

St. Lawrence County Recreational Trails Advisory Board Meeting  
St. Lawrence Co. Public Safety Building

DRAFT Minutes for March 15, 2011

Present: Kermit Blanchard, Warren Irwin, Art Wilson, Danny Collins, David Irish, Scott Sutherland, Alex MacKinnon, Judy Wendt, Roger Bennett, Walt Paul, Bill Swafford, Tony Arquiett, Tom Ortmeyer, Stan Hewlett, Mark Martin, Eric Backlund, David Butler, Bill Dashnaw, Debbie Christy

Guests: Pat Whalen, Mary Long, Edward Long, Edwin Francis, Charles Schloer, Schyler Shea, and Hugh Horton.

Excused: Spencer Thew, Bill Lutz, and Dawn Howard

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Roger Bennett.

Quorum present.

Motion to approve the Minutes was made by Judy Wendt and seconded by Art Wilson. All were in favor.

Reports of the Committees:

Board of Legislators – Tony Arquiett.

1. Tony Arquiett thanked everybody for lobbying the Transportation Committee concerning the weight limit restrictions on the UTVs.
2. Mr. Arquiett spoke about the easement on the gas line. He said that a lot of the land is owned by individuals. A list is needed of the landowners and they will need to be contacted. Judy Wendt said that they should keep an eye on the future. There are a lot of power lines and highway extensions that may allow recreational use in their easements if contacted in the beginning.
3. Thanked everybody that attended the Economic Enhancement meeting. He spoke about the lack of ability to utilize trails and the harassment going on.
4. He thanked Alex MacKinnon for sponsoring the Trail Coordinator position to the Finance Committee.
5. He has spoken to Senator Ritchie about the numerous tickets and harassment that is occurring. The DEC Region 6 Director Judy Drabicki thinks a meeting is necessary. It has been decided that they will not invite public comment. It should be decided concerning the members of the Board that should attend. He will tell Ms. Drabicki when the date is. It has been suggested that it could be at the Ranger School and Sheriff Wells has said that it could be held at the jail. It will be the Board's decision where and when it should be held. The Enforcement Committee members are Erik Backlund, David Butler, William Lutz, Walter Paul, and Judy Wendt. The Jail would be centrally located and most of the law enforcement would be in that area.

Mr. Arquiatt said that they should have specific statements from people that have been harassed and they need to be real circumstances. Roger Bennett said that the law enforcement could be sent letters specifying the items that we want answers to so they can be prepared. The Supervisor of the Town of Fine is trying to resolve some of the issues and Judge Burns from Brasher Falls should also be involved. We need to have key players there. Hank Ford and Pat McKeown are making calls and contacting people. Mr. Arquiatt said the media came to him and he felt obligated to respond to their questions.

6. Mr. Arquiatt said they will move forward opening any ATV trails across the County aggressively.

7. David Irish asked where the situation was now for the UTVs. Mr. Arquiatt said it has to go through the Assembly. He doesn't feel there is any problem with the Senate. The APA is lobbying some in the Assembly. Once the Assembly passes it, it will become a law.

8. Judy Wendt said the letter at the Economic Enhancement meeting was written by Schyler Shea. Walt Paul said he doesn't feel the people are opposed to enforcement. There are a lot of older people that ride. There have been complaints about the extensive checks. They should look at the bigger picture in the County. The Town Supervisor in Tupper Lake complained last year about excessive coverage by law enforcement. Some people are concerned about fishing on the St. Lawrence because of it. They need to look at the tourism aspect. They need to look at the assessment of how much law enforcement there was before 911 and how many now with the DEC, Sheriff's Department, the Rangers, and the State Police. They could compare to the FBI crime report. People will stay closer to home to avoid them. Mr. Arquiatt told Pat McKeown that people from Pennsylvania got pulled over three times. The figures need to be checked as to what the costs are to the agencies to patrol.

Judy Wendt said a proposal is being worked on to say that any Canadian that comes by boat or air will need to pay \$5.50 each time for an inspection fee. Roger Bennett said they are going to collect if they have to go through Customs. Alex MacKinnon said they haven't hired any State Police in two years. Pat Whalen said that the DEC is not hiring and they have lost 5 people. The Border Patrol is a Federal agency and it is felt they are in the area due to smuggling and other problems. There are 111,000 people in the County and Walt Paul said that law enforcement has to produce. The population in St. Lawrence Co. has gone down. They are picking the pockets of the poor people and businesses in the County.

