

MINUTES - 2018 Annual Meeting - St. Croix Bike Pedestrian Trail Coalition
April 28, 2018, 10:00 a.m., Paperjack Park, New Richmond, WI

At 10:00 a.m. **Mingle and Munch**

At ~ 10:30 a.m. **CALL TO ORDER** – André Johnson, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at ~ 10:45 a.m.

STATEMENT OF PUBLIC NOTICE – The agenda was posted at the Town of Somerset Town Hall and on the Coalition web site.

ROLL CALL - Board members present were Mark Gherty, Susan Heuiser, André Johnson, Pam Kaiser, Andrew Lamers, Dave Mandel, Mark Vanasse, and Tim Witzmann. Board member Marian Webber was absent. Alternate Board members Susan Stepka (after ~ 11:00 a.m.) and Ruth Steiner (after ~ 10:30 a.m.) were also present. Other members and nonmembers present were Joan Detloff, Ben Heuiser, Vince Kaiser, Ron Pratt, Agnes Ring, Irv Sather, Mike Steiner (after ~ 11:00 a.m.), Nancy Vanasse, and Caren Witzmann.

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

APPROVAL OF 2017 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES – April 29, 2017 – A **motion** (Gherty, Mandel) to approve the April 29, 2017, minutes as presented. **Carried** with no opposition.

REPORTS - from subcommittees and/or individuals about information gathered for the coalition. Three people provided information for those gathered.

Pratt provided details contained in the *Orlando Sentinel* newspaper about economic development in small communities along a trail that traverses central Florida from the Gulf Coast city of St. Petersburg to the Atlantic Coast in the Brevard County/Merritt Island area. He reported bicycle shops, restaurants, hotel/motel and bed & breakfast, etc. businesses opening up across the state as sections of the trail are completed and tourists and locals visit. See Attachment A for the complete article. Discussion among attendees included strong support for economic development potential being the key to developing a network of trails as documented in St. Croix County's bike & pedestrian plan.

Sather, a member of the New Richmond Pathways group, indicated that group has 20 – 25 members actively working on trails in the New Richmond area for approximately 20 years. Recently a focus has been opening waterway trails in the area - especially the Willow River.

Nancy Vanasse suggested it would a good idea to connect with the snowmobile organizations in St. Croix County to get information about how those organizations have developed trail networks across the County.

ITEMS for discussion and/or action

1. Review of Annual Report – The 2018 Annual Report for 2017 was discussed in several segments as follows.
Overview – Johnson reported that the two highlights of 2017 were the completion of St. Croix County's bike & pedestrian plan update and the beginning of a study to get a trail through the difficult to traverse area along the Hwy 64 Landing Hill section (between County Roads V and VV).
Communications Committee – Witzmann reported that one of the initial goals of the Coalition was to get an updated bike & pedestrian plan passed at the County level and, with the passage of that plan by the County Board on May 2, 2017, the Coalition could update its *Goals and Objectives* document by deleting that goal as accomplished. Discussion from both Gherty and Ring indicated that now the task should move toward getting accurate information to the general County population about what the plan is and what it is not. Witzmann also indicated the County is working on a Bicycle Summit initiative to get information out to governmental entities, business organizations, trails users, etc. about the new bike and pedestrian plan details and to connect communities and organizations for discussions about trail options, obstacles,

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possibilities, etc. Johnson indicated the Committee is working toward a more visible presence in the news media moving forward.

Hwy 64 Trails Corridor Committee – Johnson indicated this is a committee of communities along the Hwy 64 Corridor between Somerset and New Richmond that meets to discuss what’s happening in each community around trail issues so that the group can support each other’s initiatives and so that trails between communities will actually connect when they are completed.

Financial Report – Mark Vanasse reported year 2017’s receipts, expenditures, how funds are allocated for different projects and noted the organization is fiscally sound.

Fund Raising – Mark Vanasse and Pam Kaiser reported on plans for a fund raiser at Barley John’s in August indicating that most of the funding would likely be applied toward further detailed study of trail possibilities along the Landing Hill section of Hwy 64. Other initiatives are also a possibility as 2018 proceeds.

Special Projects – Two projects were pursued during 2017. Details follow.

Vanasse reported the Houlton Community Art Bench Project is a continuing effort in which the Coalition is partnering with Houlton Elementary School and the Phipps Center for the Arts. The project involves placing the tenth bench in the Phipps’ *Art Bench Trail* system in the Trailhead of the Loop Trail located across the street from Houlton Elementary. It will be considered the *keystone* bench along the trail because it is located in the approximate center of the trail the runs from St. Croix Falls to Prescott. This “bench” is preliminarily conceived as a “gathering space” for 40-50 people that will be available to trail users and community organizations as well as school groups to meet for varied activities.

Johnson indicated the Hwy 64 Corridor Committee contracted to have an initial engineering study done regarding the best possibilities for a trail along the Landing Hill area of Hwy 64. This initial phase of the study was to determine which side of the highway was best suited for a trail. Decisions have not yet been made about how best to proceed on this project.

