

**OAKLAND COUNTY
TRAILS ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
October 27, 2004**

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Dan Navarre at 9:11 a.m. in the commission room of the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission's administration building.

PRESENT:

Marge Gatliff, Kristen Wiltfang, Dan Duncan, Dot Lalone, Todd Scott, Lois Golden, Dan Stencil, Joe Figa, Merle Richmond, Barry Culham, Jeff Edwards, Larry Falardeau, Nicole Chandler, Brian Blaesing, Ralph Richard, Chris Doozan, Paul Pounders, David Burley, Mike Hartner, Kristen Myers, Sue Julian and Bruce Austin.

MINUTES:

Moved by Dan Duncan, supported by Chris Doozan, to approve the minutes of the August 25, 2004 meeting as submitted. The motion passed on voice vote.

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:

- Brian Blaesing of the Road Commission of Oakland County ask to present a study of motorized/non-motorized crashes to OTAC, at this meeting or the next.
- Sue Julian of the Headwaters Trail
- Larry Falardeau request an opportunity to address the committee regarding a master plan trail map.

TRAIL NETWORK UPDATE:

- Paint Creek Trail: The resurfacing project started one week ago and is currently ½ complete. Three inches of limestone is being added to the surface and then it is being compacted to two inches. Four hundred feet of additional surfaced trail is being added. The specifications for this resurfacing are available upon request.
- The Polly Ann Trail is being required to change the scope of the bridge project in Oxford to include the DNR requirements regarding ADA etc. Lois Golden reported that the trail crossing would be unsafe without the bridge. A grant extension has been granted.

Lois also reminded OTAC members that if they partner in a fundraiser to be sure to get a written agreement up-front. The Polly Ann Trail participated in a fundraiser and at this point has received no monetary award for their part and are experienced set-up and clean-up problems.

- Clinton River Trail representative Mike Hartner announced that Bruce Austin would represent the trail for the next six months. The Clinton River Trail is made up of five communities and the appointed representative for OTAC will rotate among them.
- Information on erosion control and pedestrian bridges was requested by Mike Hartner. Please bring anything you have to offer on these topics to the next meeting.
- The West Bloomfield Trail had no new news to report.
- Lakes Community Trail members are ok with the name change proposed, "Lakes Community Trail." The new name will be used on the official map.
- Huron Valley Trail representative, Chris Doozan, reported that they are working on the RFP to bid out the engineering to design their new trail. They have a State grant of \$25,000 to fund the engineering.

- The Woodward Corridor Trail will be represented by Todd Scott. A bike path in Ferndale along Woodward was not approved at this time. Dan Burton did an assessment for Ferndale because of the "cool cities" grant and made recommendations for their bike trail.

PRESENTATION BY PAUL POUNDERS, PEREMARQUETTE:

Paul Pounders, the director of the Pere Marquette Rail Trail, gave an overview of the trail. Trailheads and overlooks utilize a 50-acre bog and historical sites. 23/24 feet on each side of the trail are kept clear. The trail is plowed in winter. There is approximately 3.7 miles between restrooms.

A ½ mil tax is used to provide maintenance for the trail. Businesses that access the trail are required to pay fees for permits and additional fees may apply. An annual fee, based on real-estate value (not homeowners), is assessed. In addition, one-time fees are collected for utility crossings etc. All roadways requesting to cross the trail are declined.

No motorized vehicles are allowed on the trails (does allow amigos with flags attached).

Their goal is to create connections to the community parks, schools, etc. A survey done 3 years ago by MSU concluded that 176,000 persons used the trail that year.

They have an event policy, which requires co-insurance and limited liability. Their full policy is available on their web site, <http://www.midlandcvb.org/>.

Friends of the Pere Marquette Trail promote safety on the trails (i.e. bells, education, helmets, rules, etc.) They have not had any problems with security issues on the trail. However, there was one death on the trail this year do to an accident with the rider not wearing a helmet.

An attempt to use recycled glass and plastic for the trail surface was not as successful as they had envisioned. They had to resurface the glass/plastic area to make the surface more user friendly.

The biggest problem they experience is cracking of trail.

DATE CHANGE FOR NOVEMBER & DECEMBER MEETINGS

The date of the November meeting will be, Wednesday, November 17, 2004. The December meeting will be on Wednesday, December 15, 2004 with a Christmas luncheon following.

TRAIL REPRESENTATION AT OTAC MEETINGS

Each trail should have an appointed alternate to attend the meetings when the primary representative can not attend. Please bring the name of your trail alternate to the next OTAC meeting.

CHAIRMAN OF OTAC

Beginning January 2005, Kristen Myers will begin serving as Chairman of OTAC. Dan Navarre agreed to serve until that time.

