

City 'supports' trail? Get real

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To the editor,

This letter was sent to me because for the person's own reasons they did not want to publish their own name. I agree with what this person has written and am happy to put my name to it in this letter to the editor.

It is now time to connect the trail and I want to thank the existing Saugatuck City Council members who are able to examine the facts and find it within themselves to support this needed area project:

After reading Dan Fox's latest letter to the editor last week "shaming" supporters of the Blue Star Trail for marching in the Fourth of July Parade, I can no longer hold my tongue.

Mr. Fox, a member of the city planning commission, has repeatedly expressed his opposition to the trail. Now it seems, if you support the trail and have the audacity to express an opinion to council members, even by marching in a parade, you are to be shamed.

Mr. Fox asserts in his letter, "as the trail group knows very well, the council is already on record supporting the trail." Truth is, actions speak louder than words. The truth is, the city council has dodged, weaved, delayed and stonewalled trail supporters since council's backing was first sought more than three years ago.

Trail construction will be at no cost to the city. Yes, there will be minimal maintenance cost some years down the road, but for four-tenths of a mile? Please. This is a bogus issue and everyone knows it.

Last fall, the trail group agreed, in good faith, to pay Saugatuck's own engineering firm more than \$18,000 to study the issue and recommend acceptable options allowing for completion of the trail. This study was undertaken with council's approval.

The engineer's report was released this spring with several options resolving council's expressed safety issues. Yet members still refuse to grant its approval.

Now the suggestion has been made to put the issue to a vote of the people in the November election. This is absurd. Three years of study, thousands of dollars spent on engineering reports and still no decision by the city council. Does the council really support the trail as Mr. Fox states, or are some well-intentioned people being played for suckers here?

Hundreds and hundreds of non-motorized “bike trails” commonly traverse the landscapes across Michigan and this country.

Most, at one or more points, cross busy intersections presenting safety issues which must always be considered but are routinely resolved. The fact is, bicyclists, walkers and joggers are going to cross at the intersection of Blue Star Highway and Lake Street, whether there is a constructed bike trail there or not.

Logic tells you it would be safer for such persons to be crossing at that location on a designated, safety-designed bike trail than to cross where there is no provision whatever for their safety — as is now the situation.

The time has come for the city council to make a final review of their engineer’s report, adopt the best option for this intersection and vote its approval. Completion of the connecting trail, along with thousands of dollars of pending state grant money is at stake.

If the council truly supports the trail, it is time to show it. Actions speak louder than words.

Agreed to and signed by,
Dick Waskin

Saugatuck Township