9. Debbie Christy said there was a Police Lieutenant that was up for a meeting of the Parks and Recreation. He showed the St. Lawrence Co. Snowmobile Association what law enforcement was looking for. The Association wasn't told in advance what should have been done about the stickers, etc. The 2008 money for DWI was asked to be used for the trail system. Around 2008, the duties were also changed. Pat Whalen said that the Rangers who were peace officers now became police officers. The Conservation officers became private land Rangers. The DEC owns recreational rights on state land. The DEC has given out no more than 10 tickets this year and the Forest Rangers have given out the majority of them. Tony Arquiatt said that they said it is now toward the end of the snowmobile season and they wanted to wait on meeting. However, it is felt it is better to resolve it now and then the agreement will be in place.

Debbie Christy said that the plastic shows registration or inspection and people are being pulled over to check for sobriety. The officers feel that they are not doing their full duty just checking for registrations and inspections and feel they need to check everything. People are

not required to have a drivers' license but the Parks and Recreation Law says they need to be registered and inspected. Pat Whalen said you really need to know all the details as there may be more to it. Danny Collins said that from the Windfall to Cranberry Lake there were six of them and they were sitting on the blacktop harassing people. Debbie Christy said that last year they had a DWI on the trail and they needed help from other people to get everything out.

#### Executive – Roger Bennett

1. There is an application from Hank Ford that was sent to the Legislators and then forwarded to the Advisory Board. Judy Wendt informed the members about Mr. Ford's history and personality. After further discussion among the members, Kermit Blanchard made a motion to accept the application, seconded by Debbie Christy. All were in favor.
2. There was a letter written by Bill Dashnaw and Walt Paul that was sent by the Advisory Board to Judy Drabicki. They sent her the complete plans for the Main Corridor and information asking for access to the state owned lands. Her reply was that the information had to be forwarded onto Albany. Pat Whalen said that the Grasse River UMP is already being worked on and it won't affect this.

#### Board of Legislators – Alex MacKinnon and Scott Sutherland

1. Alex MacKinnon said that the presentation for the Trail Coordinator would have to be done on April 18 at the Services Committee. He has gotten some negative replies because of the cost so he doesn't expect it to be unanimous. He was wondering if Bob Diehl was coming up. Another question will be how do you know it will generate \$100,000 to support this position. Once it is approved, there will be a St. Lawrence Co. Procurement Policy. It will probably not be a County position and feels it should be an outside agency. The Chamber of Commerce may be the best place. The Legislature will discuss the contract with the other agency to be sure that the money is spent as needed with the proper criteria, guidelines, and evaluation to be followed. It will be done as the IDA was done last year. Mr. MacKinnon is hoping that a person can be on board by early summer. Pat McKeown will be coming to the Advisory Board meeting on April 19<sup>th</sup>. Other people will be saying that their request is just as important as the Trail Coordinator position. The \$100,000 resolution passed and the account was created. There is money in the budget to do it.
2. Judy Wendt asked what is being done to resolve the Gaming Compact issue. Alex MacKinnon said that it is out of their hands and that money cannot be relied upon. The money for the Trail Coordinator will come out of the General Fund.
3. Scott Sutherland said that he would help Alex. He plans to follow Mr. MacKinnon's advice and get Tony Arquiett on board. This will be the first step for St. Lawrence Co. in taking the taxpayer dollars and creating something. Debbie Christy said they are trying to help businesses to keep them going.
4. Scott Sutherland said that he worked in law enforcement for many years and would be willing to talk to anybody about their concerns. He said that he has always tried to get them to work with the people. Bill Dashnaw said that he felt it would be appropriate during the presentation to have the business community there. Mr. Dashnaw said that they will not get their \$100,000 back the first year. As it develops, there will be more than that eventually and they need the support of the business community.

