



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

Minutes

May 25, 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:

Brian Marzolf	Auburn Hills Parks and Recreation
Jenny Frederick	Highland Township
Kristen Bennett	Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Andrew Mutch	City of Novi
Mike Donnellon	Oakland County Parks and Recreation
Stephanie Loria	Oakland County Parks and Recreation
Jake Lloyd	Oakland County Planning & Economic Development
Kristen Wiltfang	Oakland County Planning & Economic Development
Mindy Milos-Dale	Oakland Township
Kristen Myers	Paint Creek Trail
Juliane Bagley	Polly Ann Trail
Jeff Smith	Professional Engineering Associates
Janet Waters	Road Commission for Oakland County
Alan Buckenmeyer	City of Rochester Hills
Dave Burley	West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of minutes from February 23, 2011 was moved by Kristen Bennett and supported by Brian Marzolf. The motion passed on voice vote.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

No additions were added.

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON

The positions of the Chairperson and Vice-chairperson each serve a 12-month term. Election was held for a new vice-chairperson to replace former vice-chair, Dot LaLone.

Motion moved for Brian Marzolf to serve as vice-chairperson by Dave Burley and supported by Kristen Bennett.

TRAIL NETWORK UPDATE

Paint Creek Trail – (Kristen Myers)

Kristen Stated that Paint Creek Trail's National Trails Day event, the "Paint Creek Crawl" was held Saturday May 21st. It was a cycling/fundraising event that ran the length of the entire trail, connecting the two business districts of Rochester and Lake Orion. They welcomed 99 participants; riders stopped at 5 locations along the route to collect different stamps. These were then entered into a drawing to receive a \$500 gift certificate to a bike shop, as well as 35-50 other donated prizes. All participants seemed to have a great time and the event raised about \$1200 for Friends of the Paint Creek Trail. The next event will be the Labor Day bridge walk in September.

Polly Ann Trail – (Juliane Bagley)

Juliane mentioned that the Polly Ann Trail will hold its 13th annual Rural Pearl of a Ride on July 23. She also requested some feedback from the OTAC regarding how trail maintenance is typically handled. For example, is it handled by the municipal DPW, or a contractor? As of now the maintenance for the PAT is falling on Juliane, the PAT Manager.

Kristen Myers stated that for the Paint Creek Trail, each community along the trail handles and is responsible for its own maintenance.

The West Bloomfield Trail has utilized volunteers, school groups, and the WWAM crews (Oakland County Community Corrections Division's program for Weekend and Weekday Alternative for Misdemeanants). They have pulled garlic mustard, cleared vegetation and removed garbage.

The Clinton River Trail has utilized an 'adopt-a-trail' program. Boy Scouts have been utilized to clean up the trail and complete community projects.

Clinton River Trail – (Brian Marzolf)

Brian commented there have been a few changes in staff. Bruce Austin has retired from his position as Superintendent of Rochester Parks Department, and Bill Bollen has taken his place. Bill came to the CRT's last meeting, and seems to have some great ideas.

In Rochester Hills construction is occurring along the trail under M-59, so the trail is being diverted around construction, which seems to be working.

ITC, Avondale High School, Auburn Hills Police Dept. and the City of Auburn Hills worked together on a trail clearing project next to the high school. There were concerns of safety and hidden areas on the trail. The group cleared one side of the trail facing the high school, so there was not much environmental impact. It has really opened up view from the school to the trail, users, the school, and parents are much happier now.

The Arbor Day celebration was held at the trail at Auburn Elementary on April 29. The City of Auburn Hills' Mayor and Superintendent, as well as ITC's Regional Manager Gary Kirsch and the ITC Mascot, worked with 4th graders to understand ITC's "right tree, right place" philosophy. The group of 4th graders from Auburn Elementary had been studying "green" throughout the year.

Kristen Wiltfang reported that in Pontiac both spans are in for bridge over Telegraph, they are now just waiting to pour the concrete decking. They are hopeful that the bridge will be open by June. The bridge is located just north of Orchard Lake Road.

Kristen also reported on two grants that OCPEDS is helping with. At the Orchard Lake Road trail crossing, traffic volumes warrant a pedestrian refuge island. This is a tri-party project involving Oakland County, The Oakland County Road Commission, and Sylvan Lake. Sylvan Lake has applied for a DNR

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Recreation Passport grant and a Connecting Michigan grant from the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance (MTGA). These grants require 1/3 match from the City of Sylvan Lake. The replies should be back from MTGA by July and from the DNR by November.

