DNRE *to* DNR (change will be official March 15, 2011).

Recommendation IV

Proposal to change Article III Section 4, *from* 'Council meetings will be held on the fourth Wednesday of every other month' *to* 'Council meetings will be held quarterly throughout calendar year'.

Motion by Lois Golden, supported by Deanna Magee, to implement these changes to the Bylaws.

TRAIL NETWORK UPDATE

Paint Creek Trail – (Kristen Myers)

The Paint Creek Trail Friends Group has been up and running since July of last year. Their National Trails Day event this year will be a Paint Creek Crawl Cycling Event on Saturday, May 21st. The event will utilize the entire trail from Rochester to Lake Orion and incorporate both business districts. There will be cycling workshops for maintenance and they are hoping to give away a brand new \$600 bicycle. Event entrance fee is \$25 which includes a t-shirt and breakfast.

There will be a Meet and Greet event on March 26th to build membership of the Friends Group and to spread the word of the Paint Creek Crawl Cycling event. A cycling movie will be shown.

Polly Ann Trail – (Lois Golden)

Lois stated that she is assisting the Polly Ann Trailway Management Council (PATMC), which consists of members from various townships, in their selection for a new trail manager. Lois is not a part of the selection team but will assist with advice and scope of work for the trail manager position. Application deadline for position is on February 28th @ 2:00 p.m.; information on position and scope of work is posted at www.pollyanntrailway.org. Lois asked if you would like to recommend someone you know for this position to please contact her.

Due to the Oakland County Corrections Department cutting back on their services, she has recommended that they contract out twice a year for vegetative management/maintenance services on

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the trail. She stated that in the past, the Trail Manager has devoted too much time on maintenance issues when they could put that attention to grant writing and event fundraisers. So far those recommendations seem to be working fine. She is also proposing they utilize their website as a revenue-generating mechanism with ads, and also gain the support from businesses within the district. This would be commission-based, with no fee to be paid by the PATMC.

The Polly Ann Trail is in the process of a updating their Recreation Master Plan. JoAnn Van Tassel from Orion Township is heading up with the sub-committee for this, with assistance from Kristen Wiltfang. Lois suggested using some of the trail events and possibly an online survey to get input from the public on the plan.

Lois also mentioned that Oxford has passed a Complete Streets resolution.

New e-mail address is manager@pollyanntrailway.org. Lois is in the process of creating a new address book for the new Trail Manager, and requested everyone to email their contact information to her.

Clinton River Trail – (Brian Marzolf)

Brian is currently working with Kristen Wiltfang to help Sylvan Lake improve their crossing at Orchard Lake Road. Also, they are considering using a tri-party funding as match for one of the new Recreation Passport grants.

In Pontiac the work continues with the bridge over Telegraph, working on Phases 3 and 4 to connect to Auburn Hills.

On April 29th the City of Auburn Hills they will be holding an Arbor Day Celebration, which is a partnership with Avondale Schools and ITC Transmission. Brian stated together they worked on a vegetation management project with to implement a new landscape design and other improvements for the trail. At the Celebration, they are going to plant 5 new trees and create a new landscape along the trail.

Also this winter they are seeing a lot of cross country skiing and snowmobile tracks on the trail.

West Bloomfield Trail – (Dave Burley)

Report not available from Dave Burley

Headwaters Trail Inc. – (Susan Julian)

Report not available from Susan Julian

I-275 Metro Trail – (Jeff Edwards)

Report not available from Jeff Edwards

Woodward Corridor Trail – Todd Scott)

Updates

Royal Oak is currently still working on their non-motorized plan.

The City of Ferndale has passed a Complete Streets ordinance.

Berkley and Clawson both have Complete Streets resolutions.

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Bike to Work Day will be held on May 20th. There will be multiple Bike to Work Day events. Last year the routes included Grosse Pointe, Dearborn and Royal Oak, all leading downtown to Campus Martius.

Todd said that on May 20th they will be leaving from Royal Oak at the Farmers Market to Campus Martius, which is about 11 miles. Bikers can either ride back or take the SMART bus. Most riders don't start in Royal Oak; they normally pick up riders along the routes by Wayne State or in Ferndale.

Todd is currently working on the light rail project on Woodward from 8 Mile to Downtown Detroit. The goal is to make sure it is a friendly design for people who are riding the train and for people who are riding their bikes on the road with the train.

