



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 8, 2017**

7:00 pm, AgroLiquid Headquarters, St. Johns, Michigan

Minutes

1. **Welcome to Members** - The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Kyle Knight at 7:02 pm. Approximately 14 members/guests in attendance.
2. **Introduction of Board Members** - Knight introduced the following board members: Kyle Knight, Chairperson; Rick Church, Vice Chairperson; Ardelle Rodgers; Marshall Baker; Kathy Simon, Secretary; Janice Gustafson, Treasurer; Dave Weber; Pamela Weisenburger, Doug Hyland and Terry McLeod (non-voting ex officio member between MWMTA and the Friends Group). Also, Barry Culham, Trail Manager
3. **Introduction of Distinguished Guests** - Guests included Heather & Karl Hanover, Erwin Trumble, Jr., Juanita Hyland, Mark Fritsma, Bob Thelen, Avery Weaver, Bob Flynn, Verne Rodgers, Gordon Shipley, Rick Morris, Judy Culham, Tim Machowicz, Wendy Armbrustmacher, Karen & Dave Hunsaker, Chas Petersen, Jill Kaltenthaler
4. **Approve Minutes from 2016 Annual Meeting** - **MOTION** to approve the minutes of March 17, 2016. Gustafson/Baker M/S/P
5. **Financial Report** - Gustafson presented the Annual Financial Report for 2016 (actual) and the 2017 Budget. The 2016 ending fund balance was \$13,301.19. Projected ending fund balance for 2017 is \$11,361.19. 2016 highlights included placing a couple more benches and the maintenance/grant program with MWMTA. We began accepting grant money in 2016 from the MWMTA to pay for mowing, brush back, etc. **MOTION** to approve the 2016 Financial Report and 2017 Budget as presented. Simon/Rodgers M/S/P
6. **Public Comment** - Mark Fritsma (River Valley Trail) commented that the Village of Saranac and the City of Ionia have both been awarded grants to improve trail heads in their cities. Ionia's will be at the corner of Dexter (M-66) and Adams Street; Saranac's will be in the area of the Grand River boat ramp on the west side of Bridge St across from the depot. The Friend's group is coordinating several grant requests to develop the trail between Lowell and Saranac as well as between Lowell and Greenville. A key grant may be a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) grant application which is due to be submitted this week. They are cautiously optimistic that they will receive enough funding to complete construction in 2018. He also noted that Keith Litchfield completed brush hogging of the trail between Ionia and Saranac last fall and will be completing Lowell to Greenville this spring. The River Valley Trail is becoming popular with local organizations looking to host various runs/walks and bicycle events. Legislation is

progressing through the state Senate and House that will enable the DNR and/or MDOT to acquire several additional miles of rail grade in the Lowell area that will connect to this system. It was additionally noted that we are trying to coordinate with River Valley Trail for events that span both of our trails so that it will be a smooth process. Knight mentioned that St. Johns is also receiving funding for a trailheads. A mural is planned for the tunnel under US 127 in St. Johns. They will be using youth offenders for cleanup of rail cars and painting. Wendy Ambrustmacher mentioned run off spot on the trail near the Ionia end. Culham stated that the DNR has approached the farmer. Bob Flynn reported that there is an abundance of wildlife and birds, including sandhill cranes and rooster pheasants.

7. ***Election of New Board Members*** - the three candidates elected were:
 - a. Clinton County - Baker (opponent withdrew)
 - b. Ionia County - Janice Gustafson (unopposed)
 - c. Shiawassee County - Pam Weisenburger (unopposed)

8. ***Volunteer Recognition Awards*** - The following awards were presented to acknowledge and recognize our volunteers (some not present): Glen and Sue Witgen, Marvin Lafler, Anthony Thelen, Doug Hyland, Erwin Trumble, Jr., Robert Flynn, Karl and Heather Hanover, Dale and Diane LaDuke, Terry McLeod, Richard Howard, Bob Bartlett, Charles Petersen, Andrea and Andrew Turner, Richard Church, Janet Balice, Dave Weber. Special recognition to Guy Buckingham for his many years serving on the Board.

9. ***Update from Mid-West Michigan Trail Authority*** - Terry McLeod gave a brief update of activities of the Mid-West Michigan Trail Authority.

10. ***Featured Speakers Barry Culham, Trail Manager*** - (In addition to his own items, Culham spoke on behalf of Van Bloem who could not attend because the high wind conditions caused dangerous conditions at her home). Culham volunteered in June to be a trail manager in order to document the maintenance process (what needs to be done when). Culham stated he would like to send out e-mails occasionally to interested members. He discussed the Friends' Group e-mail address and voice message system (thanks to City of St. Johns). Since there is good cell phone coverage along the whole trail, the voice message system is a good option. He also discussed that our website has been recently updated. He stated that we have a maintenance agreement with Keith Litchfield for mowing and brush back. There has been some negative comments that the brush back was too severe, but we have to meet DNR specs and the trail has to be clear for emergency vehicles. We've taken down about approximately 50 trees since October. There were 12 mowings in 2016. Some culvert replacement this past year, may be more this coming year. He will be marking all culverts this coming year so we have a good idea where they all are. We also added horse signs on the trail. After experiencing some problems with signs being stolen, we put self locking nuts on the signs. The Adler Drain (between Hollister and Shepardsville roads) will be re-routed by Clinton County tentatively in June. We had an MSU survey in September in Pewamo, Fowler St. Johns and Ovid by Chuck Nelson. He will be at our April 12 meeting at the Clinton County Courthouse to present his findings. We are also in discussion with another MSU professor (Professor Everett) about a community engagement project for his students. The proposed project is to design trail signs for us that meet MDNR and MDOT standards. Agro Liquid and Mahle are looking for connections to the trail. Motz Park would also like to connect, which is a more complicated process because of the road (most likely solution is to have some sort of easement along the road). We are also working on connections with Sleepy Hollow State Park, possibly utilizing a wider shoulder along the road. We are planning to spray this spring for invasive species along the trail (specifically Japanese Knotweed at Shepardsville Road). We are planning on two, possibly three spraying for encroaching weeds. McLeod and Church are working with Clinton County for signage at Shepardsville Road to alert drivers about the trail. It is currently a very dangerous

blind spot. Another dangerous crossing is Carlson Road. Culham plans to identify and mark all culverts. We fixed numerous holes in 2016 from animals. We have discussed setting aside a day that people could move wood (downed trees) for personal burning, pending DNR approval. Trail surface, in a word, is bad. MWMTA has been adamant with the DNR at their last meeting. The MDNR engineer, the engineer from Prein Newoff, MDOT, Culham and Knight are planning to meet to check out trail surface problems. Will also check out the paved part in Fowler because it's caving. MDOT has requested 1,200 more brochures for rest stops. Several 5k, 10k and half marathons have been held along the trail, and the City of St. Johns utilized a portion for their holiday activities last December.

11. ***Featured Speaker Nikki Van Bloem, Trail Planning Specialist, MDNR*** - No Report (Ms. Van Bloem was not able to attend due to unforeseen circumstances.)

12. ***Adjournment*** - MOTION to adjourn at 8 pm. Gustafson/Simon M/S/P

Minutes taken by Kathy Simon