## Oversight Committee

1. Tom Ortmeyer said they followed up with the IDA last month. It was felt that it was strictly a snowmobile issue. Debbie Christy said that the Snowmobile Association approached the IDA directly at the start. Judy Wendt then lobbied for year round use. The IDA voted to allow snowmobile access on the Newton Falls railroad. Debbie said their insurance carrier and their attorney need to finalize the arrangements.

2. Bill Dashnaw said that he would follow up with Judy Drabicki. He said that he met with landowners on the easement lands to lay out the trail as they know it now as wanted to know any issues that they would have to deal with now. He asked them to have them count the number of gates that would be needed. There are changes on the Granshue land and they prefer that they avoid the trail by the lodge as it may have a negative impact on the members. Alternate trails were suggested which satisfied minimizing the impact to the area for logging. They were satisfied with a couple of the areas there but will avoid  $\frac{3}{4}$  of that property. Bill Dashnaw said they need to look at waterways and bridges. They recommended the trail off the Tooley Pond area without being on State Forest. He left them maps and will identify other things on there. Pat Whalen looked at the trail and identified the path of least resistance to avoid UMPs or recreational problems. Most of the landowners were alright with the proposal and feels that everybody is going to be alright with the alternate route. Pat Whalen said that he is working with the landowners and his boss.

3. Bill Dashnaw said he needs to find out where the Greenwood Forest is. He talked to the IDA concerning Newton Falls to the town line. When the contract is up, the land goes back to the landowners. We need to cross the State Forest for 200 to 300 yards. He offered to fence it in order to keep people on the road.

4. Bill Dashnaw said that they are closing in on the deadline. He has a list of equipment. Several parcels need to be purchased and they may have to buy some easements. He said that he would try to negotiate those deals if the Advisory Board wanted them to.

5. Mr. Dashnaw said they need to be certain where they can cross and where they can't. He expects that a segment of that trail will be open this summer. Everything can't be completed with the funds and manpower available and wants to do the segments that make sense. On the easements, they have trail standards and we need to build according to their standards. Kermit Blanchard wondered if BOCES could build the gates. Bill Dashnaw said that he knows a local man that could build the gates for \$650.00 each 32' and capable of using double locks.

## SEQR

1. Bill Dashnaw said they are trying to find out from the DEC the areas they definitely can't have. They have been through the whole trail and are almost ready to go. They need to be careful how it is written and take out all the red flags that they can. Judy Wendt said the trouble that Lewis Co. had with segmenting was that they asked for trails in different areas that they would eventually be getting to. She doesn't believe that they will have that problem here.

2. Bill Dashnaw said they need to clear up three areas as he can see red flags in those areas. He needs to talk to the group and the attorneys. Walt Paul said that Hugh Horton is at this meeting tonight if Mr. Dashnaw would like to talk to him about the Little John Road.

3. Judy Wendt said they have had three meetings with Pierrepont. They would like to get access from the Pilot Trail to Hannawa Falls. They also went to the meeting of the Pierrepont Town Board and had another meeting afterwards. They would like to add a staging area in Hannawa Falls that would benefit the businesses. This will be referred to the Trail Oversight Committee and will pick a date to meet with them in about two weeks.

4. Bill Dashnaw said they plan to take the map on the road to the impacted towns starting next month.

### Finance and Insurance

1. Dawn Howard has contacted Lewis Co. concerning insurance and they haven't heard back yet. Bill Dashnaw said that he is struggling with Workers' Comp and is trying to figure a different way than using Comp. Judy Wendt said that she worries that trail users going on unmaintained trails would be a much greater risk and Mr. Dashnaw disagreed. He said that we couldn't afford Workers Comp. When people participate in an adopt-a-highway program on his roads, he has that group provide insurance. David Butler said there is an adopt a natural resources program. Debbie Christy said that the St. Lawrence Co. Snowmobile Association has a Workers' Comp policy and they don't need a list of names. She will bring their policy to next months' meeting. The County Attorney thinks they would have to have a Workers' Comp policy. Debbie Christy said she felt they could umbrella under the St. Lawrence Co. Snowmobile policy.

### Grant Search Committee

1. Judy Wendt said that the St. Lawrence River Development Association could pay part of the Trail Coordinator costs. There is an Off Highway Vehicle list that lists the extra resources that tells what it generally covers.