Todd indicated some people want the light rail to be located along the side of the road, once the tracks are south of Grand Boulevard in Detroit. This would mean bikes would be riding where you have tracks. Todd is advocating that the light rail tracks be placed in the median of the street to avoid conflicts with bike traffic.

Bret Rasegan stated that at the last board meeting for the Woodward Avenue Action Association, a resolution was passed supporting light rail transportation on Woodward Ave.

Lois Golden asked if there is a website for the Bike to Work events; Todd stated that you can find information on events at www.m-bike.org.

Bret indicated that Oakland County Planning and Economic Development applied for and was approved for a TIGER grant from the Federal Highway Administration to do a connectivity plan for Downtown Pontiac. The project will involve evaluating the neighborhoods surrounding The Loop and the Clinton River Trail to see how they can be better connected to the Downtown. Complete Streets principles will also be considered. The County is working on the grant contract agreement with FHWA and hope to have that signed within the next couple of weeks. This will be a 2-year project if all goes well starting in May. A consultant will be hired to work with the County Planning Dept. on this project.

The Michigan Department of Community Health and Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance launched their Complete Streets Institute in January for "Training Trainers". They have developed and now have a standard Complete Streets presentation with five modules on introductory material and more advanced modules on how to engage the community on discussing and implementing Complete Streets.

Lakes Community Trail – (Deanna Magee)

Notice of Abandonment has been filed for the Michigan Airline Trail. Focus is now on the acquiring this corridor, to complete this link in the Great Lake-to-Lake statewide trail. The last MNRTF grant application submitted for land acquisition was turned down, but Deanna says they will re-apply.

Bret Rasegan stated Kristen Wiltfang wanted him to bring the Great Lake-to-Lake Trail Brochure to share. The brochure shows the existing and proposed portions of the Lake-to-Lake trail going across the state and also shows the Amtrak rail line. For ease of travel, people can store their bikes on the train, thus having the option of riding one way via bike and than riding back on the train.

Huron Valley Trail – (Chris Doozan)

Report not available from Chris Doozan

Todd Scott indicated the trail is closing for construction at I-96 and a detour route has been developed.

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OTHER TRAIL NETWORK UPDATES:

(TIGER) Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery Grant -

(Mindy Milos-Dale, Oakland Twp. Parks and Rec.)

Mindy stated that they are converting their un-awarded TIGER II Grant application content from last year into an application for a Transportation Enhancement Grant. The project is to create a south connector between the Polly Ann and Paint Creek Trails. They are also looking at adding fishing access in connection with the pedestrian bridge on Adams Road. The Clinton River Watershed Council indicated preference for that area as a good fishing spot.

Mindy also stated that she attended the MRPA Trail Summit in Traverse City and was really inspired by Nancy's presentation on Complete Streets. She contacted Todd and he will be coming out to do a presentation to the Oakland Township board in April.

Orion Township – (Heather Muzzy)

Heather announced the Growing Green Day Earth Day Expo will be held on April 9, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., at the Kings Court Castle, Olde World Canterbury Village, 2325 Joslyn Road in Orion Township. Cost for vendors to participate is \$25 for the whole day and includes a plated lunch and table for display materials.

The Expo is a green program focused on the green education of the greater Orion area and neighboring communities which features green products, local vendors, career opportunities, environmental programs, services, energy issues & information, greening your home, lawn, garden & wetlands, green lifestyles, energy efficiency & conservation, speakers & presentations, hands-on, green focused activities. The mission and focus of the Expo is toward reaching the high educational standards of creating a green living community. Visit www.orientownship.org for more info.

City of Novi – (Andrew Mutch)

Report not available from Andrew Mutch

Independence Twp. – (Cory Johnston)

Report not available from Cory Johnston

Highland Equestrian Conservancy – (Sharon Greene)

Sharon mentioned the concept for a potential trail connecting Highland and Rose Oaks County Parks [3-4 mile stretch]. Oakland County Parks sent a request to purchase [a 4-acre, ½ mile long parcel adjoining Highland Oaks to the north] from Highland Equestrian Conservancy a few years ago. The HEC granted that request and sold the parcel to Oakland County Parks in 2010. This land can serve as a start for a future connector trail between the two parks.

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PRESENTATION: Springfield Township Pathway Plan – Chris Benedict, Charter Twp. of Springfield – Supervisor’s Office; Neil Willson, Springfield Twp. Planning Commissioner

In addition to Neil’s Planning Commissioner duties, he is also sharing responsibilities with the Springfield Township Pathways Committee, which he helped to establish. In his spare time he is a board member of North Oakland Headwaters Land Conservancy in Springfield.

