

FRIENDS OF THE BLUE STAR TRAIL

MINUTES

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS JUNE 21, 2018

PRESENT: John Adams, Clark Carmichael, Richard Donovan, Laura Jager, Dan Keller,
John Ludlow, Jeanne Van Zoeren
ABSENT: Jack Eisinger, Sunny Hill

Call to Order. John Adams called the meeting to order. He reported that Frank Cunningham has resigned from the Board due to the press of other commitments. Members noted his many contributions to the FOTBST, thanked him, and expressed hope that he would continue to assist as time allows.

Minutes. Due to a misunderstanding, the final version of the minutes of the May meeting was not circulated beforehand, so approval will be postponed until the next meeting.

Treasurer's Report. In the absence of Jack Eisinger, John Adams gave the Treasurer's report. The Toast event exceeded its goals with tentative net proceeds of \$47,765. The latest balance sheet and P&L statement were circulated.

Update on Grants. Jeanne VanZoeren provided an update on pending grant applications. She reported that she recently told the DNR grant coordinator that we expect to have the required matching funds (approx. \$20,000 yet to be raised) by the October 1 deadline, which should give us additional points in the application process.

John Adams reported that he had recently spoken with the MDOT grant coordinator to relate the developments with the City of Saugatuck. She reaffirmed that FOTBST needs to provide a letter of approval from the City of the proposed interim route. John opined that we still hope to get conditional approval of our application this year, although funding is doubtful because MDOT tends to commit funds early in the grant cycle. The most likely scenario at this point is that we would not receive the funds to build until 2020.

Jeanne reminded the Board that we would like to secure more pledges.

City of Saugatuck. John Adams reported that, at its May 29 meeting, the City Council declined to agree to the interim route solution proposed by MDOT. Indeed, the Council voted not to add the question to its agenda since there had not been time to give adequate notice to the public (FOTBST only received the request from MDOT a few days before the Council meeting and promptly notified the City). In subsequent conversations with John, Kirk Harrier, the City Manager, suggested that it would facilitate matters if FOTBST agreed to pay for the City's regular engineering firm to study and recommend solutions to the concerns about the Lake Street intersection. A subcommittee of the Board drafted a letter of understanding with the City that would set forth the terms on which we would accede to Harrier's suggestion, primarily that if the exercise resulted in a mutually satisfactory solution, the City would provide the letter of support that MDOT has requested.

In the meantime, Harrier unilaterally asked the City's engineers, Fleis & Vandenbrink, to submit a proposal. John circulated a copy, dated June 20, 2018, just before the meeting. It provided a work plan, a lump sum cost of \$18,600, and a rough estimate of time to completion. The scope of work had been enlarged to include the route over the Kalamazoo River Bridge.

A discussion ensued about how to respond to the proposal and options for securing the City's approval. A number of concerns were noted, including that: there would be no sense agreeing to pay for the study unless the City agreed that a satisfactory outcome would result in the letter of support to MDOT; the engineers should minimize cost and duplication by reviewing previous studies by the City and by Douglas; there is a risk that the engineers would defer to the City's viewpoints since the City is its regular client; and an opportunity for consideration of the FOTBST 's and any other engineers' opinions is important.

A consensus was reached to (1) obtain the comments of FOTBST's engineering firm about the proposal and the best way to work together with the City's engineers; (2) schedule ASAP a meeting among the City, F&V, FOTBST, and possibly our engineer, to raise our concerns, evaluate F&V's willingness to address them; (3) discuss further with Harrier the LOU approach; and (4) revisit the issue with the Board to make a decision how to proceed.

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Fundraising Update. Laura Jager noted several initiatives under consideration, including development of a Powerpoint for pitches to major donor prospects, a "Just 10" campaign in which a larger number of people are asked to give even a small amount of money, and a Square Foot campaign in which donors would "buy" a square foot of trail. Laura also noted that donors want to see progress, so it is important to keep them up to date.

Communications Update. In Sunny's absence, Dan Keller called attention to a number of upcoming events that present an opportunity for FOTBST to raise awareness:

- July 4 parade in Saugatuck-Douglas
- Aug 11 Blueberry Festival in South Haven
- Labor Day bridge walk in Saugatuck-Douglas
- Music in the Park in Saugatuck
- Douglas Socials
- Glen pancake breakfasts

John Adams related that several local business owners had suggested we provide a sign or decal that could be displayed in windows of businesses.

Harvest Ride Update. Clark Carmichael gave an update on this next event. So far we have \$2650 in sponsorships. Photos and more information are being added to the website.

Committees. John Adams asked the members to be prepared to discuss at the next meeting the responsibilities of their committees, including what types of decisions should be made at the committee level and which ones should be brought to Board.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Donovan, Secretary