### Unfinished Business

1. Roger Bennett asked for a vote on the revised by-laws. A motion was made by Bill Swafford and seconded by Debbie Christy to adopt those by-laws. All were in favor.

2. Judy Wendt gave a report on the Economic Enhancement Advisory Board meeting. She said they were very supportive as they talked about the enforcement impact and economic impact with the pending legislation. They spoke about the UTV situation and would like to see the wording changed on the law. They promised support for the Trail Coordinator. Tony Arquiatt and Sam Burns were there. They had a concern that the Advisory Board was not updating the Legislature on what they do. It was felt that we should get the public up to date on what we do and give a regular report every few months. Alex MacKinnon said there are a lot of new people and felt an update could be given on April 18 at the meeting or send a flyer prior to the meeting.

3. Roger Bennett said that they were working on a list of equipment needs. Judy Wendt said that a couple decibel readers would be helpful. They would cost \$200.00 tops. Walt Paul said speed zone indicators in the right spots would be helpful. Debbie Christy said that counters could be bought as the DOT has been doing an audit with the Comptroller's Office and they asked for a count. Judy Wendt said that kiosk material could also be bought. Bill Dashnaw said they would take everybody's input and finalize the list and get it approved. He said they need approval for reimbursement in the grant. Roger Bennett said that they could contact him

or Bill Dashnaw with any concerns. Bill Dashnaw said they are beginning to write the specs for individual pieces.

Judy asked where the equipment would be housed and the process that they would have to go through to use the equipment on the trails. Bill Dashnaw said that should be up to the Trail Coordinator. Mr. Dashnaw said that people would need a CDL license if it were up to him. Debbie Christy said there has to be guidelines. If there is damage, who pays for the damage? She asked if they planned to use all the money that is left on equipment or use it for other purposes. Bill Dashnaw said that it would be used for equipment, easements, and property. Any expenditure of the money has to come to the committee first. He feels the equipment would cost about \$200,000 and they have a total of \$500,000. The grant ends in early 2012. Mr. Dashnaw said that he doesn't have the authority to say who maintains it. If it is maintained by the County, there are rules such as people having to sign it out and they have to have training. Debbie Christy asked how they would be insuring the equipment. Mr. Dashnaw said it depends on the Board. Debbie Christy said that it is a multi use trail. The grant was done mainly toward ATVs. It is for all trails and all interests. If the equipment belongs to St. Lawrence Co., it cannot be used on private property.

4. Debbie Christy said the businesses need to speak up. She has been getting them to write letters for the Trail Coordinator position and other concerns. She has put petitions in the businesses. Art Wilson said it would be a good idea to have Bob Diehl come to the meeting. The business people could attend the meeting.

### New Business

1. Roger Bennett said that John Manson is back on the IDA committee.

2. Judy Wendt said they have done posters asking for landowner cooperation. There were landowners that were interested at the Pierrepont Town Hall. Walt Paul made a motion to put the posters up, seconded by Art Wilson. All were in favor.

3. Judy Wendt said she checked the highway laws because of the road closures. She said the DEC has the right to close the road under a special process.

4. Walt Paul said there has been work done on the Goldmine Trail and the Picketville Road. It is a beautiful area to ride.

5. We need St. Lawrence Co. landowners that are willing to allow legal and insured multi-use trails to pass through their land. Walt Paul said that he e-mailed Dan Parker about opening land near Rainbow. He will follow up with Mr. Parker concerning this.

6. Debbie Christy spoke about funding for the bridge on the Goldmine Trail. Bill Dashnaw said that he would send information that was recommended to him. Debbie Christy said there are expenses in the amount of \$1,237.00 for the work done in the Goldmine Picketville area and Danny Collins will send that information.

7. Debbie Christy said that letters should be sent to the towns along with maps. The Colton Town Board supports the Trail Coordinator position. Bill Dashnaw said they will be bringing the towns up to speed on what's happening.

Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on April 19, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. at the Soil and Water Building.

Comments

Ed Long thanked everybody and asked them to keep up the good work.

Adjournment

Bill Swafford made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Kermit Blanchard. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Minutes by Mary Long