Kristen Wiltfang indicated the Friends of the CRT is putting on their annual Fall Classic Ride fundraiser again. Also, the "Look and Feel" project is about to wrap up; the CRT hopes to begin implementing the recommended design concepts and trail improvements this fall.

West Bloomfield Trail – (Dave Burley)

Dave reported on their trail extension that was purchased at the end of 2010. The salvage company is nearly finished hauling rails and ties out. When that is finished the trail surface will be graded. Wade Trim will then complete a topographic/wetlands survey and start the design phase of the trail. The extension is around 2 ½ miles long, and will end at Haggerty Road. Their National Trails Day event will be held on June 4. The event will be led by the West Bloomfield Twp. Naturalist and their Walk Michigan event coordinator.

Headwaters Trail Inc. – (Susan Julian)

Report not available from Susan Julian

I-275 Metro Trail – (Jeff Edwards)

Report not available from Jeff Edwards

Andrew Mutch commented that on June 4 the Friends of the I-275 Trail are having a trail Grand Re-Opening Celebration. This group has done a lot of work on the trail from Novi to Canton. The group will celebrate the Cherry Hill rest stop in Canton. Bike tours are available from the Cherry Hill rest stop and other locations along the trail. Canton has trail connection along Rouge River, and will also be holding an event related to this. Andrew will submit more information on the event to Stephanie Loria.

Woodward Corridor Trail – (Todd Scott)

Report not available from Todd Scott

Lakes Community Trail – (Deanna Magee)

Report not available from Deanna Magee.

Kristen Wiltfang reported that the transportation board denied the application for abandonment of the Coe Railroad; the Commerce, Wixom and Walled Lake Trailway Management Council is trying to see what they can do to move forward. There is also a draft version on what to do with the train depot in Wixom. There has always been question as to how to utilize it; they are hoping to come up with plan so that it can remain part of the trail. The council applied for DNR Trust Fund grant (not awarded), and they are unsure if it can be amended. There is one company that still receives freight on the line, but it is west of depot.

Huron Valley Trail – (Chris Doozan)

Report not available from Chris Doozan

OTHER TRAIL NETWORK UPDATES:

Kristen Bennett reported on trail projects for the DNR. There are currently three projects for regional trail connections. First is the design of a trail through the Highland Recreation Area from M-59 south to Ford Road. This would create the north-south connector for trails in the middle-western portion of the county. Construction should begin this fall.

The MDNR is partnering with White Lake Township to explore a trail corridor from Pontiac Lake Road to White Lake Road on Teggerdine through Pontiac Lake State Recreation Area; it is just starting and there is no time line yet.

At Seven Lakes State Recreation Area they are working to make a connection with the Headwaters Trails through the park, from Fish Lake Road to Tinsman Road. The design work has been completed; a construction grant proposal is in place; now they just need the dollar amount to build.

Mike Donnellon reported on Oakland County Parks and Recreation's discussions with Independence Township on collaborating to fill the gap in a pathway connection on Sashabaw Road, from the main Independence Oaks Park to the new Independence Oaks – North acquisition. OCPR Commission approval was received last month to proceed with negotiations to extend that pathway. They are looking at possibly bring the safety path into the park at Independence Oaks-North, instead of going through the wetlands along Sashabaw Road, as an interim step to create a pathway connection. It is just under a mile of pathway connection that the Township would possibly create to connect the parks.

Mindy Milos-Dale, of Oakland Township, attended the SEMCOG Pedestrian Facility Design class on May 24th. She indicated this class on accessible design is offered periodically and is free to SEMCOG members. They have a representative from the U.S. Access Board in Washington, D.C. that teams up with an accessible design expert from Chicago. They offer classes in Detroit, Lansing and Flint every few years to make sure that everyone is up to date on the latest guidelines.

Oakland Township now has adopted a Complete Streets Resolution. Todd Scott did a presentation for their board; it was good timing because they are just starting a revision of the 5-year township master plan, so they can incorporate a lot of these ideas.

Mindy thanked everyone who is trying to help her find an agreement between a government and the road commission that would satisfy MNRTF to allow them to use grant money to build a pathway in a county road right-of-way. She just received an agreement that Road Commission did for The Huron Valley Trail in 1998. She will take that agreement and send to Road Commission to make sure it works, and then send it on to the DNR. As Complete Streets movement grows, someone else will need this information as well. OCPR may have received grant money for paths surrounding Orion Oaks around 1999 or 2000; Stephanie will check into this.

