

Friends of the Blue Star Meeting

December 18, 2014

Present: Jeanne Van Zoeren, Sunny Hill, Carol Leneway, Clark Carmichael, John Adams

1. November 2014 Minutes were approved as distributed.
2. President's Report- See comments below.
3. Treasurer's Report – John Adams

We received \$5,000 from Chemical Bank. Response from year- end request has been strong. Another pledge was made today for \$5,000 for two years.

We will get the official a list of donors from ACCF on or around January 2nd.

Regarding the membership donation through Pay Pal on the website, Jeanne will check to see if there is an option to renew or if it was automatic. This may need to be corrected.

(Note: In an email from Jim Van Buren it was determined that renewable membership is optional).

Phase II construction is to scheduled to begin August 2015, assuming that we receive ROW certification, including required easements. There are 25 easements in this Phase; 4 are verbally completed. Land Matters staff is meeting with each of the landowners involved. CMAQ funds in CY15 are dependent upon satisfactory easement resolutions. Our meeting with affected property owners regarding the easements was very positive.

Phase III – Saugatuck Township. The DNR staff declared our application ineligible for this fiscal year as MDOT did not meet the timelines for their portion of the match requirement to the DNR. However, we have been strongly encouraged to re-submit our DNR application in April 2015 for CY 16 funding. We need to

resolve two issues with MDOT staff: (1) perceived escalation of construction costs. We were encouraged to reduce the scope of the project to reduce costs and (2) overpass trailway over Exit 36 on I-196. A meeting with MDOT staff will be scheduled in January 2015 to resolve these issues. We will ask MDOT for application approval on or before April 1, 2015 to insure that matching requirements can be met prior to DNR Trust fund application filing. Overall, both funding sources are very supportive of the project.

Marker Design – Carol Leneway

Carol has been researching other markers. Denise Adams is working on post markers for non-motorized trail signs. Felicia Fairchild has suggested using three different West Michigan Pike signs. Carol presented a sketch using the Blue Star logo with the vertical pole containing the information about trail usage and mile markers.

Timetable: City of Douglas would like the marker design completed in March. They would also like it to be consistent along the entire trail. We concur.

Sunny will contact graphic designer. Carol mentioned a program called “Spitball” which would also work out a design via computer. This is not the preferred method.

Carol is also writing the narration for the historical narrative. We need to find a narrator.

Property Raffle

John will apply for solicitor’s license.

Data Management

Clark is in charge of database management. A meeting was held and a new outline for input and use of data was established. Clark is setting up an Access program and will get the information from Jim Van Buren. A process was also set up to gather and sort the information. Some information can be password

protected. Clark will continue to work with Jim and then each board member will be asked to assist in identifying categories, i.e. Volunteer, donor, etc.

Annual Campaign Letter

Jeanne thanked everyone for working on the first annual year end campaign. She has had good feedback from those that received letters. A special thank you to our two “Jims” for preparing the letter.

Other Business

John discussed an article re: charitable giving. He noted the importance of:

1. Advertising your donors.
2. Public recognition for donations. Publishing in local newspapers is an opportunity to showcase our donors. Donors should be contacted to ask if they would like to be acknowledged publicly. John suggested this be done on an annual basis.
3. John noted that every dollar donated goes directly to the trail and it is important to make sure everyone is aware of the low overhead involved in this project. This is noted at our community information sessions, but needs to be noted as much as possible when at other fundraising events.

A meeting is scheduled with Cynthia McKeane, sculptor on January 2nd who is volunteering to create and produce our major donor gifts. Everyone is aware of the low overhead.

Capital Campaign 2015

Timeline report was disseminated. The timeline was designed at a meeting in October. Clark suggested that it be placed on the website to outline accomplishments and goals. Clark also suggested that a map of the trail also be kept online. It could be a small icon that could be clicked to enlarge.

Campaign Work Plan Update was reviewed and discussed. Jeanne will be submitting a Bikes for People Grant for \$10,000, a grant request to Perrigo for

\$40,000, a grant request for \$15,000 from Allegan County Community Foundation, and a \$5,000 request from Holland Hospital for 2015.

Lot Raffle. A committee will convene in late Spring 2015 to plan this event. Julie will chair this committee.

Lakeshore Harvest Bike Tour 2015 – Increased sponsorships, increased riders are needed to meet the campaign target. There were around 300 riders this year; another 200 more may be possible for 2015.

Jeanne will put it on the January agenda for further discussion.

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 PM. Merry Christmas everyone!

Next meeting: January 8, 2015 4:00 pm at Casco Township Hall

