

WASHINGTON COUNTY AD HOC TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 14, 2018

AD HOC TRAILS COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Supervisor Shaw, Rozell; D. Perkins, T. Ward; G. Stark

AD HOC TRAILS COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Supervisors Idleman, Moore, Hogan, Middleton, Hicks; M. Traver Village of Fort Edward Representative

SUPERVISORS: Clary

Sandy Huffer, Deputy Clerk

Heather Weller, GIS Specialist RPTS

Pamela Landi, Jr. Planner

AGENDA AS PRESENTED IN COMMITTEE NOTICE:

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Accept Minutes – February 14, 2018
- 3) Goals & Objectives
- 4) Trails Updates:
 - a) Empire State Trail/Champlain Canalway Trail
 - b) Fort Ann
 - c) Fort Edward – Village and Town
 - d) Granville
 - e) Greenwich
 - f) Kingsbury
- 5) Other Business
- 6) Adjournment

Chairman Shaw called the meeting to order at 10:34 AM.

A motion to accept the minutes from the February 14, 2018 meeting, was moved by Mr. Perkins, seconded by Mrs. Stark and adopted.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES (MISSION STATEMENT)

These were distributed at the last meeting for review. Under objectives: Chairman Shaw suggested adding “that meet our goals & objectives” after Coordinate all efforts. He feels this is simple and broad enough to allow for flexibility moving forward. A motion to accept the Mission Statement as amended, was moved by Mr. Perkins, seconded by Mr. Ward. Discussion. Mr. Perkins stated he has done some research on mission statements, goals and master plans but forgot to bring the documentation today. Chairman Shaw stated that everything is so fluid that we could be changing the mission statement every month. The mission statement can be amended at any time and if the committee would like to refine the goals & objectives in the future he would entertain that. A motion to accept the Mission Statement as amended, was moved by Mr. Perkins, seconded by Mr. Ward and adopted. (Revised Mission Statement attached.)

TRAILS UPDATES

- Empire State Trail/Champlain Canalway Trail – Chairman Shaw asked Mr. Perkins, member of the Champlain Canalway working group, to update the committee.
 - Still reeling over the Empire State Trail announcement last month that they were going to take Clay Hill Road out of Fort Ann, do trail work to get across prison property to Comstock, then out Route 4. A group met yesterday including Supervisor Moore, Gretchen Stark, Tracy Clothier (LA Group) and Paul Cummings (Chazen). From Fort Ann to Comstock, both grants are making an impact. He feels they made headway impressing that there are some problems on Clay Hill Road and going out to Route 4 is

not ideal. Once you leave Clay Hill Road, you can't get back to it without crossing private land. They are setting up meetings with landowners to explore opportunities due to the dangerous sections of Clay Hill Road. The consultants travelled Clay Hill Road for the first time yesterday and couldn't imagine navigating the steep hills and curves on a bicycle.

- South of Fort Ann – Waiting for announcement on March 22nd on what they are going to do from Fort Edward to New Swamp Road. He noted a peek in interest in the Town of Kingsbury. Pamela Landi added that a few access points were discussed including kayak access. Heather Weller, GIS Specialist has made contacts with Alta Planning to obtain shape files. She hasn't obtained them yet but will share with this group when she gets them.
- Fort Ann Battlefield – Difficulties shut down the potential to use the west side of the canal and the focus changed to the east side. Now that the Fort Ann Battlefield has come into play, is there potentially more funding that could overcome the difficulties on the west side? Mr. Perkins stated that has been discussed. If you're going to run a trail to Battle Hill, it would have to be to Battle Hill and back to the Village because there is no way to continue north from Battle Hill and get back across Route 4. They would like to tie Battle Hill in. The campground has a couple of spots that oversee Battle Hill but we're a long way from knowing how it's going to pan out but it is being looked at. There was also a lot of interest and support for instead of going across prison property, building a pedestrian bridge across the canal where Dewey's Bridge used to be, to get you over to Old State Route 4. From there, you could pick up the Power Express project and from there it is a straight shot north.
- The Governor is asking for \$13 million for the EST and \$25 million for the Hudson Greenway but most of that is for Manhattan.
- Fort Edward Village/Town – Tracy Clothier who is working on revising the Action Plan has met with Supervisors talking about what can be done to improve the trail. Mr. Traver would love to see money put into redoing the aqueduct bridge so that the trail doesn't have to follow Route 4 and would go along the old canal. South of Fort Edward it is important that a connection is made over to the Important Bird Area. The potential links to other resources such as the IBA would greatly enhance the trail from a tourist point of view. It is important to be aware of all these possibilities so they are not forgotten.
- Granville – Chazen has submitted cost estimates to the Town. The group must figure out where they want to start to move this forward.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Mr. Perkins stated that Pamela and he attended a round table tourism discussion and it was stated that there always seems to be a north versus south mentality. Almost all in attendance were from southern Washington County and they were looking for ways to promote what is important to them and not looking county wide. He was disappointed that they didn't seem to be interested in these major trail projects. Chairman Shaw noted from his experience, the southern group focuses on the Village of Greenwich, Cambridge and Salem. These efforts are community based. He also noted that the Champlain Canalway Trail doesn't hit Cambridge or Granville. Mr. Perkins would like the mindset of this doesn't pertain to us change to how can this benefit me. Chairman Shaw added that once the EST becomes active and successful and people are seen using the trail, they will get more involved. Pamela added that the trail itself may be one of the unifying pieces.