FUTURE GOALS

Dan Stencil recommended an annual review of OTAC's progress and adjusting future goals accordingly. Mike Hartner recommended it be the topic of an entire meeting and that a work session be held. Due to a speaker already being established for December, the review will be done at the January meeting.

GOLF CART USE ON TRAILS

In general, golf carts on the trails are not permitted. However, each case will have to be evaluated individually and additional information will be accumulated regarding accessibility requirements now in place.

TRAIL NETWORK COORDINATOR REPORT

- Marge Gatliff offered thanks to the volunteers that assisted with the 2004 Trails Summit. It was a success with approximately 80 persons attending. A new host for next year is needed. Please contact Marge.
- The County Trail map will be available within the next few weeks. If members wish to attend the MRPA trails committee meetings contact Marge and she will see to it that you are notified of the times and locations of the meetings.
- Dan Navarre and Marge Gatliff did a presentation at the Farmington Hills Economic Conference on how the Council was formed and how the group developed goals and objectives.
- The State Parks are looking for volunteers to help with the MDNR seed collection this year. Contact Kristen Bennett if you are available.
- Sergeant Searing is being replaced by Sergeant Hurst. He will be the Oakland County Sheriff's Department liaison for OTAC.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Todd Scott noted that a new law indicating that bikers can only ride single file on roadways and doing away with the trail exemption is being considered. Michigan law is now set up the same as the national guidelines. He recommended that OTAC members contact their senator/representatives to deter the passing of this bill.

2005 MICHIGANDER EVENT

Barry Culham of the Michigander Conservancy gave a brief presentation on the 2005 Michigander trail event. This bike tour usually has 600-800 cyclists participating. The event will begin in South Haven and end in the Algonac State Park. The exact trails/roads to be used is now being investigated. If you can offer any assistance please contact Barry. He will try to focus on trails and little used roads where the trails aren't linked. The "Michigander" will pass through Oakland County beginning in South Lyon through Rochester.

A fee is charged the participants. They can either sign up for a 2-day or 6-day event. Two meals are provided each day with lunch on your own.

This event offers opportunities at the various rest stops for booths to offer promotional information and/or items for sale. It was suggested that Sgt. Hurst and staff could be utilized to offer a demonstration on trail safety at one of their evening stops.

OTAC members have offered to assist the organization of the event. Ralph Richard moved that an OTAC committee be established to help set up Oakland County connections for them. Louis Golden seconded the motion and it was passed on voice vote.

BRIAN BLAESING – ROAD COMMISSION FOR OAKLAND

Brian presented the results of a 4-year crash study done by "the Road Commission of Oakland County". There were 991 total N-M crashes and 68 fatalities. Twenty percent of the crashes involved non-motorized vehicles and 14% of the fatalities involved non-motorized vehicles. His maps pinpointing the sites of the non-motorized crashes show that the urbanized areas have most of the incidents. Subdivision roads didn't have many crashes; the larger city/state/county roads had most of them. These results will be analyzed during the next six months to try to find ways to increase safety.

LARRY FALARDEAU – OTAC MASTER PLAN MAP

Larry wants to clarify if the existing OTAC map which indicates future trails is to be used as the master plan for the future of the trail network in Oakland County or if a new map should be developed, taking into consideration the newly developed trails and new areas of consideration for future trails. Part of the formula could be items such as road crossings, priority areas, connections of trails, and areas that could offer potential connections to other counties trail network. He also suggested that the southeast portion of the county should be considered as a focus due to its large urban areas and need for the need of home/work and home/school walkable access.

A pilot study should be done to assist OTAC in developing a master plan. Additions, deletions, population centers, and connectivity for work/schools needs to be a consideration.

It was suggested that this be part of the January OTAC meeting work session.

Sue Julian - Headwaters Trail

Sue Julian of the Headwaters Trail introduced Barbara Nelson Jaimeson from the National Park Service to the council. Mrs. Nelson offered technical services for rivers, waters and trails to communities. She is currently assisting Sue Julian on a project in Holly.

OTHER BUSINESS/COMMENTS

- Merle Richmond of the Oakland County Equestrians reported that a National American Horse Spectacular will be held at the Novi Expo Center on November 12,13 and 14 this year.
- Larry F. informed the group that Marge made a presentation to the senior advocacy group and that Kristen W designed a map designating the senior centers in close proximity to trails. Lois Golden agreed that seniors should note senior centers on the OTAC trail map to encourage use of the trails. Lois Golden will present this opportunity to the seniors group in Rochester to see how well it is received.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:24 a.m.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be **9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, November 17, 2004** in the commission room of the Oakland County Parks and Recreation administration building. **The December meeting will be on Wednesday, December 15.**

sjb, Oakland County Parks and Recreation