

Friends of the Blue Star Trail

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

September 20, 2018

PRESENT: John Adams, Clark Carmichael, Jack Eisinger, Richard Donovan, Dan Keller, Laura Jager, Jeanne VanZoeren, Sunny Hill (by phone)

ABSENT: John Ludlow

ALSO PRESENT: John Morrison (Item 3)

1. **Call to Order.** John Adams called the meeting to order.
2. **Review and approval of August Minutes** (Motion to approve by J. Van Zoeren, seconded by D. Keller, passed unanimously)
3. **John Morrison**, Executive Director, West Michigan Trails and Greenways, discussed the history of his organization, its scope (basically 100 miles of trails in the MDOT Grand Region), and its new strategic plan, which includes promoting uniformity of trail signage.
 - a. study in Minn. showed that seal coating early on significantly extends the life of an asphalt trail
 - b. discussed strategy re City of Saugatuck, MDOT's requirement for linear construction, buy-in from residents
 - c. John's organization may be able to help us with funds and certainly with information/advice
4. **Treasurer's Report** — Jack distributed and reviewed an updated balance sheet and P&L
5. **Lakeshore Harvest Ride Update** — Clark reviewed the highlights: 413 riders, positive comments on Facebook, on budget, great article in *Commercial Record*. It was noted that many riders came from outside the area, and so spent money on food and lodging as well as at the stops on the tour. The Board thanked Clark and his committee for a job well done.
6. **Spending Policy** — Richard reviewed the proposed policy, which was circulated in advance of the meeting. Laura moved to approve, Clark seconded, motion passed unanimously.
7. **Letter of support-South Haven as Pure Michigan Trail Town** — Jeanne Van Zoeren explained the background of this state program and how a successful application by SH would benefit the BST. After discussion, Jeanne moved to

approve the draft letter of support that had been circulated in advance, Clark seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

8. **Update on the SH connection** — Laura reported on her recent conversation with Brian Dissette, City Manager of South Haven, about the possibility of a grant for a trail connection of 0.6 mile to the pavilion in downtown SH. Jeanne determined that it may be eligible for a DNR Passport grant, which requires that it connect to a state park. The city would be the applicant and we would assist with the application. MDOT Grand Region stops at Baseline Rd. at north side of South Haven, so there may be two different MDOT staffs involved in the review. We may contribute to the required match but would certainly look to the town for a portion. This would be a way for us to continue construction while waiting for a resolution in Saugatuck City, and show donors in SH that we are making progress in their area.
9. **Annual campaign** — Laura explained that she, Ellen Donovan and Jack met to discuss the approach this year. They contemplate a letter that will include an update and a tentative theme of “cooperation, construction and celebration.” They propose to send to the LHR bikers too, possibly with a request for a donation. Want to have it in the mail by December 3, with personal notes from Board members. A draft will be prepared for review by the Board.

10. **Community Outreach Update** (John)

Info Session at Ludlows— very successful start; a report was circulated previously

Future meetings—possibly at Yacht Club in second week of October; several people are willing to invite others. Discussed timing of outreach; should not be rushed since we are driving the effort; Jeanne related that April 1, 2019 is one deadline that we should be prepared to meet, though MDOT funds are committed for 2019 and 2020.

PR Firm discussion — John reported that he had received suggestions and spoke with two firms but neither seems to fit our needs.

Discussed the need to rebut a perception by MDOT staff that residents of the City are not in favor of the Trail, which perception is probably based on articles forwarded to staff by Kirk Harrier, City Manager.

9. **Utilizing outside resources** — Clark opined that as Toast and the Harvest Ride have grown over the last few years, the workload for the chair has become too much. He shared an analysis of tasks that could be assigned to someone, and emphasized the need for reliability. He and Cathy recommend that we seriously consider hiring someone for certain tasks, whether as independent contractor or employee. The possibility of using a college intern was also mentioned.

Jon Morrison mentioned a donor/non-profit software program called “Little Green Light,” which his organization uses.

11. **Grants Update** — Jeanne explained that there is an Oct. 2 deadline for the

DNR/Natural Resources Trust Fund grant application for \$200,000 for the two sections in Saugatuck Twp. to Holland St. and Old Allegan Rd., and that DNR has added new requirements in its 500 point system. The Twp. team is compiling about 30 supplemental documents in the hope of raising our score from 240 to +400. Our match would be \$96,000, which we have in the Allegan County Community Foundation.

12. **Hurley Stewart-Project closeout.** The engineers are close but have not closed out last year's contract. A subcommittee of the Board will meet with HS in early October to discuss how we can improve our work going forward and the terms of a contract with HS.

13. **Next meeting date:** October 18, 2018 4:00 PM @ Casco Township Hall

14. **Adjournment.** The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:10.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard E. Donovan

Richard E. Donovan, Secretary

