

WASHINGTON COUNTY AD HOC TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 17, 2018

AD HOC TRAILS COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Supervisors Shaw, Idleman, David Perkins, Tim/Mary Ward, Gretchen Stark, Matt Traver, Village of Fort Edward

AD HOC TRAILS COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Hogan, Middleton, Rozell

SUPERVISORS: Henke, Hicks

Debra Prehoda, Clerk

Chris DeBolt, County Administrator

Heather Weller, GIS Specialist RPTS

Public

AGENDA AS PRESENTED IN COMMITTEE NOTICE:

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Accept Minutes – December 13, 2017
- 2) Trails Discussion
- 4) Other Business
- 5) Adjournment

Chairman Shaw called the meeting to order at 10:35 A.M.

A motion to approve the minutes of the December 13, 2017 meeting was moved by Ms. Idleman, seconded by Mr. Traver and adopted.

Mission Statement – Ms. Idleman offered the following draft mission statement:

- The Trails Committee's mission is to advocate for, support and promote the development of a county wide trail system in Washington County with connections to trails outside the confines of the county for the purpose of recreation, economic development and historic appreciation.

Mr. Perkins suggested adding wording regarding our community connections within the county. He referred to the development of snowmobile trails in the Adirondack Park and having community connectors. Connecting communities together has the economic benefit built right into it. He is thinking of community support within Washington County and if they see these trails are to enhance business within the county that would generate support. The draft mission statement was amended as follows:

- The Trails Committee's mission is to advocate for, support and promote the development of a county wide trail system that connects communities within Washington County as well as connections to trails outside the confines of the county for the purpose of recreation, economic development and historic appreciation.

A motion to adopt the mission statement as amended was moved by Mr. Traver, seconded by Ms. Stark and adopted.

Goals & Objectives – Ms. Idleman is compiling a list of goals and objectives submitted by members for consideration at next month's meeting.

Chairman Shaw provided the following contact information:

- Jim Boni, NYS DOT – 518-457-8546 - In charge of the off road Rt. 4 portion of the Empire State Trail between Fort Ann and Whitehall.
- Alta Planning Contact Lindsay Zefting – 518-874-4211
- Shannon Martin, Georgia Pacific – 404-652-6558 – Regarding trail along Rt. 113 in the Town of Greenwich. Almost the full length of trail is on Rt. 113 and it borders Georgia Pacific property. She stated they would be open to discuss about moving the trail off the

shoulder of Rt. 113 but needs more information. Heather Weller, Real Property GIS Specialist, is preparing maps to forward to Georgia Pacific. Chairman Shaw asked if this is something the committee wants to pursue. Mr. Perkins stated anything we can do to get the trail off the shoulder of the road is a positive thing. On a bike, it is a very tough road especially when it is busy because there is no room. He is sure Georgia Pacific will have liability concerns and it was discussed that the State probably has the liability insurance coverage for the Empire State Trail and the Champlain Canalway Trail would be covered under the Empire State trail because it is the same route but that topic needs to be pursued in detail. No one will let them on private property without coverage. The County Administrator stated the County Board could elect to provide coverage through NYMIR. The liability issue would be part of any agreement with Georgia Pacific. Committee consensus was interest in pursuing trail options with Georgia Pacific. Mr. Perkins suggested this topic be a regular agenda item to ensure it continues to move forward.

Whitehall Trail – Mr. Ward reported the feasibility study is coming along quite well now. The big problem will be getting across the railroad tracks at flat rock. Every time you cross the railroad tracks they have to increase their insurance and they will have to negotiate that with them and that will be handled by Chazen Engineering. He stated they are going to have to figure out what Laura Oswald's \$430,000 CFA grant award covers. They are in the process of working on easements with property owners and probably use some of the grant award to purchase some easements and hopefully some easements are free. There is a meeting this afternoon with some of the landowners and an update from Chazen Engineering on where they are at with the study. One problem is they wanted to go on the old Champlain canal but it is owned by the railroad and they do not know which one and that is being explored further. Mentioned the Power Express power line coming through Putnam, Whitehall and Fort Ann and how possibly the trail could follow the buried power line but they are unsure where the power line is going and that information would be helpful suggesting possibly inviting them to a meeting. Mr. Ward would like the Whitehall Trail to go along the old canal because it is more scenic and the power line will probably be as straight as an arrow and they do not want to be near the tracks.

Empire State Trail – Chairman Shaw contacted Jeff Olsen about coming to a meeting but due to a teaching commitment he is not available but will have one of his associates attend a future meeting; Lindsay Zefting, Alta Planning.

Fort Ann Section of Trail – Ms. Stark reported that she has been unable to find out any information on the proposed trail route. It is her understanding that they want the trail to go right along Rt. 4.

Mr. Traver stated there are two grants, the Empire State Trail grant and the Champlain Trail. Mr. Perkins stated there are three grants, Empire State Trail \$200M in State funding, \$430,000 CFA – Comstock to Whitehall and the feasibility study for the Whitehall section – Fort Ann to Whitehall determining best route. The CFA grant and Whitehall feasibility study will work together; one is finding the best route and one to make it shovel ready. The Empire State Trail is aware of the work being done through the other two grants.

The County Administrator mentioned bond act monies for a trail from Rt. 196 to Baldwin Corners that has been in the process for years. GPI is the engineering firm working on this project and Mr. Perkins believes construction will start next year.

Mr. Perkins mentioned a trail going from the southern end of the Village of Fort Edward up to New Swamp Road in Kingsbury. Three major projects have to be done regarding this trail; bridge across the old canal, bridge across Bond Creek and a tunnel under Rt. 196. The tunnel project has been delegated to NYS DOT and the two bridges to the Canal Corp. He stated the committee needs updates from these two agencies on the status of these projects. Ms. Idleman asked Mr. Perkins if he would prepare a list of the ongoing projects and contact information and he agreed to provide that information. These are Empire State Trail funded projects.

Fort Edward Village Mayor Traver stated the above-mentioned trail goes on the village streets and they are trying to redirect a portion along the old canal but there are issues with an old aqueduct. He stated they have an existing trail once you go through Mullen Park that connects to the Towpath; current bike trail. The village has not yet designated the portion of the trail through Mullen Park as part of the Empire State Trail but plan to once the trail route is confirmed.

Chairman Shaw stated once you leave Rt. 113, the Town of Greenwich has designated their trail route from River Road, Rt. 4, all the way up to Fort Miller and then the Town of Fort Edward will need to pursue the trail to the village and hopefully find a route off Rt. 4 and go along the canal.

Mr. Hicks, Town of Granville, stated they received a planning grant and are working with Chazen who plans to update them at the end of the month. This trail would connect from Salem up to Vermont. They have a landowner issue with one section in Granville and the Salem portion needs to be developed. They hope to take the information from Chazen and submit a CFA application.

The next meeting is Wednesday, February 14th at 10:30 A.M. in the Supervisors large conference room.

The meeting adjourned at 11:14 A.M.

Debra Prehoda, Clerk
Washington County Board of Supervisors