

Trails Committee Minutes
July 22, 2009 – 3:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman Veitch; Supervisors Wright, and Richardson; Devin Dalpos, Saratoga Springs; Larry Gordon, Gansevoort; Troy Hilts, Planning; George Hodgson, Environmental Services; Julie Stokes, Saratoga PLAN; Joe Ritchey, Public Works; Press.

Chairman Veitch called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

On a motion made by Mr. Wright, seconded by Mr. Richardson the minutes of the May 13, 2009 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mrs. Stokes said she and Mr. Kemper, along with Saratoga PLAN, have been holding a countywide trails meeting every month. Attendance at the meetings has been approximately 20 to 25 and the e-mail list is growing with people who are requesting copies of the meeting minutes.

Mrs. Stokes said when the county adopted the green infrastructure plan; a layout of where all the trails would be located was established. One of the issues is, how does the Board of Supervisors, along with the County staff, ensure that everyone knows what is going on, i.e. Town and County relationship.

Mr. Veitch said every community in the county has some idea of what trails they would like to build in their community. The county is the clearinghouse for county projects, he said.

Mr. Hilts said he has been asked to put together a trail database, which has been difficult as a lot of the assets are not archived or recorded properly. The county sees itself moving forward as a data repository for the local communities. It would begin at a local level, to a county level and eventually to a state level.

Mr. Hilts said he sent a letter out on June 1st to all towns, requesting any information they might have on any or all parks or trails in their town. Thus far, two towns have responded. The challenge will be to put all the information in a useable GIS format. The county currently does not have the server to hold all the information that the county would take care of, i.e. DOT, Sewer infrastructure, water infrastructure and anything that can be inventoried and spotted geographically. Once the county has the server and the data that has been requested, it will be put together, and through a host you will be able to access the information via the web.

Mr. Hilts said currently his office is working on a number of grants for archiving, servers, and the MS-4 program. As soon as information is obtained, work will begin to write grants to obtain money for all the trail connections.

Mr. Veitch said the committee should talk about the county as a clearinghouse, where they could work on behalf of some of the towns, at the town's request, for certain types of grant money. If we have this huge trail program that we want to establish with the green infrastructure program, we are going to need everyone's help to get it done.

Mrs. Stokes said the county has put the trails into economic development, which is a really good place for it. There is a lot of evidence that a good trail system brings about both business development and recreational development. Every year the Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce receives a number of requests for trail maps. That kind of initiative is the whole quality of life what attracts companies like AMD and keeps them here.

Mr. Gordon said from the Saratoga Battlefield north to Schuylerville, up through the Town of Saratoga, the Old Erie Canal is almost exclusively owned by the Village of Schuylerville. There are a lot of unknowns dating back to the 60's that have fallen in place, but there are a lot that haven't. In the town of Wilton when they have a conservation subdivision they immediately go to the trails map and have discussions about whether they can have a negotiated taking and transfer. Whether it is actually built, or going to be built by policy or just an idea at the time, it is a good thing to have all this in place.

Mr. Richardson asked if all the maps and information about the proposed trails could be put in a more consolidated format that would be easier to understand where each trail is located in the county.

Mrs. Stokes said, the next piece is to tie the county DPW into the trails. The NYS DOT has now done that. We have gotten all of these maps to NYS DOT and they have it built into their planning department. It is important to make that jump at the County, she said.

Mr. Veitch said an example of that is in the City of Saratoga Springs, where a scheduled bridge project was worked out with a neighborhood association and the City. The project was to make sure that the Geysers Road Trail that has been in the planning stages for many years, had pedestrian access for the piece going over the railroad tracks.

Mr. Hilts said the State is currently soliciting grant applicants. Grants are now available for shovel ready projects. like the one between the town of Wilton and the County, where the Department of Transportation and the City of Saratoga Springs would like to build on the waterfront with a Water Revitalization Grant. The Department of State is asking everyone to come and get the money. It is critical this year to really get on board to apply for multiple grants and have multiple entities.

Mr. Gordon said, ten years ago the Town of Wilton established a plan of improved bikeways that were part of the town highway system. Whether you are talking town or county, both entities deal with traditional right of way, most of which are not surveyed.

Mr. Veitch said the Grand Opening of the Loudon Trail will take place on July 31st at 4:00 p.m. at the Wilton Mall Parking Lot.

Mr. Hodgson said that BOCES is involved with a couple of county reforestation areas in the towns of Wilton and Northumberland. Mr. Flynn from BOCES, mentioned that the BOCES conservation students would be interested, if maintenance was required on the Loudon Trail, in helping with the long-term maintenance of the trail.

Mr. Veitch said he was happy to hear that, as there will definitely be maintenance help needed for some trails.

Mr. Veitch said that Saratoga PLAN is going to sponsor a Zim Smith Ride. He said he would like to see the County establish a promotion plan for the Zim Smith Trail, i.e. monthly rides on the trail sponsored by the Trails Committee.

Mrs. Stokes said the Board of Supervisors should get some recognition for Zim Smith Trail, as it is an extraordinary inter-municipal trail system.

Mr. Veitch thanked Mr. Ritchey and his crew for their work on the Wilton Trail.

Mr. Gordon said incorporated in the middle of the Wilton Wildlife Preserve and Park, there are numerous trails upon private lands, nature conservancy lands, county lands, state lands as well as the old Scout Camp, on Scout Road. In the Wilton town plan there is an eight-mile trail system that already exists to Gavin Park and Dorothy Nolan School. The town trail system is complete to Edes Road.

Mr. Veitch said he was in favor of building a trail that would span two different towns. Discussion took place on potential trails on Ruggles Road in Wilton and Gailor Lane in Northumberland.

Mr. Richardson suggested that establishing county trails map would help promote tourism to the area.

Mrs. Stokes said the Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce has expressed an interest in working with Saratoga County on a county trails map.

On a motion made by Mr. Richardson, seconded by Mr. Wright the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom