

Trails Committee Minutes
October 12, 2017 – 3:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Richardson; Committee members Preston Allen, Devin Dal Pos, Jason Kemper, Matt Veitch and Tom Wood; Tom Speziale, Public Works.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Veitch, seconded by Mr. Wood the minutes of the December 14, 2016 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mr. Kemper gave a brief update on the following:

County Forestry Program

Providence Parking Lot

Mr. Kemper said that there is a County forestland parcel in Providence that joins up to a large parcel owned by Saratoga Plan. Through Saratoga Plan Trails Committee, Saratoga County DPW created a parking lot. This lot is used a lot by horse owners as now there is an area where they can turn their trailers. During construction they found a stone marker, Old Homestead 1860-1916, there was also an old foundation and two wells. Mr. Kemper said that he worked with County Historian Lauren Roberts and found the house that was there. If there are funds remaining in the trails account at the end of the year, they will install some interpretative signage. Mr. Kemper thanked the Department of Public Works for their work on the lot.

Loudon Road Target Shooting

Mr. Kemper said that a public hearing has been set for a proposed local law to prohibit target shooting on the Loudon Road County parcel. There are no restrictions during hunting season. Mr. Kemper said that they have been monitoring the area and target shooting has decreased. Mr. Kemper said that they are having similar issues with an area on Pettis Road. Mr. Veitch said that they are on the right track prohibiting target shooting at Loudon Road and said that he would have gone a step further and prohibited target shooting on all County property. Mr. Kemper said that if the Board was in favor, they could start a discussion with DEC and the Town of Milton to develop an area specifically for target shooting. Mr. Kemper said that some local gun retailers were sending people to the Loudon Road parcel. Mr. Kemper said that the Sheriff has already spoken to some of the retailers to inform them to stop.

Zim Smith Trail

Town of Halfmoon – Pocket Park

Mr. Kemper said that they are working very closely with the Town of Halfmoon proposing a pocket park at Coons Crossing where Zim Smith Trail crosses. There will be two bathrooms, small storage shed for Public Works. The Town of Halfmoon has agreed to take over full maintenance of the park. This project will be done in conjunction with a water booster station needed by the Town.

Mr. Richardson noted that at the end of the Zim Smith Trail in the City of Mechanicville, there is a new building on the waterfront with bathrooms and showers. Mr. Kemper said that they can work with the City on signage to the facilities.

Mechanicville School District

Mr. Kemper said that they are working with the School District and will have a joint parking lot which can be used for busses and pedestrians. There was a public school district vote approved this spring and they have reached an agreement on acreage.

Pan Am/CP Rail/DOT Hearing

Mr. Kemper said that the County set aside approximately \$80K of a \$300K project in the Zim Smith capital account. By the county contributing, the project has been moved up in the timeline. There will be a crossing for cars, and a button with arm and crossing area for pedestrians.

Property Acquisitions

Mr. Kemper said that this week all of the Right of Way acquisition maps were approved. First and second meetings have been held with landowners and they are working out appraisals and agreements. Mr. Kemper said that they should be moving forward within the next month or so. Board approval was already received for the acquisitions and Mr. Kemper will just need to update the Economic Development Committee with amounts.

Funding (State, Federal, Local)

Mr. Kemper said that there was \$500K from a State Grant from Parks, over \$4M from CDTC and all of the matches are already existing in the Zim Smith Capital Account. If funds are remaining, they can look at a feasibility study in Mechanicville or ultimately up to Saratoga Spa State Park. Design is 98% completed. All federal and state approvals have been received. Mr. Kemper said that they would like to get approval from the board early in 2018 so that they can begin clearing in the spring.

Mr. Richardson commended Mr. Kemper on a job well done. Mr. Kemper thanked the Department of Public Works on all of the work they have done on the projects.

CDTC Trail Study

Mr. Richardson distributed a handout from the CDTC entitled Regional Trail Perspectives – A survey of Capital District Trail Facilities. The CDTC performed surveys on the trails in the area and the results estimate that over 100K people use the Zim Smith Trail annually. Some of the key findings were that there are an estimated 1.6B trail visits in the Capital District annually, the Zim Smith Trail was named as one of the primary trails in the Capital District, and the highest percent of trail visits occur in August.

Mr. Richardson also highlighted additional information.

Trail users came from 93 different zip codes and about 61% of those zip codes were within the capital region. Trail users are more educated and higher income earners than the average Capital Region resident. The biggest problem identified on the trails is the lack of services, such as restrooms. Trails in the capital region attract tourists from all over the globe, as far away as Ireland, San Diego, CA. Local trail users mostly spent money at restaurants and bars on grocery

and take-out food while visiting the trail. Over half of the property owners felt having the trail adjacent to their property improved their physical activity level and quality of life in their neighborhood.

Mr. Richardson also reported that CDTC has a plan through the year 2030 to continue to look at trails and what opportunities trails provide for communities.

Establishment of Bike Routes on County Roads

Mr. Veitch said that he has had a few inquiries from constituents regarding how to make some of the County roads more bicycle and pedestrian friendly. One of the ideas was to establish some of the County Roads as bike routes, for example Lake Desolation Road. If roads were designated as official bike routes, traffic would know that they are bike routes and to expect to see cyclists on it. If the County was to pursue this, it was noted that some of the shoulders are a little too narrow. Mr. Allen said that he did bring the issue of widening shoulders to the long range capital committee recently. Mr. Veitch said that he uses a cycling app that can determine which roads are being used often by bike riders. Mr. Veitch gave the name of two cycling apps to Mr. Speziale to try to get data to determine which roads would be best to use as a designated bike route. Mr. Speziale said that they would need to do some homework on the proposal, they would be concerned about liability, conformance on what they can call a bike route, areas that may have bottlenecks due to utility poles decreasing the size of the shoulder, and also the cost. Mr. Veitch said that he would like to explore the initiative and see if it is something they can bring back to the board at a later date.

County Trails Grant Program

Mr. Kemper said that they currently have approximately \$44K in the trails reserve account. Mr. Kemper said that the 2016 grants are being wrapped up, there are two outstanding grants from 2015, one in the Town of Clifton Park and one in the City of Saratoga Springs.

Mr. Veitch said that they may need to revise the grant for the City of Saratoga Springs and he will speak to the Mayor about it.

Mr. Richardson said that there has been a lot of people working on the Champlain Canalway System, several sections have been completed. Mr. Richardson said that Andy Beers from the Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation announced recently that the State will be providing approximately \$12M in funding to help with a lot of the connections between Waterford and Whitehall. The entire trail from New York City to Canada will be called the Empire State Trail however the signage for local trails will remain the same. Mr. Kemper said that the Governor's office has reached out to him and they may be looking at the County to aid in getting pass through funding to the different municipalities

On a motion made by Mr. Veitch, seconded by Mr. Allen the meeting was adjourned unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Therese Connolly
Deputy Clerk of the Board