Oakland Township is trying to get grants for pathway connectors between the Polly Ann and Paint Creek Trails. They are also working on a potential Safe Routes to School project to create connections to Baldwin Elementary School; this is the only school in the Rochester school system where 100% of kids are bused because there are no pedestrian connections at all.

Janet Waters of RCOC announced that at the end of June the Road Commission will hold the opening meeting of its newly formed Bike Lanes and Complete Streets Advisory Committee. David Evancoe will be chairing the committee. Janet indicated there is a good mix of stakeholders on the committee; including a Road Commissioner from the Milford area who is interested in bike lanes and complete streets.

Kristen Wiltfang stated that MDOT is going to create an updated non-motorized master plan for the Metro Region. They will be holding some stakeholder meetings; she will pass on the information when they are announced. There is a “Bike the Bridge” event on the Ambassador Bridge on June 12. The cost is \$55 and participants will need a passport or an enhanced driver’s license. A meeting is scheduled for June 9 at Macomb County regarding the “Great Lakes Lake-to-Lake Trail”. The Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance will be sponsoring it; Kristen will pass along more information as she receives it. Kristen also shared a flyer for the I-275 Metro Trail grand opening, as well as a magazine published by the West Michigan Trails and Greenways Coalition.

Mike Donnellon - Springfield Township has a trails plan which was done in-house to connect Independence Township and Clarkston to the Davisburg area. The plan proposed a pathway along Davisburg Road and Holcomb Road; part of the proposed pathway goes through OCPR property (known as Rotary Park in Davisburg). On June 11 OCPR will be installing an 8’ pedestrian bridge with volunteers at Rotary Park. This is a pre-manufactured steel structure that is being built in-house and will be put together, by volunteers, at the location. This will replace the old 4’ wide wooden bridge that was built in the 1970’s and is part of the proposed path connection from Clarkston to Davisburg.

Andrew Mutch– the City of Novi passed their Complete Streets Resolution last year. In their adopted budget for the upcoming year they will be funding the implementation aspect of it. This involves bringing in consultants to revise the design construction standards and adjusting the city’s ordinance to reflect desired ‘complete streets’. Also in the budget is implementing the first phase of their Non-Motorized Master Plan, which includes signage for the neighborhood connectors, and education outreach work in the city. A design study is being done for a crossing from the north and south end of the city through the I-96 corridor. I-96 essentially cuts the city in half and there is no good way to get across. They are looking into using the CSX Railroad to get a connection from one side to the other.

Also, Jeff Edwards and Vince Ranger from MDOT are considering how they can work with the city to make a connection between the I-275 Metro Trail, which ends at Meadowbrook Road and 11 Mile area, and taking it up to the M-5 Trail at 13 Mile. There is no good route, so they discussed the city taking on some type of an on-road or off-road non-motorized pathway. The city already has an 8’ safety path between M-5 and Meadowbrook Road along 13 Mile Road, and along Meadowbrook Road between 12 Mile and 13 Mile Roads. So, the city could complete the connection to M-5 between 11 Mile and 12 Mile on Meadowbrook Road with a pathway.

PRESENTATION: History of the Leonard Mill – Jake Lloyd, Oakland County Planning and Economic Development Services

Jake Lloyd is part of the part-time design staff at OCPDS. He has a background in architecture and a passion to work on environmental planning projects.

Essentially the Village of Leonard asked OCPEDS for help in putting together some promotional graphic material in order to help gain support and bring awareness to historic Grain Elevator (Leonard Mill). Jake shared the end result, a graphic display to be shown in a public forum. It illustrates the process of the acquiring the property and though several phases shows how to preserve and rehabilitate it.

Leonard is hard for people to recognize because it’s not on any of the main roads; it’s isolated in the northeast corner of Addison Twp. Leonard is a typical agricultural community that developed in the late nineteenth century, and tended to decline in the middle of the twentieth century. This was due to

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decreases on agricultural occupations and people moving to the city for industrial work. Seeing this grain elevator as a unique focal feature and destination draw to the area is what the project is about.

The Pontiac, Oxford & Northern Railroad ran from Pontiac to Caseville. After agricultural necessity decreased, it became abandoned; it was then acquired by the city to serve as the Polly Ann Trail. There are 14.2 miles of this rail-trail, and it connects Lake Orion, Oxford, Addison Township and Lapeer County – which contain a significant amount of green infrastructure (natural areas). The trail is used for walking, jogging, equestrians, biking and skiing.

