

## Friends of the Blue Star Trail Minutes of the August 23, 2012 Board Meeting

**Attendees: Board Members: Jeanne Van Zoeren, Jim Van Buren, John Adams, Julie Werkema Friends: Eileen Mead, Sunny Hill, Lois Schwartz, Colette Krueger, Sharon Gultinan**

President Jeanne Van Zoeren opened the meeting at 4:35pm at the Casco Township Hall.

**MINUTES:** The Minutes of the July 27, 2012 meeting were approved as presented.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Former Secretary/Treasurer, Eileen Mead reported:

The receipts for feasibility study totaled \$14,875. Of this number

- \$1,000 from corporations
- \$550 from small business
- \$2,250 from community foundations
- \$100 from neighborhood associations (Mt. Pleasant)
- \$10,975 from individuals.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT:** Jeanne Van Zoeren reported that the Feasibility Study has officially begun. Interviewing has commenced and is expected to continue through October 2012.

Jeanne will work with board members to prepare the required application for a solicitor's license. Jeanne has the application forms.

City of South Haven update: Brian Dissette intends to seek \$1,000 from SHARC (South Haven Area Resource Council) on behalf of the FOTBST. This is in lieu of our \$4,000 request funds from the City of South Haven, which will be postponed until Casco Township Trustees elects to participate in the South Haven Area Recreational Authority (SHARA) and appoints a representative at large for Casco Township.

Jeanne made a presentation to the Lakeshore Association. They have requested a final design plan before providing a letter of support and contribution.

Scott Post (Prein and Newhof Eng) presented an engineering study at a special meeting of the Casco Township Trustees. He provided terrain maps and a cost estimate of 1.9 million for 6 -1/2 miles of Casco Township or \$300,000 per mile. This amount includes an estimated 10% in engineering fees and a 10% contingency. Large amounts of funds were earmarked for storm sewers, which may or may not be needed. If the entire project could be completed at one time and/or if the project were privately funded construction costs could be reduced by as much as 20 – 25%. This is because the requirements of government contracting would not apply and there would be economies of scale. Prein and Newhof also advised that the firm has never paid more than \$1.00

for an easement and they would expect the Friends to talk with people in conjunction with him regarding the possible easements that he included in the terrain maps.

Congestion, Mitigation, Air Quality (CMAQ) grant would be the most likely source of funding if government dollars are used. The Friends would apply through the Allegan County Road Commission, the required applicant for this federally funded allocation. The amount would be an estimated \$310,000, which must be applied solely to construction costs. The Friends would need to guarantee the required local match and engineering costs at the December meeting of the Casco Township Trustees for the project to move forward. Prien and Newhof would prepare and file the application in conjunction with the Allegan County Road Commission.

A meeting with the Allegan County Community Foundation staff will be held on August 29<sup>th</sup> at the Casco Township Hall to initiate a possible contractual relationship for management of the Friends funds. Eileen, Jeanne, and John will represent the FOBST. Other interested Friends are encouraged to attend as well.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Sunny Hill –Special Events** – The first annual Lakeshore Harvest Bike Tour was a success! There were between 130-135 registrations. Seventy-one participants pre-registered and the remainders were same day registrants. Many were out of towners. Deliveries from the farms/markets went well. She suggested that a thank you letter be sent to participants with an offer to join the Friends. Jim Van Buren commented that the time frame seemed to be good for this event. He emailed bike shops and biking clubs and placed information in the Chicago Tribune. Sunny also recommended a bike weekend event or potluck and volunteered to host. A meeting is scheduled for 8/29 with Julie Cowie to do a “debriefing” regarding the event. Sunny will email Friend volunteers and encourage their attendance at this meeting.

**Jim Van Buren – Marketing/Publicity** – Jim presented a poster, which he ordered from Staples. It was not done correctly but is useable for the present. He may go to Bannerworks in the Kalamazoo area to have another poster made. Many thanks to Jim for donating his design work for the banner.

Regarding the website, a system for donation will need to be integrated. Jim is currently hosting the website on his server at home and will need to transfer files to another host. Jim recommended GoDaddy.com. They have a good online interface and the necessary level of security. The cost is \$75.00/year. Jim also discussed Joomla content management software which is furnished for free through GoDaddy. This will allow password and administrator permissions and allow users to utilize separate sections of the site. Jim recommends uploading our database into the system as it can be used to generate newsletters and is always current so new contacts may be added at any time. Through the Joomla software a person could join online through self-enrollment. There is also a shopping cart function for donations. He estimates he can have it operational by October 1, 2012.

Pay Pal can be set up for donations online. It will handle the security and verify credit card information. The system allows donors to use Mastercard/Visa/Discover. John Adams, newly elected Treasurer, will manage PayPal.

**MEMBERSHIP FEES:**

Those present discussed whether to establish membership fees as the primary revenue source for the Friends basic operating expenses (e.g. printing, copying, etc) following an introductory presentation by the Chair. Following discussion a motion was made, seconded, and approved to establish individual membership @t \$25.00 and Family Membership @t \$35.00. Accordingly, Jeanne will prepare an amendment for approval at the September meeting to the existing Bylaws to include annual fees.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:**

Lois Schwarz encouraged the group to include non-bikers in discussion of the trail as many people may wish to use the trail for cross country skiing, jogging, and for walking groups.

**NEXT MEETING:** September 27, 2012 @ 4:30 PM @ Casco Township Hall

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 PM.