2. Nomination for and election of the Board of Directors seats currently held by Susan Heuiser, André Johnson and Mark Vanasse – A **motion** (Witzmann, Gherty) to elect André, Susan and Mark to three year terms on the Board of Directors. - **Carried** with no opposition.
3. Set next meeting date – Last Saturday in April 27, 2019 – After discussion of different options, consensus among those present was to leave the Annual Meeting date at the last week-end in April.

ADJOURNMENT – A **motion** (Gherty, Lamers) to adjourn. **Carried** with no opposition at ~ 11:20 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan Heuiser, Secretary

At ~ 11:00 a.m. Bike Ride around the Paperjack Park/Creek area for interested attendees - Bikers left at ~11:30 a.m. to ride around the surrounding New Richmond area pathways.

Appendix A

Coast to Coast Florida Bike Trail Sparks Hotels, Shops

Orlando Sentinel, March 19, 2018, Mary Shanklin

Entrepreneurs across Central Florida have opened inns and bike shops — and one city is investing more than \$1 million to boost business — all in hopes of benefiting from a bike trail that’s carving a path through the state.

With about 80 percent of the 250-mile Coast-to-Coast Trail now complete, the paved route grew by 13 miles last month with the opening of a segment from Titusville in Brevard County to Volusia County. Hundreds of bicyclists gathered in late February at Titusville’s Coast to Coast Bicycle Co. to break in the newest section of the trail, which is aimed at a range of riders and pedestrians.

About 60 miles away in west Orange County, the Oakland Manor House bed and breakfast is set to open this month with plans to offer overnight respites for trail riders. The prospect of capturing groups riding across all — or even parts — of the state was one reason the owners decided to invest in re-purposing the historic home that overlooks Lake Apopka.

“That was a huge draw,” said proprietor Cynthia Schultz, a former University of Indiana adjunct professor. “If you’re a cyclist you’re looking for places to stay, this is just two blocks off the trail.”

To the west, Clermont has invested more than \$1 million in a trail spur connecting its downtown to the trail, and staked out a trademark for the marketing slogan, “Meet Us in the Middle,” to reach trail users statewide.

The route from the Gulf of Mexico in St. Petersburg to the Atlantic Ocean in Brevard County will near completion in three to five years, linking Central Florida cities and towns including Groveland, Clermont, Winter Garden, Altamonte Springs, Longwood, Lake Mary, DeBary, Deltona and Osteen.

Even with about \$25 million of gas-tax revenues a year aimed at construction, progress has been slowest in Sumter County sections, which are under design. The easternmost stretch of nine miles through Brevard County’s Merritt Island to the Atlantic has environmental issues and no funding yet.

“The good news is that big sections are rapidly coming together,” said Dale Allen, president of the Florida Greenways and Trails Foundation.

West of Central Florida, a five-mile stretch from the Pinellas Trail to Pasco County was finished last year and gaps are being plugged to complete about 100 miles of continuous paved paths as soon as this year. East of Orlando, the newest 13-mile leg is expected this year to thread together Florida’s east coast area with Volusia County’s Spring to Spring Trail, which leads to DeBary.

In Titusville, Coast to Coast Bicycle Co. co-owner Carrie Overfelt said her shop opened because of the cross-state trail and now the route is becoming a hub with connections to several other trails.

“I think we are going to become a little biking community, and we are going to see a lot of biking events,” she said. “We have a lot of European visitors who love to bicycle and they talk about how they would love to do a cross-state ride.”

Among the most ambitious plans for the bi-coastal trail is Clermont’s efforts to be anything other than the “dead” center of the asphalt ribbon.

“We have known about the Coast to Coast Trail for quite some time and have been preparing back to 2012,” said Clermont City Manager Darren Gray. “One of the biggest projects we are getting ready to start design on is what will probably be the best trailhead in the Southeast or even the U.S.”

Appendix A
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In addition to branding itself with its Meet Us in the Middle trademark, Clermont is investing about \$1.1 million into a 1-mile Legacy Loop spur of the South Lake Trail bringing pedestrians and cyclists into a downtown area that Gray said has added dozens of businesses in recent years.

Owners of Epic Cycles World moved from a shopping center near State Road 50 to be next to the trail, and discussions are under way for a boutique hotel between downtown and the trail. In addition, owners of a lumberyard on the trail have planned a 10-acre, mixed-use project with condos, shops and short-term housing, Gray added.

The trailhead off Eighth Street is planned for eateries, kiosks, Wi-Fi, and possibly concessionaires when it is completed, likely in 2020. The city is also redeveloping commercial property on Lake Minneola. The plans, Gray added, grew from a series of meetings that drew suggestions from about 1,000 residents.

Despite delays and detours, trail advocates say the long-distance linear park will boost local economies.

"We've ridden trails in all 50 states and the communities that benefit the most from it are the small and mid-size ones where the trails are connected to a larger city," Allen said. In Indianapolis, suburbs with trail connections to the city are growing the fastest and Washington, D.C., trails are faster for commuting than congested roads, he added.

The Missouri Parks Department estimated its statewide Katy Trail generated \$18.5 million in economic benefits when last reported in 2012. Wisconsin estimates a \$1 billion annual economic boost from its statewide trail system, which Allen said is a better network than Florida's but only usable during part of the year because of severe weather conditions.

"That is happening all across America," he said.