

Friends of the Blue Star Trail

Meeting Minutes

October 25, 2012

Attendees: Board Members: Jeanne Van Zoeren, Jim Van Buren, John Adams, Carol Lenaway, Julie Werkema

Guests: Nancy Owen, CEO (The Owen Group); Nancy Krupiarz, Executive Director, Michigan Trails and Greenways

The President called the meeting to order at 4:35 PM.

MINUTES: The minutes of the August 23, 2012 meeting were approved as presented.

TREASURER'S REPORT: John Adams reported that 1 contribution had been received and expenses were paid for the picnic which left an ending balance of \$11,155. John also reported that the Federal form 990 was already filed and that he filed the required Michigan update form.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Patricia Birkholz is no longer working with the State of Michigan so she will not be assisting in our process as was previously discussed. Nancy Krupiarz advised that John Allen has taken her place and will also be a good advocate as he headed up the Blue Ribbon Panel for State Parks and is very pro-trail.

Felicia Fairchild, Executive Director, Saugatuck- Douglas Convention and Visitors Bureau, sent an invitation to a Conference for Great Lakes Trailways for November 8th and 9th in Saugatuck. The conference is free. Jeanne indicates that the afternoon of the second day appeared to have information scheduled which would be most helpful to our group.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Jeanne Van Zoeren reported on the Lakeshore Harvest Bike Tour Committee. Kim Overhiser will be the representative from the Lakeshore Harvest organization.. Deb Davidson, Director of the Downtown Development Authority for the City of South Haven and Brandy Gilden, the Director of Recreation Planning for the City of South Haven will also serve on the committee. Jim Van Buren, Sunny Hill, and Sharon Gultinan will represent the FOBST. Jeanne will also be asking Sarah Ridley to join the committee when she returns to West Michigan. No committee meeting has been set yet.

MARKETING/PUBLICITY

Jim Van Buren reported that he is working on the new website as well as Pay Pal. He is also working on a Fall newsletter but his database of pictures has been lost since one of his servers is no longer operational. Jeanne will contact Sarah Ridley to see if she has maintained a database of the pictures since she took the majority of them.

Jim spoke with Julie Cowie and Kim Overhiser and received permission to use the Lakeshore Harvest Logo. Julie Cowie is no longer involved with the Lakeshore Harvest group so Kim is the contact person. Jim needs details regarding the Lakeshore Harvest ride as soon as possible in order to meet the deadline for publishing with the League of Michigan Bicyclists ride calendar. Lakeshore Harvest also advised that it is permissible to use their email address for registrations.

No meeting has been set so Jeanne will make the appropriate contacts and schedule a meeting as soon as possible.

Jim is validating email addresses for bike tour registrants and will have the list completed soon.

Regarding the newspaper article which was discussed at the August 23rd meeting, Jim advised that he will need more details and content before he can contact the newspaper or write the newsletter article.

FEASIBILITY STUDY STATUS REPORT:

Nancy Owen provided a written status report of the feasibility study. She discussed each point in the study and discussion ensued with regard to each one. A copy of the report is attached to the minutes. Nancy advised that only 17 interviews had been completed but that 10 additional interviewees had responded recently. Action points were discussed which included marketing and endowment funds. Clarification was also discussed with regard to uses of the Trail including walking, pushing strollers, jogging, cross country skiing, etc. and excluding snowmobiles and equestrian uses. Representing the trail as a four season "recreational pathway" as opposed to a "bike trail" will help with marketing. This improved definition will also assist Nancy in discussing the trail with interviewees.

Nancy stressed that long term and extremely detailed planning is crucial to trail projects. Both Nancy Owen and Nancy Krupiarz expressed the need to determine exactly which entity will be the "owner" when the project is completed. Jeanne advised that the original 2008 Visionary Committee determined that Allegan County would become the owner and would include the trail as a park. She also indicated that it has been decided that 5% would be dedicated to an endowment fund. Nancy Owen advises that no fundraising be commenced until the ownership question is determined. Jeanne advised that the local governmental entities are looking to the feasibility study before they will make that determination.

Nancy advised that she will make contact with some of the local developers and banks and will include some of her secondary homeowner neighbors along the lakeshore among the interviews.

Jeanne requested that Nancy provide a written status report for the Casco Township Board Meeting on Monday, November 19, 2012.

PRESENTATION RE: MICHIGAN TRAILS AND GREENWAYS (MTG):

Nancy Krupiarz informed the Friends of the role of the Michigan Trails and Greenways and their mission which is to foster an interconnected trailway in Michigan. She also provided copies of the Great Lake to Lake Trails Brochure which illustrates the current and future trailways linking the Great Lakes in

Michigan. This tool could be extremely helpful in our marketing efforts. Nancy will provide Jeanne with copies of the map showing the trails crossing the state.

MTG provides technical assistance, promotion with the public and with elected officials and policy advocacy.

She advised that over 2/3 of the counties in Michigan have existing trails or projects. Michigan is #1 in the United States for trails with well over 3,000 miles across the state.

Nancy discussed a website with a shopping cart online which links to hotels, restaurants, and tourist attractions along a bike route. This is involved with the Up North Trails Initiative and can be accessed by doing an internet search for "Discover U.S. Heritage Route 23".

Nancy suggests that the Friends do as many booths and marketing events as possible. She can provide a list of places they advertise one of which is "Chicago Outdoor Athlete". Nancy further advised that the Friends look into applying for a Coastal Management Grant. Lisa Krupiarz, Nancy's sister-in-law, has already assisted the Friends with the donation of a quilt for fundraising. Nancy stated that MTG can also provide further assistance and provided a form to complete in order to join their organization. Jeanne advised that the Friends will put it on the Agenda for the November meeting. .

Meeting adjourned: 6:53pm

NEXT MEETING: The THIRD THURSDAY: 11/15/2012 4:30PM Casco Township Hall. Please note that this is the 3rd week of the month, not the 4th, which falls on Thanksgiving.