Neil stated that Springfield has had a Safety Path plan for a number of years. The new Township Supervisor (Mike Trout) has a personal interest in putting this plan into action. A survey of residents completed last year indicated there was an overwhelming response for developing trails and pathways. Residents indicated a willingness to pay for the trails/pathways via a potential future millage. Their Master Plan proposes a connective network of 29 miles of pathway. Their need and plan have been established; now they are just trying to secure funds.

Presentation showed several images of pedestrians trying to walk across/along dangerous streets with no pedestrian infrastructure; including some streets where the speed limit reaches 55 miles per hour. With some of the funding they receive they want to improve the intersections, implement traffic calming, and make the intersections more pedestrian friendly. Also, they would like to put in a ‘Welcome to Springfield Township’ sign.

They would like to start creating a safe crossing at Dixie Highway and Davisburg Road. They received approval from the Township Board to utilize CDBG funds to get a small amount of sidepath placed on the west side of Dixie and Davisburg Roads. Next priority would be to create a pathway connecting to Clarkston, along Holcomb Road. Then connect to Davisburg along Davisburg Road. In their Plan, it was decided it would be best to run the pathway along the north side of Davisburg Road. They really want to make connections between the schools.

As the path enters the Village of Davisburg, the route could require an expensive boardwalk through wetlands between Schultz Park and Mill Pond, with a railroad crossing also.

Chris Benedict stated that in forming a safety path committee, they tried to represent a broad range of stakeholders. They have also identified potential regional partners. They are not sure if Safe-Routes-To-School funding will be available for 2011. Also, a likely upcoming new police millage may take precedence over a potential future trails and pathways millage.

Chris stated for grant application material and general information they put together a benefit-cost analysis. Their model was based on East Carolina University’s physical inactivity quantification tool calculator. Link to calculator and their methodology is located on their website <http://www.ecu.edu/picostcalc/>.

Merle Richmond encouraged Springfield Twp. to consider equestrians in their trail/pathway planning.

It was discussed that MDOT is moving toward funding AASHTO guideline projects; the STP/ TE programs are not likely to fund trails/sidepaths.

Todd Scott indicated it is good that Springfield is trying to improve their intersections. He recommended they do a speed study and implement traffic calming measures, such as road striping for pedestrians/bikes.

Complete Streets policies might be included in future planning. Springfield Twp. does have a zoning ordinance adopted five years ago that requires new development to construct sidewalks.

Possible consolidation of school districts might make them more likely to get funding.

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PRESENTATION: Macomb County Trails Update – John Crumm, Macomb County Planning and Economic Development

This summer the Macomb Orchard Trail will be completed and the entire trail (23.5 miles) will be paved. It's taken 13 years to complete and it should have been finished earlier but they had some engineering mistakes. They will be re-building the bridge over Clinton River in Armada Township this summer; it is essentially three bridges built together, with the oldest section built around 1885.

There is a new gateway sign/structure at Dequindre Road, constructed with local donations.

There is discussion about reversing the mile markers on the trail so that they match up with those on the Clinton River Trail; however, doing so will depend on St. Clair County also agreeing to the change, as it would also affect the numbering of their trail mile markers.

John mentioned that they are in negotiations with ITC regarding access for vegetation management along their trail that adjoins an ITC corridor. No agreement yet – the Macomb Orchard Trail has declined ITC's request to use their trail for veg. mgmt. and directed ITC to access their power line corridor via contact with adjoining homeowners. John mentioned that DTE Energy property parallels parts of the trail, between 31 and 32 Mile Roads, and the County has not had any problems with vegetative management with them; DTE did what they said they would do, clearing/cutting only marked trees.

They've had a few issues with cars being on the northern portions of the trail, but the Sheriff increased patrols to prevent this. They eliminated the bollards from their trails, as they ended up causing more trouble than they were worth. An emergency vehicle was damaged from one of the bollards.

A vehicle accident occurred near the trail at 29 Mile and Old Van Dyke Road. Phragmites along the road obscured the driver's view of the trail, and was a factor attributed to the accident.

