



FRIENDS OF THE FRED MEIJER CLINTON-IONIA-SHIAWASSEE TRAIL
P.O. Box 274
ST. JOHNS, MI 48879

Friends of the Fred Meijer CIS Trail Annual Meeting

Wednesday, March 17, 2016

7:00 pm, Memorial Healthcare Hospital, Owosso, Michigan

Minutes

1. **Welcome to Members** - The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Kyle Knight at 7:01 pm. Approximately 35 members/guests in attendance.
2. **Introduction of Board Members** - Knight introduced the following board members: Kyle Knight, Chairperson; Guy Buckingham, Vice Chairperson; Ardelle Rodgers; Barry Culham; Marshall Baker (not present); Kathy Simon, Secretary; Janice Gustafson, Treasurer; Dave Weber; Pamela Weisenburger and Terry McLeod (non-voting ex officio member between MWMTA and the Friends Group).
3. **Introduction of Distinguished Guests** - George Raimer, Ron Gunderson, Sandy Wolniakowski, Doug Hyland, Rick Morris, Mike Espich, Phil Hathaway
4. **Approve Minutes from 2015 Annual Meeting** - **MOTION** to approve the minutes of March 11, 2015. Gustafson/Culham M/S/P
5. **Financial Report** - Gustafson presented the Annual Financial Report for 2015 (actual) and the 2016 Budget. 2015 ending fund balance for 2015 was \$11,627.41. Projected ending fund balance for 2016 is \$12,787.41. 2015 highlights include: received \$11,700 in donations to place 14 memorial benches along the trail; received \$1,500 from Bike Ride for the Railroad; received \$4,000 grant from DALMAC to place bike racks along the trail; contributed the final \$15,000 of local match funds to the State of Michigan for trail construction. **MOTION** to approve the 2015 Financial Report and 2016 Budget as presented. Simon/Buckingham M/S/P
6. **Public Comment** - Mr. Hathaway stated that the Shiawassee County Parks, Recreation and Open Space have drafted a five-year plan. The first aspect of the plan relates to recreational and destination bicycling to and from the seven Shiawassee County parks. The second aspect deals with connectivity between destinations with a bias to city and village open spaces and parks together with a few regional open space attractions. The objective is to foster exercise and non-motorized transportation. Because there are only two off-road biking trails in Shiawassee County (including the FMCIS Trail), the map for the Live Healthy Coalition group that prepared it emphasizes the low volume least distance routes between destinations. Maps will be marketed on the county's website and at the parks on information kiosks. Tony Thelen commented about the prison of war camp at the Owosso Race Track. He suggested we put up signs with interesting facts along the trail.

7. ***Election of New Board Members*** - the three candidates elected were (all ran unopposed):
 - a. Clinton County - Kyle Knight - 60 votes
 - b. Ionia County - Dave Weber - 58 votes
 - c. Shiawassee County - Barry Culham - 58 votes

8. ***Volunteer Recognition Awards*** - The following awards were presented to acknowledge and recognize our volunteers: Bob Bartlett (not present), Tony Thelen, Dave Weber, Jill Hamilton (not present), Guy Buckingham, Diane and Dale LaDuke, Robert Flynn, Erwin Trumble, Sue & Glenn Witgen (not present), Marvin Lafler (not present).

9. ***Update from Mid-West Michigan Trail Authority*** - Terry McLeod gave a brief update. We will soon have a permanent phone number thanks to the City of St. Johns. The new number is 989-224-8944 ext 285. Although the number is working, we currently do not have a message on the phone, nor are the messages monitored. The new number will be posted on our website and will be monitored by an MSU intern student beginning May 1. He will be working with Friends Group, monitoring the phone line, and will inventory the trail (for insurance purposes).

10. ***Update from Nancy Krupiarz, Executive Director, Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance*** - Ms. Krupiarz provided an update from the results of the Ingham County Regional Task Force. \$3.5 million/year for six years was approved. First round of applications will be for trail repairs and bridge replacements. Second round will be for new construction for identified trails, as well as rehabilitation, long-term maintenance projects and special projects. During the public input forums, interest was expressed in connections to our trail. Under trail maintenance she stated that the Michigan Parks and Recreation Association has released a draft trail maintenance manual for the state, including sample policies and forms. They are making edits to the manual based on feedback from trails communities. The West Michigan Trails and Greenways Coalition is offering a trails maintenance workshop on Tuesday, April 6 at Meijer headquarters in Walker. Cost is \$35 and includes lunch. She also stated that more and more trail groups are collecting trail endowments for maintenance at the time they are fundraising, but it helps to stretch those dollars further by supplementing with volunteers. Another thing to think about is the AmeriCorps program. They are working on getting a couple crews together this year in the northern lower peninsula. She is working together with the DNR Unit Supervisor to put together an application and finding low-cost or no-cost basic lodging for a crew of 8 to 12 people for a six week period in the fall. Lastly, she talked briefly about the Iron Belle Trail. In Calhoun County they are working on an on-road connection - one for hiking and one for biking.

11. ***Keynote Speaker - Kristen Bennett, Trail Coordinator, MDNR*** - Ms. Bennett stated that she has been put in charge of the Iron Belle Trail, so will not be assisting with trails in southern Michigan any longer (although she still has non-motorized trail manager duties). A new trail coordinator has been assigned starting March 28 - Nikki VanBloem. The Iron Belle Trail is their biggest initiative yet and runs from Belle Isle to Ironwood for a total of 2,035 miles, 1,200 miles follow the North Country Trail. You can hike through the entire trail. On some sections you can bike or horseback. They are now having broader conversation with connecting communities. The FMCIS Trail is a critical loop connection with the Iron Belle Trail. Other initiatives - Alpena to Hillman, Kalamazoo to Grand Rapids, Lowell to Elmdale purchase and PawPaw to Hartford. On our network of trails, the design is complete for the Lowell to Greenville section - the last 25 miles. She mentioned the coordination of trail groups, the DNR and MDOT in using each other for match funds, using our trail as an example Ms. Bennett talked about a bike ride DNR and MDOT staff did from Pewamo to Muir in pouring rain - they had a blast. She stated that the trail

is curing well, but there are occasionally soft spots. Partnerships are great on this trail, which was built on the backs of the volunteers.

Questions from the audience included:

- a) *Illegal motorized use on the trail.* Ms. Bennett said that when you see someone, it is essential to contact the RAP line. This starts an investigation. It is extremely hard to catch someone, but the COs do not blow it off. They come out on trail. The more tickets are issued, the less we will see illegal use. Civil infraction of illegal motorized use on trail is \$250.
- b) *Saranac-Belding section.* They are still working on this section. It has been engineered and is shovel ready, but was turned down for Natural Resources grants.
- c) *Hunting on the trail.* The trail *is* open to hunting and trapping, but it is not encouraged to hunt on trail, rather only using the trail to traverse from one hunting area to another. The Trail Section of the DNR was originally housed in the Forest Section and this trail was established under State Land Use Rules (which allows hunting). We are hoping to change to State Park Rules, then it will no longer be open to hunting, which is not the best use of corridor. She had no idea of the time frame for changing to State Park Rules. It is important to note that hunting *is not* allowed within 450 feet of an occupied dwelling, but they can still carry guns. May still be able to carry guns under state park rules from one hunting area to another. [Note: The board of the FMCIS Trail has already formally requested that this trail be changed to State Park Rules.]

12. ***Adjournment*** - **MOTION** to adjourn at 8:00 pm. Buckingham/Weber M/S/P

Minutes taken by Kathy Simon