

Trails Committee Minutes
September 28, 2011 – 3:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Kinowski; Supervisors Veitch, Wright, Wormuth, Richardson, and Wood; Larry Gordon, Gansevoort; Julie Stokes, Chris Ferraro, Saratoga PLAN; Jason Kemper, Planning Director; Steve Dorsey, County Attorney; Press.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Richardson, seconded by Mr. Veitch the minutes of the June 28, 2011 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mr. Kemper said that approximately two months ago he did a presentation on the extension of the Zim Smith Trail down to Mechanicville. He said his office is still awaiting confirmation of a transfer of \$250,000 from Saratoga PLAN to Saratoga County in order to acquire the right of way.

Mr. Richardson said he would contact Assemblyman Reilly's office, and try to help move that along.

Mr. Kinowski said the Planning Department has been doing a great deal of work to get the County Trails on the web. Mr. Kemper said everything has been forwarded to the GIS vendor to be put on the county map viewer, which will include all the county trails.

Mr. Kinowski gave an update on the Spruce Mountain project, stating that there is still equipment that needs to be removed. The contract is in progress, and at some point all the equipment will be taken off the tower. At that point it will be forwarded to the Law and Finance Committee for their consideration.

Mr. Kinowski said after speaking with Mr. Kemper with regard to completing the National Registry for the Smith Trail, it is expected that the form will be completed next Friday.

Mr. Kemper said Planning has just entered into a contract with foresters for the County Forest Management Plan. As soon as recommendations come out on what parcels to cut, Providence will probably be one of the first to be looked at. With all the GPS locations done it will be very easy to make the connections.

Mrs. Stokes said that Saratoga PLAN owns well over 700 acres in the Town of Providence, with one of the parcels consisting of approximately 650 acres. She said several weeks ago Saratoga PLAN opened up approximately 1 ¾ miles of trail with nearly 20 volunteers ready to groom trails.

Mr. Kinowski said this initiative was one of six that came out of attending the meetings that Saratoga PLAN put together at the County Planning office. Together with the Planning office and all the trail committee members that meet with Saratoga PLAN it helps to bring ideas to this committee.

Mr. Kemper said logging is a little over halfway done in the town of Moreau and should be completed in the fall. Mrs. Stokes said the exciting thing is that this is next to Moreau State Park and the park manager there is very interested in opening an equine trail system. We can connect the State Park with county forestland and the county land has enough area to park horse trailers being able to develop well over 20 to 30 miles of trail system for horses.

Mr. Kinowski asked how trails systems that are established by individual towns are integrated into the county trail system? Mr. Kemper said there are towns that request the assistance of the Planning Department and some have the staff to do it. Mr. Kemper said if he knows of a smaller municipality struggling Planning will step in and do whatever they can to help. Mr. Kinowski suggested distributing a letter to all Supervisors stating that if they are looking for grants or if they are pursuing trail initiatives that they should forward information on to the Planning Department. Mr. Kinowski said there is a trail book available now with all the maps and soon a website will be available. Mr. Kemper said he would draft a memo to be given to Mr. Kinowski for all Supervisors including recent additions and stating that the Planning Department is there for assistance.

Mr. Kinowski said he was going to suspend action with regard to the Zim Smith Trail Northern Connection until 2012. Mrs. Stokes gave an update stating that the Department of Transportation has reached out to CP Rail and Saratoga PLAN has a meeting scheduled with them on October 5th in Schenectady.

Mr. Kinowski introduced Chris Ferraro, an intern with Saratoga PLAN who gave a brief powerpoint presentation on the Saratoga County Trail GIS and Google Earth overlay.

Mrs. Stokes said 202 county trails and 124 miles of snowmobile trails have been put on GPS. She said Saratoga PLAN will be putting a link on their website, both the Saratoga County Chamber and the Southern Saratoga County Chamber are going to load directly. The County Planning Department has agreed to do the updates, so there will be links between all the websites.

Mr. Kemper said there was a parcel that came up on the County Auction Block in the Town of Wilton. Supervisor A. Johnson requested that it be pulled from the County Auction for acquisition by Saratoga County.

Mr. Gordon said the parcel was logged thirty years ago and it has been logged all the way around it, both on the Green Property and the Belmonte Property with a good stand of timber on it, giving it a real value beyond the property tax value.

Mr. Dorsey said the county foreclosed on the property for non-payment of taxes and took possession of the property in November. The property was supposed to be on the County Auction and at that time Supervisor A. Johnson pulled it at the request of the property owners, in order to give them additional time to pay the taxes. Then Supervisor A. Johnson pulled it from the September Auction about a month before the auction in order to give the Trails Committee an opportunity to look at the parcel to see whether they wish to keep it in county ownership. Approximately two or three days later a tender offer was made.

Mrs. Wormuth said she would like to understand what conversations took place between Mr. Johnson and the property owners who made the tender offer before making any decisions. Mr. Wright agreed.

Mr. Kinowski said he would speak with Mr. Johnson on behalf of the committee, expressing the concerns of the Trails Committee; stating, that it would fit into plans and would be advantageous for the county to own it, but they don't want to do it at the expense of taking something from the property owner.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom