

Ohio River Trail Council



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MINUTES

JANUARY 30, 2012 6:00 PM

MONACA BOROUGH BUILDING

MEETING CALLED BY	Chief Executive Chairman – Vincent Troia
TYPE OF MEETING	Scheduled
FACILITATOR	Chief Executive Chairman – Vincent Troia
NOTE TAKER	Donna Campbell – Secretary

Attendees: Vincent Troia, Mario Leone, John Szatkiewicz, Diane Kemp, Pat Majors, Donna Campbell, Chad McMillen, Nathan Peluso, Linda Tice, Norman Kraus, William Weber, Bill Sweterlitsch, Jack Manning

Agenda topics: Introductions, Approval of minutes, D & O Policy, ORTC By-Laws Addendum Vote, Reports, New Business

DISCUSSION	Vincent Troia welcomed everyone, called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and everyone in attendance introduced themselves.
DISCUSSION	Approval of Minutes – Dr. Troia made motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting; Patricia Majors second the motion; all were in favor
DISCUSSION	The Directors and Officers Liability Insurance policy was discussed. Minimum recommended coverage is \$1M/\$2M policy meaning the insurer will pay a maximum of \$1 million for any one claim and an aggregate of \$2 million per policy year. Attorney Chad McMillen advised the group that having this policy will do a great deal to protect Board Members from liability. The policy will cost \$1,000.00 per year. Dr. Troia stated that if all board members pay their individual dues, it will cover the cost of the premium. Attorney McMillen recommended the policy be in place as soon as possible. Jack Manning stated that this is fairly standard practice. He is on many boards where these are in place and he highly recommends this. Mario Leone made a motion to obtain the D & O Insurance coverage and Diane Kemp second his motion; all were in favor.
DISCUSSION	The second item of legal consequence is the issue of the group's need for a fifty percent quorum for a passing vote based on the current bi-laws. Attorney Chad McMillen suggested that the language in the bi-laws be changed to reflect that one third of the members or currently, seven members are necessary for a passing vote, due to the difficulty of the current quorum rules. Using a percentage of members instead of a number would be the best solution, in case the number of members was to fluctuate. John Szatkiewicz made the motion to change the bi-laws quorum to one-third of total members and Jack Manning second the motion; all were in favor.

DISCUSSION	<p>Dr. Troia announced that the ORTC was awarded two \$ 10,000.00 grants to develop the Ohio River Water Trail for kayaking and canoeing. The Bridgewater launch area is complete and Ohioville is almost complete. Rochester is still working out some issues. The grant for the proposed launch at Wallace Run in Beaver Falls was not approved by the Fish and Boat Commission. John Szatkiewicz stated that the PA Game Commission as well as the local Fire Departments are in favor of a launch there. Dr. Troia showed the completed Monaca and Bridgewater areas with kayak and bike racks. He also showed the signage marking the future route of the Ohio River Trail. Signage costs approximately \$800.00 per sign. The signs will be placed in Monaca, Moon Township, Point of Beginning and Midland.</p>
DISCUSSION	<p>Dr. Troia reported on the Lewis and Clark historical marker project. The Historical Markers cost \$1800.00 per marker. Dr. Troia continued by reviewing that Lewis and Clark spent a night on Georgetown Island due to a leak in their canoe while on their journey west. It is proposed that the marker will be placed in Midland with a view of Georgetown Island and the text will reflect their stay on Georgetown Island.</p>
DISCUSSION	<p>Dr. Troia indicated that Dr Troia and Justin Battalini completed the application for the Lincoln Highway Historical Marker. The Lincoln Highway originally came through Beaver County. Justin was not at the meeting to report on the project but John Szatkiewicz described the original Lincoln Highway route through our area. He also noted that there is nothing to reflect its existence in Beaver County. Dr. Troia reminded us that there is a State Heritage Corridor and that the recently established Eastern Legacy Project got us involved in this. Dr. Troia mentioned that he is disappointed that there is no mention of the Lincoln Highway history in our area. Dr. Troia showed the towns that the highway connected in 1915. The proposed text for the Lincoln Highway marker can be viewed on the ORTC website.</p>
DISCUSSION	<p>Pat Majors reported on the Baker Cemetery. The cemetery had its first burial in 1810. There are approximately fifty graves with sandstone markers in the cemetery. It was established by Jacob Baker, the first permanent settler in Monaca. Rome Monument has installed a granite marker to feature the property. Work at the cemetery is ongoing including grass cutting and more tree-trimming. She will be looking into another marker "down the road" memorializing the names of everyone buried there. The cemetery is historically linked to the Michael Baker Family. She also noted that there was an injunction on record from the early 1900's that does not permit any disruption of the cemetery. They are now trying to determine who owns the property and if it can be purchased. Pat is very proud of the project. Restoration and Historical marker is being sponsored by Beaver County Historical Research and Landmarks Foundation. The cost of the marker is being covered by Beaver County</p>
DISCUSSION	<p>An Inter-governmental "template" Agreement between ORTC and the South Shore municipalities where the Ohio River Trail is located was discussed. The purpose of the Agreement is to outline and provide a framework and a mechanism to adequately maintain the trail within the political boundaries through joint efforts of the communities including Monaca, Center Township, Aliquippa, Hopewell Township, South Heights, Crescent, Moon Township, and Coraopolis. The Municipalities have not reviewed the document yet but will be doing so shortly. ORTC will be responsible for surface and signage.</p>
DISCUSSION	<p>The Trail Town Program was reported by Nathan Peluso. Town Center Associates works in conjunction with the Trail Town Tracker program which gauges the progress of towns that become a "trail town". The initiative keeps track of the economic benefits the trails bring to the participating municipalities. Statistics show that there has been \$40 million per year in economic benefit created by the Great Allegheny Passage. There are ten steps in the process of becoming a trail town with twenty seven current municipalities in the program. ORTC would like to get a borough manager as a representative of the town to work with ORTC to form agreements for a Trail Town network. Nathan also works on the Bicycle Friendly Community Program which brings additional tourism into the communities along the trail. Nathan and Dr. Troia have visited most of the towns along the Trail Town network commenting that you can truly enjoy the beauty of the tri-state area especially Pennsylvania. They will be visiting the towns again this year. A schedule of the Trail Ride Series was provided to the group. All are welcome to attend any or all of the twenty scheduled rides.</p>
DISCUSSION	<p>Dr. Troia showed a video called "Bikes Belong" outlining the benefits that Boulder Colorado has experienced by becoming a bicycle friendly community. More information can be obtained at www.bikesbelong.org.</p>