WHITEHALL – Tim Ward stated that he has new maps that show more specifics. He also reported that Chazen has said that Canadian Pacific wants to talk. One landowner with about a quarter mile stretch, does not want us using the Towpath. In order to use the Towpath, we need access points to build it. The hope is to have a very short, straight and level section on Route 4. The section from Ryder Road to Whitehall, there are almost no access points for maintenance. Pamela and he checked out a culvert where the old canal went underneath the railroad and if they could use the old culvert, it would be on state land and avoid landowners.

PARKING AREAS & BATHROOMS – Chairman Shaw stated he was surprised the State doesn't regulate the distance between parking areas and bathrooms along the trail. He asked the committee if we should start identifying viewsheds and parking areas. Heather Weller, GIS Specialist suggested coming up with a list that could be mapped out with points of interest, bathrooms, parking areas, birding areas, historical places, picnic areas, cultural experiences, vistas. Mr. Perkins stated that he believes that along the canalway trail, they are planning a parking area at New Swamp Road.

Supervisor John Rozell, Whitehall joined the meeting. He stated that at the last meeting, DOT talked about their plans along Route 4, adding a foot to the shoulders and paint striping. He is concerned about having the trail go along the shoulder of Route 4, as it will be dangerous. He asked if a resolution can be brought to the full Board to be sent to the state recommending that they cancel the paint striping and use those funds toward the Towpath route. The paint striping is to be done this year. A motion for a resolution to be drafted asking to state to cancel the paint striping contract and use those funds towards the Towpath route, moved by Mr. Perkins, seconded by Mrs. Stark. Ms. Landri stated that it needs to be clear where the resolution should go, because DOT has the funds, not the EST. A motion for a resolution to be drafted asking to state to cancel the paint striping contract and use those funds towards the Towpath route, moved by Mr. Perkins, seconded by Mrs. Stark and adopted. Chairman Shaw will work with the County Attorney to draft a resolution.

Sue Clary, Salem Supervisor stated that Salem is looking forward to the trail. Not sure how it will work out due to the mixed ownership issues that keep coming up. The railroad bridges along White Creek are looked at as obstacles due to flooding.

To recap today's meeting, Chairman Shaw stated that a resolution will be prepared for this Friday's Board meeting regarding the Route 4 paint striping. Heather Weller is going to start working on a map identifying parking areas, places of interest, bathrooms, vistas, cultural experiences, trails, fishing, historical places. He also asked Dave Perkins if he would be willing to report this committee's discussions back to Agriculture, Planning, Tourism and Community Development committee and he agreed to do so.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 18, 2018 at 10:30 AM.

The meeting adjourned at 11:37 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Sandy Huffer, Deputy Clerk
Board of Supervisors*

Mission Statement:

The Trails Committee's mission statement 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.

Goals:

- Create a Master Plan
 - Promote county wide collaboration
 - Review and coordinate current Trail grants
- Coordinate Empire State Trail and Champlain Canalway Trail efforts

Objectives:

- Promote continuity throughout the County in order to increase tourism and recreation
 - Apply for Grants as a group, not individually
- Eliminate plans that do not support the mission statement and goals
 - Coordinate all efforts that meet our goals & objectives