The Leonard Mill grain elevator is adjacent to the Polly Ann Trail, and actually creates the east gateway into town. Originally there was a different horse-powered grain elevator located across the street, but it burned down and the present one was created around 1900. The grain elevator could process one truck load of grain, approximately eight acres worth, in about 45 minutes. Essentially it was a big storage unit. Grain was distributed in a pit in the bottom, and a bucket conveyer system was used to raise it to the top; then sorted it according to what kind of grain it is into different bins.

It was used up until about the 1970's. The material and equipment was auctioned off, and it was used as a feed and supply store for local farmers.

Jake visited the site, took pictures, and tried to determine what portions were original and what was added at a later point. It's a large building, even though it was one of the smaller grain elevators of its time. There were some additions added in 1950's or 1960's for extra storage space. The unique timber frame structure has a type of "cribbing" construction only found in grain elevators. Two-by-four boards were stacked and interlocked in such a way that created a very tight pressure; this kept the building together even when it was full, and kept rodents out of the grain storage.

The building currently is in poor condition. After visiting the site, Jake created a model illustrating four different phases for rehabilitating and re-using the building.

The first phase is acquisition and stabilization, followed by a thorough assessment to determine what can and can't be replaced.

Phase two would be preserving and restoring portions of the building. The grain elevator is probably the most structurally sound portion. Possible site enhancements include planting a row of trees to create a visual buffer along property edge, stabilizing the structure, and creating an outdoor sitting area for picnicking.

Phase three is to rehabilitate and reconstruct the front portion of the roof and get some permanent tenants to fully occupy the space.

Phase four is the possible future use of the space, possibly an interpretive museum, gallery of local history, banquet hall, trail-related service businesses, or a restaurant.

The Village of Leonard is negotiating with the property owner to acquire the building, possibly using money awarded from a MDNR Trust Fund grant.

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PRESENTATION: Boardwalk and Floating Dock Construction – Mike Donnellon – Chief of Park Facilities, Maintenance & Development, Oakland County Parks and Recreation

Mike showed a YouTube video on the construction of the boardwalks at Independence Oaks. OCPR utilized in-house staff for creating the background music, and utilized a partnership with Fox Sports for filming and producing the video.

The video <http://www.youtube.com/destinationoakland#p/u/14/-fuzugxWzEU> explained that the overall goal of the boardwalks is to make sure we can provide quality educational and recreational experiences while still preserving natural areas. OCPR has roughly 2100 acres of wetlands in the park system.

OCPR strives to make all their recreation programs inclusive. Their boardwalks meet and exceed the guidelines of the ADA. They are 8' wide. Railings were not placed on the boardwalk to prevent hindrance of one's view. Instead, bumpers were placed on the sides of the boardwalk surface, which serve as a guide for canes and wheelchairs.

The boardwalk replacements / construction at Independence Oaks were partially funded by the MDNR Trust Fund. There is approximately 1100 feet of boardwalk.

Typical boardwalk construction usually involves the use of heavy equipment that can cause disturbance to soil and sensitive wetland vegetation. While building this boardwalk OCPR takes the equipment to the edge of the previously built section, install the piers, and build the next new section, so the equipment is never in the wetland. Depending on the wetland soils each section will be anywhere from 20' to 80' deep. The boardwalk can support up to 55,000 lbs. of bearing pressure.

Park staff modified the design of a local contractor to reinforce it and make sure it was safe with our equipment. Park auto mechanic Mike Willhite posthumously received an MRPA award for his creation of a cantilever machine to construct the boardwalks. OCPR typically budgets for a contractor to do the work at \$200-\$210 per linear foot, but by doing the work in-house they save around \$30-\$40 per linear foot. Park staff hired a contractor to train them on how to install boardwalks and floating docks.

By eliminating any soil disruption there is also the benefit of keeping invasive species out. Any disruption of the soil can open up the area to any non-native plants. The boardwalk also provides access for park service crews to be able to do herbicide treatments and mapping of the park inventory.

Camp Wilderness (Youth Group Camp) at Independence Oaks has a 222 ft. boardwalk bridge that was installed in 2002. The bridge opened about 300 acres of inaccessible park property, and had to be designed to carry a live load of 12,000 pounds (an EMS vehicle). The bridge was constructed with a 25-ton wheeled crane that had to go across 222 ft. of wetland area. Large timber mats were laid down, and posts were driven 30' into the wetland.

Mike opened the floor to questions:

How is the floating dock anchored to the lake bottom?

