

**MINUTES Trail Coalition Board of Directors**

**Town of Somerset Town Hall, 748 HWY 35, Somerset, WI - December 14, 2016, 6:30 p.m.,**  
*Amendments to Agenda Shown in Italics*

**CALL TO ORDER** – In the absence of Chairperson David Mandel, Tim Witzmann, Vice Chairperson, called the meeting to order at ~6:35 p.m.

**STATEMENT OF PUBLIC NOTICE** – Witzmann indicated the agenda had been posted at the Town of Somerset and on the Trail Coalition web site.

**ROLL CALL** - Board members present were Mark Gherty, Susan Heuiser, André Johnson, Andrew Lamers, Mark Vanasse, Marian Webber and Tim Witzmann. Board member absent was David Mandel. Others present were Brett Budrow (St. Croix County Community Development Staff), Ben Heuiser, Gary Kriesel (Washington County Commissioner), Mike Polehna (Stillwater City Councilman), Agnes Ring (St. Croix County Commissioner), David Sandberg (St. Croix County Staff), Connor Schaefer (Washington County Staff), Grant Shirts (St. Croix County Staff), and Jim Weber (Hudson City Council).

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA** – A **motion** (Lamers, Vanasse) to adopt the agenda. **Carried** with no opposition.

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*At this point in the meeting, Witzmann indicated it would be appropriate to change the order of agenda items to start with items that pertained to visitors present. There was consensus among the board members to do so. The minutes correspond to the order in which items were taken during the meeting.*

**ITEMS** for discussion and/or action

1. Cooperative Interstate Activity Possibilities with Washington County Officials

Witzmann introduced this discussion indicating it seemed appropriate for Washington and St. Croix Counties and their interested communities, residents and advocacy groups to work cooperatively regarding trail initiatives particularly as they relate to the shared Loop Trail being constructed as a part of the St. Croix River Crossing.

Polehna detailed his extensive work as a Washington County Parks Department employee over the past 30 some years. Under his management, the Washington County trail system went from very limited opportunities to the Minnesota county that has the most extensive network of trails. Then he discussed the City of Stillwater’s plans for the Loop Trail portion in their city as well as a larger vision of connecting trails to communities/amenities both north and south of the city providing copies of the city trail plan. He also indicated that the City of Stillwater is planning to keep the Loop Trail open during the winter months, something St. Croix County is not currently planning to do. In response to a question from Gherty regarding frustration getting St. Croix County officials to recognize the economic potential benefit of trail development, both Kriesel and Polehan indicated little opposition in Washington County over the years. Polehan also indicated a desire to work collaboratively on a Loop Trail opening event, mentioning a bike ride, dinner on the Lift Bridge and other celebration possibilities. Response was positive from Coalition board members.

Kriesel indicated that there is a recent attempt to coalesce 5 advocacy groups in Washington County into one coalition working on trail initiatives. He also discussed the voter approved legacy referendum funding indicating the County leverages this money with careful consideration to maximize taxpayer dollars. The rates vary depending on the urgency of the project being discussed but the county has obtained additional funds for as much as 75% to as low as 50% of the cost of a particular project from other funding sources. Schaefer indicate that a trail master plan is currently being worked on at the County level. Moving

forward, Kriesel thought it wise to have county staffs as well as elected officials and advocacy groups working cooperatively regarding trail initiatives.

Budrow provided details about progress of St. Croix County’s Bike & Ped Plan update indicating a schedule that would include entire County Board approval in the first quarter of 2017. He also indicated a willingness to work and share ideas with Washington County staff.

General consensus by all at the meeting was that this collaboration should be extended to county staffs, county elected officials and advocacy groups in both states for the mutual benefit of all. Trail Coalition members were invited to a meeting of Washington County advocates later in December.

**BRIEF PAUSE IN THE OFFICIAL MEETING** – A break of ~ 10 minutes occurred before the meeting resumed.

2. Trailhead Marketing Possibilities with St. Croix County Officials

Budrow introduced the general nature of St. Croix County’s initiatives regarding including the public in the creation, design and funding of amenities on the Loop Trail indicating that plans are still in the early stages. Shirts and Sandberg provided details about current amenities contracted by the county with WisDOT to complete as the Loop Trail, its Trailheads and various other features are constructed during the 2018 construction season. The two also discussed further ideas being considered over the ensuing years by the county as the maintainer of this facility. Plans are in the works for an online store where the public can look at possibilities for donations of, for instance, benches – perhaps with a dedication, trees and/or shrubs – perhaps with a dedication, bicycle aid stations, water bottle filling stations, pet watering stations, informational kiosks, and many more. The county will also be looking for interested people/organizations to maintain, for instance, rain gardens at the Trailheads, to adopt portions of the Loop Trail or areas of the Trailheads for cleanup activities, etc. Shirts and Sandberg were interested in obtaining from the Trail Coalition ideas regarding additional Trailhead features, a list of organizations/people who might be interested in contributing to this effort and a list of grantors that could be used to fund additional features. A number of ideas were shared at the meeting by Coalition’s board members. It was agreed that board members would send further suggestions to Susan Heuser and she would forward a complete list to St. Croix County staff in the near future.