They are working on developing the new Romeo Trailside Park along Clinton Street in Romeo. The county leased the approximate two-acre parcel (former DPW storage yard) from the Road Commission for Macomb County for \$1; since that time the Road Commission has become a department of Macomb County, so the site is now county-owned. A Phase I ESA revealed elevated levels of salt in the soil, which has since been remediated. A Transportation Enhancement grant will be used for improving the site for Phase I of the park, with benches, toilets, and parking. They hope to open it this summer or late fall. The Village of Romeo is considering the site for a Farmers Market.

The Metro HCMA to Macomb Orchard Trail is another major link in the proposed 70 mile Regional Trail Loop for Macomb County. They are making the final connections to the "Metro Beach to the Stony Creek Park Trail"; they have about 25 miles left to complete. The trail starts in Harrison Township out on the shoreline, heads west to Clinton Township and then travels through Sterling Heights. A section is already built around Dodge Park. They received an MDNR Trust Fund grant to fill in the portion from Dodge Park to Utica, which will include a new trail, bridge, and ADA compliant kayak livery. There is a box culvert under the bridge over M-59, which will allow for the trail crossing. The trail would then link up to Shelby Township, near Riverbends Park, Mound Road, and 25 Mile Road. The County has a grant for this connection, pending some issues regarding environmental contamination at Riverbends Park.

Kristen Myers asked where to find the Macomb Orchard Trail Maps. John said to just send him an email (John.Crumm@MacombCountyMI.gov) to receive a copy. Trail updates are on the county web page: <http://macombcountymi.gov/index.htm>

Paul Miller asked if the trail will be open to equestrians. John stated that currently horses are not allowed on the trail, but in the future they will create a grass sidepath along the trail for equestrian use.

Todd Scott mentioned that at the Pro-Walk/Pro-Bike Conference last year that someone from Montréal presented automatic counters for bikes, pedestrians, and vehicles. For bikes you bury the device

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underground and it will tell you how many people have passed by. Name of company is eco counters; website <http://www.eco-compteur.com/> .

John Crumm indicated they've tried to get funding for pedestrian counts on the trail. Possibly apply for a grant to do a pilot project where equipment is shared amongst local trail entities?

John also indicated their greatest success with trail funding has been through appropriations, via Senator Carl Levin and Representative Candice Miller.

Paul Miller indicated that a Washington Township lady recently attended a Paint Creek Trailways Commission meeting, asking about invasive species she observed on the Macomb Orchard Trail (Asian Bittersweet). John Crumm indicated he has an interest in contacting the Oakland County Conservation Stewardship Program to have similar invasive species work done by volunteer stewards in Macomb County. Dead Elm and Ash trees are also a problem. Oakland County's Cooperative Weed Management Area (through The Stewardship Network) could be a resource for the Macomb Orchard Trail.

COMMENTS ON DRAFT OTAC 2010 ANNUAL REPORT– (Stephanie Loria)

Stephanie emailed out the draft of the annual report. She stated that this is a document that will live on-line; people can print and share with others. It's a great piece that explains what OTAC does.

Kristen Myers asked who is our target audience? Stephanie stated it will be very useful for your own commissions and anyone interested in OTAC. It gives a snapshot of what others are doing in their trails. It will also be provided to the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission.

At the end of the draft document, Stephanie took excerpts from the Master Plan "gap analysis and next steps". It was indicated that it would be a good reminder for OTAC members to refer to in the Annual Report.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/PUBLIC COMMENTS

Bret mentioned that Kristen Wiltfang sent a get well card on behalf of OTAC to Jennifer Fredrick from Highland Township; Jennifer recently sent a thank you card. Bret also stated that April 1st is the deadline for local governments, county entities, and non-profits to apply for a Brookside Way Minigrant. Bret also mentioned that on March 18th Oakland County and the RCOC are hosting a Context Sensitive Solutions Training Workshop for free. Register on-line.

David Evancoe stated the winners for the TIGER II grants are all at risk because of a deficit in federal funds. Transportation Enhancement funding remains intact for the Safe Routes 2 Schools program. David stated that his other role is with the Oakland County Federal Aid Committee; yesterday they held their annual meeting where they divide up federal funds for road projects four years in advance. There was \$67 million dollars worth of project applications, with only \$17 million available. There will be a lot of worthy road improvement projects that will go unfunded, but they were happy to award what they could.

Todd Scott stated that Mayor Bing of Detroit mentioned embracing bicycles and greenways in his recent State of the City Address.

The meeting adjourned at 10:52 a.m. motion by Lois Golden and supported by Deanna Magee.

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