Mike answered that every 16 to 20 feet of water they have been putting 40 to 50 feet of pipe in the ground; it doesn't have to bear weight, just has to hold dock in position.

Does the depth and pressure change with season?

No, and it can be installed any time of the year. You do have to be conscious of what season it is installed in due to fluctuation of the water levels (need 12" clearance under dock). OCPR works with the OC Water Resources Commissioner's Office to monitor lake levels in their parks.

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This cantilever system is allowed to operate all year long because there is no heavy equipment going into the wetlands; DEQ permits are therefore not required. Typically the DEQ would prohibit construction between April and July, when animals and plants are emerging and growing.

Who did the engineering and decided what pressure fixes were needed on the helical piers? Who decided on the spacing?

Mike answered that the piers were done by AB Chance, and they have a chart for the torque gauge. Every 500 ft. pounds of torque represents 10,000 lbs. of bearing pressure. The design of the boardwalk was done by Mike Donnellon. Sheppard Engineering was contracted to do the engineering calculations to make sure the design Mike came up with would support a vehicle. The floating dock is not intended to be driven on and only has a 60 lb. live load. Wave height was not a consideration due to the fact the lake (Upper Bushman Lake at Independence Oaks-North) is very small.

What material is the boardwalk made of, and what are long term maintenance expectations?

The material is a treated lumber, and has around a 15 year life cycle. Structural screws were used instead of deck screws because it holds and retracts better for replacing.

How was it budgeted for not knowing the depth?

We know little about the site geology, but in general, the piers averaged a depth of 30 feet, with contingency for any extra depth as needed.

Federal rule regarding Other Power-Driven Mobility Devices on Trails

As of March 15 the Department of Justice is asking everyone who operates trail and park pathways to evaluate them for use by people using "other power-driven mobility devices". The DOJ has provided five assessment factors for park/trail managers to determine what devices will be allowed. The American Trails website has some good examples of policies that some parks groups have drafted or adopted. OCPR is working on a draft policy, and they are leaning towards evaluating use on an individual basis of each user.

Alan Buckenmeyer –

The Federal rule indicates that we must address all vehicles used on the trail, whether they are powered or not. Alan indicated there are a few exceptions when determining if OPDMDs are allowed: safety concerns; trail damage; completely alters use of trail; affects cultural/historical resources of the site. Not a lot of exceptions; the law is ambiguous on purpose. It is up to the park/trail manager to make the distinction within the law of what's not allowed and why.

The City of Rochester Hills has just posted signs on their trails at road intersections that indicate "non-motorized vehicle trail, except for vehicles used by the disabled". Their trails are patrolled by the Oakland County Sheriff's Office; officers need these signs to reference for enforcement. The City is waiting to see which vehicles are being used before making a policy (technology is rapidly evolving on these types of devices); they are also looking to the Paint Creek Trailways Commission for guidance.

A possibility would be to only allow devices, motorized or not, to not exceed 4' wide. Perhaps initiate a size restriction or weight restriction, if it's appropriate. Speed limits are a possibility on certain portions of a trail; however they are very difficult to enforce. Wheelchairs are allowed indoors and outdoors (they should be allowed on all trails that are designed to be accessible); if the vehicle in question cannot be

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used indoors, it can't be considered a wheelchair. Therefore, Segways will likely have to be allowed, as they are allowed both indoors and outdoors. Also consider passenger capacity and means of operation.

Each trail can have different allowed uses and there does not have to be an overriding policy for everything in the county.

California and Illinois have addressed this already in their ordinances; CA State Parks has dealt with this for years. National Parks Service/Forest Service are working on this policy, but they deal with large tracks of wilderness.

It's important to trail enforcement people on what is allowed and why.

The State has a draft policy; Kristen Bennett will get a copy to Stephanie to distribute.

The Paint Creek Trailways Commission has created an ADA Subcommittee to address this; they intend to have a policy by the next OTAC meeting in August. Others are invited to share their policies/thoughts about this as well. This will likely be a topic of discussion at OTAC for some time.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/PUBLIC COMMENTS

April marked the 150th anniversary of the Civil War. Kristen Wiltfang presented the recently completed Civil War map for the county. It includes information on the Underground Railroad as well as officer information. Michigan had quite an influence on the troops sent south. Jake did some renderings of buildings still standing that are significant to the time period, like cemeteries and monuments.

The meeting adjourned at 10:57 a.m. motion by Kristen Wiltfang and supported by Dave Burley.

Minutes taken by Shanna LaBair - Administrative Services-OCPR; edited by Stephanie Loria – OCPR.