*The regular order of agenda items was resumed at this point in the meeting.*

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**PUBLIC COMMENT** – Opportunity for comments on subjects not on the agenda when recognized by the presiding officer. There were no public comments.

**APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES** – October 12, 2016 – A motion (Johnson, Gherty) to approve the minutes of the October 12, 2016, meeting. **Carried** with no opposition.

**REPORTS** - from subcommittees and/or individuals about information gathered for the Board of Directors Financial Report – Vanasse reviewed the revenues and expenditures for 2016 through November. There were no questions.

Healthier Together – Susan Heuser reported on progress being made on the Healthier Together initiative led by the 4 hospitals in St. Croix County. The final planning stages are being finished soon with roll out of the initiative’s action plans to follow.

Hwy 64 Trail Corridor Committee – Johnson reported one of the priorities identified in the county’s Bike & Ped Plan update, specifically the route from the Loop Trail to Somerset, has been discussed extensively by the committee, that a Chairperson (Susan Heuser) and a Vice-Chairperson (Johnson) have been elected, that there are sticky points where the municipalities connect that will need further discussion and that more information is needed before any firm recommendations can be made.

Others that may be available – Vanasse reported the information that there will be no bicycle crossing sites from Wisconsin into Minnesota and vice versa for an extended period of time (perhaps as long as a year and a half) as the Loop Trail on the Wisconsin side and its accompanying Trailheads are constructed and the Stillwater Lift Bridge is refurbished. He noted there would be a 45 day comment period before WisDOT’s plans are finalized and that the bicycling community should be rallied to comment about the length of this lack of transportation facilitation for the bicycling community.

**ITEMS for discussion and/or action (continued)**

3. **2017 Proposed Budget** – There was brief discussion about several items in the proposed budget - see below for details. Following discussion, a **motion** (Marian Webber, Johnson) to adopt the 2017 proposed budget. **Carried** with no opposition.
  - Renewal of the web site contracts – The renewal fee for the web site contract was a specific line item in the proposed budget. Consensus of the board discussion was that the web site should be maintained as a valuable communications tool. Witzmann indicated that approval of the budget eliminated the need for a specific motion authorizing funds for that renewal.
  - Other specific items as needed – Discussion about the amount of grant and fund raising dollars in the proposed budget centered on fund raising for the bench project on the Loop Trail and for a marketing document to spur funding for trails and amenities along the Hwy 64 Trail Corridor. It was agreed that the budget could be approved and a more in depth discussion about items covered in those two items of the budget could happen at a later date. Witzmann suggested the Communications Committee take up that topic at its January meeting.
4. Criteria for/Identification of Future Coalition Donation Organizations/Projects – This item was not formally discussed because of time constraints but some ideas were discussed as a part of other agenda items. The item will placed on future agendas.
5. **Best Method for Fund Raising**
  - Raffle Possibilities – Vanasse indicated interest in a bicycle raffle in 2017. Further discussion will occur at a later time.
  - Other Possibilities – further discussion on this topic was not taken because of time constraints and the item will be placed on future agendas.
6. Appointment of Coalition Representative to Hwy 64 Trail Corridor Committee – A **motion** (Vanasse, Lamers) to approve Susan Heuser as the representative from the Coalition to the Hwy 64 Trail Corridor Committee. **Carried** with no opposition.
7. Set next meeting date – The next meeting date was set for **Wednesday, February 8, 2017**.

**ITEMS FOR NEXT BOARD of DIRECTORS AGENDA** – Criteria for/Identification of Future Coalition Donation Organizations/Projects, Best Methods for Fund Raising, Grant and Fund Raising Amount Details in the Proposed Budget – Specifically the Bench Project and the Hwy 64 Trail Corridor Marketing Document as well as others that might arise

**ITEMS FOR NEXT COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE AGENDA** – Grant and Fund Raising Amount Details in the Proposed Budget – Specifically the Bench Project and the Hwy 64 Trail Corridor Marketing Document as well as others that might arise, Best Methods for Fund Raising – Raffles and other methods

**ADJOURNMENT** – A **motion** (Marian Webber, Vanasse) to adjourn. **Carried** with no opposition at ~ 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Susan Heuser, Secretary