

Minutes
Telephonic Meeting of the Board of Directors
Friends of the Blue Star Trail
February 20, 2019 2:30 pm

Present: John Adams, Clark Carmichael, Jeanne VanZaeren, Sunny Hill, Laura Jager, Richard Donovan, Jack Eisinger, Dan Keller

Absent: John Ludlow

1. **Fundraising Strategy.** The Board discussed the Friends' fundraising strategy for 2019 given our inability to date to obtain approval from the Saugatuck City Council for the Trail section in the City.
 - a. **Toast Event.** Clark Carmichael explained that his wife Cathy, the Chairperson of the *Toast* fundraising event, was uncomfortable proceeding under the current circumstances, in particular the need to solicit sponsors when the progress of the Trail is stalled due to the inaction of the City. After robust discussion, the Board unanimously approved a motion to suspend *Toast* in 2019. Dan Keller will work on communication of this development to our supporters. It is hoped that there will be an opportunity for a different event later in the year.
 - b. **Harvest Ride.** The Board next discussed the desirability and feasibility of holding the Lake Shore Harvest Ride (LHR) in 2019. Clark Carmichael, who had chaired the event for the last few years, expressed a desire to step down from that role in order to focus on other Friends' tasks, including the upcoming PR campaign in the City. Most Board members felt it would be beneficial to hold the ride in 2019 but some were concerned about the required resources needed for the LHR, including management of databases and social media among other things. One possibility is to retain an event manager if an appropriate person can be found at a reasonable cost.

After discussion, Jack Eisinger indicated that he is willing to consider assumption of the chair role for 2019. Jack and Clark agreed to discuss this option and explore bringing in outside resources to help with the effort. They will report back to the Board within 45 days.
2. John Adams reported that state representative Mary Whiteford had reached out to the Friends to discuss how she could help. John will schedule a meeting with her, including Clark.
3. **City Campaign.** John Adams and Dan Keller discussed utilizing local marketing professionals to advise us how to structure a PR campaign, as an alternative to a PR firm, possibly on a pro bono basis. These professionals could bring both skills and local knowledge needed for a successful campaign. John and Dan have identified several potential candidates, and Board members were encouraged to identify others. Dan Keller agreed to lead this effort, which would be tasked with developing the main elements of a

PR campaign in the City.

The Board then discussed the formation of a community outreach group made up primarily of Saugatuck City residents, which would be asked to implement the actions recommended by the marketing/PR working group. Ideally this group would be led by a resident(s). Clark Carmichael will provide a list of City residents and trail ambassadors to the Board. All Board members were asked to review this list and suggest other candidates for the outreach committee.

4. **Legal Options.** Richard Donovan then reviewed potential legal options to advance our goal of obtaining City approval, based on his review of Saugatuck City ordinances and state law:
 - a. It appears that there is no legal mechanism available to force City Council to provide the pledge of support and approval of a City route for the Trail that are being required by the state agencies that administer grants.
 - b. The state statute that authorizes a referendum does not apply to local communities or ordinances, and only addresses the passing of a new law or changing an existing one, not to administrative actions of a legislative body like the Council.
 - c. The Friends could seek a millage, which would result in a vote of the City residents. It is not clear if a successful vote would obligate Council to build the Trail section in the City.
 - d. The Friends could organize a petition, but Council would not be legally bound to respect the wishes of the signatories.