

Friends of the Blue Star Trail Special Board Meeting

May 28, 2015

Present: Jeanne Van Zoeren, John Adams, Jim Sullivan, Clark Carmichael, Jim Van Buren, Sunny Hill

Guests: Tim Stewart (Hurley-Stewart): Deborah Poeder(Land Matters)

1. The May 7, 2015 Minutes were approved as distributed.

2. Issues/Concerns/Updates – Jeanne

- There will be a Fund Raising meeting scheduled at Clark's home on June 10th at 1 pm.
- Perrigo contributed \$2,000 this past month. She will be preparing application requests for \$20,000 to (2) local family foundations within the next few weeks.
- Jeanne and John met with several lakeshore municipalities, township managers, and Allegan County ark staff to consider some sort of formal alliance. The consensus was that we would work toward an informal association model. Meetings would be quarterly.

At the same meeting Brian Dissette, the City Manager of South Haven and a strong advocate of trails, expressed an interest in developing a more formal relationship in trail development that would benefit us both. While nothing has been formalized yet, the concept is that we would work together to connect the City's existing trail network, the Kal-Haven Trail, and our 20 mile trailway. There was some discussion among the Board members about whether this would dilute our current efforts. Following discussion, however, it was agreed that working together and combining our strengths, would significantly enhance Blue Star trailway connectivity north and south **and** east and west of with the addition of an access point off Kal-Haven

trail off the BS Highway.. A formal motion to explore this concept further with the City of South Haven staff was moved, seconded, and approved..

3. Social Media – Jim Van Buren

- Jim has created our new Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/MyBlueStarTrail>
- Also, Jim registered us at twitter - <https://twitter.com/MyBlueStarTrail>

It is a great start and all of us supporting the development of the Blue Star Trail should check it out and encourage others to follow us!

4. Treasurer's Report (John Adams)

As a follow-up to our last meeting Tim Stewart and Debbie Poeder (Tim's subcontractor handling right of way easement process) joined us today to give us a status update on Phase II of the Trail.

- Tim distributed a Project Summary & Review Meeting Handout, which outlined his agenda. The handout is an example of what he wants to provide at monthly meetings to keep us informed. As the project progresses, the updates will have less subject matter. He anticipates that he will not have to personally attend our meetings unless we are at a critical decision making stage.
- Highlights of the conversation with Tim and Debbie are as follows:
 - 1.The Environmental T&E and wetlands inspection has been completed. There was no evidence of endangered species.. A formal report will follow soon.
 2. Debbie Poeder reviewed with us the properties that need to be part of the ROW acquisition process in Phase II. She has contacted all the owners of the properties to explain the process and address any concerns as best as she can. Debbie reviewed her Land Value Study and explained how she

arrived at her value per square foot for each easement property. She plans to mail to each property owner in a few weeks the valuation for their parcel with the supporting papers that they can review and use to respond to her offer. Debbie explained that she has specific guidelines she must follow and that each offer is actually based on the value of leasing, not purchasing each property. Following lengthy discussion, it was moved, seconded, and approved that Jeanne would prepare a letter for each property owner explaining the project. She will include the BST Phase Development map and the State of Michigan Lake to Lake hand-outs for their review. Debbie will follow with Land Matters offer letter.

3. Lastly, Tim and Debbie reviewed with us their original estimate for the project and how they arrived at these figures. The projected cost overruns were primarily due to the underestimated projection of needed easements (12 projected vs 26 actual). While Tim said this was the best estimate he could make at the time, he understands that we based our fundraising efforts on this number and are now having to deal with the likely shortfall at a time when we wanted to be focusing raising funds for Phase III. He proposed (1) a modest discount of his current cost projection and a delayed payment for the possible shortfall. We all thanked him for his consideration and the sincere manner in which he is trying to partner with us so that we can reach our mutual goals.

5. Meeting adjourned at 7:25 PM.

6. Next meeting: June 25, Thursday, 4:00 pm at Casco Township Hall