DISCUSSION	<p>Mario Leone, chairperson for the EPA Brownfield Project, reported that the project is moving along nicely and will be completed in December 2012 according to grant guidelines. It will take that long because the consultant is very busy with the North Shore Trail Project. Community meetings will be held to gather input from residents of what they would like to see at the Brownfield locations. Another grant has been submitted for \$1 million to be used for planning and feasibility of viable use for the properties. Some of the funds will be used for remediation and cleanup. Mario is confident that we will get the grant. Twenty three communities submitted to get this grant. Ours was chosen because of the "uniqueness" of access to the forty mile stretch along the Ohio River. Other cities applying for the grant were Cleveland and San Francisco. We will be hearing about the grant soon. This should only continue to enhance the overall reason that we originally wanted the Ohio River Trail and trail development in these areas. Jack Manning asked if there is any estimate of the cost of cleanup in the Brownfield areas. Mario stated that the next \$1 Million grant will be used for this. The first grant is strictly for planning. Assessments to determine use, for example housing, will be done. Midland has a contaminated site that is recommended to be used as a solar field. These are examples that will be studied further. Community meeting dates have been picked, but which communities will be slated for each date are yet to be decided.</p>
DISCUSSION	<p>Diane Kemp, Chairperson of North Shore Trail Feasibility Study, reported that the SGA meeting reviewed mapping and asked if they wanted to implement changes. An open house was held in Midland for questions and comments. They want to complete the mapping to show all the trails on the documents. The project is progressing well. Dr. Troia has drafts on PDF.</p>
DISCUSSION	<p>John Szatkiewicz and Linda Tice, chairpersons for the Butterfly Preserve Project reported on the Butterfly Preserve at lock 57 Park. John indicated that the yellow zone on the map is where the preserve is located. A \$1000 grant provided by Venture Outdoors North has allowed them to successfully cultivate 30 to 40 varieties of flowers with more to be added this year.</p>
DISCUSSION	<p>Dr. Troia reported that USCG Auxiliary Paddle-sports America Safety Course was held last year at Community College. Dana Kirk, The USCG Auxiliary Instructor and an American Canoe Association Kayak Instructor taught the course and it was well attended. ORTC would like to sponsor the course again this year at Lock 57 Park.</p>
DISCUSSION	<p>John and Linda also reported that the ORTC Community day last year at Lock 57 was a great success and the proposed date for 2012 is July 15th. ORTC will again partner with Venture Outdoors for this event. For more information contact Julie Meier at 724-856-2785 or Julie@ventureoutdoors.org.</p>
DISCUSSION	<p>Dr. Troia and Peggy Pings of the National Park Service has submitted a Transportation Community System Preservation Program (TCSP) grant application for \$200,000. \$50,000 in matching funds are needed. Peggy stressed that a "letter writing" campaign must be started and the sooner the better. The application would have been stronger if we had already secured the funds. At the "eleventh hour", Coraopolis agreed to be the applicant. The grant was filed with a trail route through town. There are some obstacles with rights-of-ways however the trail is aesthetically nicer closer to the river. Bill S. stated they do have alternatives to the issues. Dr. Troia was very busy getting letters of support from elected officials and state, federal, county and "friends groups". The grant notice came out in mid-December; however the application was submitted in January. There was some confusion on deadlines, however Peggy was able clarify this and submitted it the day before it needed to go to the Highway Department. There is a "Bikes Belong" grant pending but it has a \$10,000 maximum. Ten to fifteen percent can be spent on counters for traffic flow. Volunteers would have to read the count numbers which is a computation of bike vs. pedestrian. An original count can be done before trail (possibly along Bike Route A). A manual survey can also be done.</p>
DISCUSSION	<p>Dr. Troia reported that a possible next step would be a 50/50 grant application pending for the South Shore Trail – Phase II which means a great deal of money must be raised. The 2.5 mile trail would connect the West Aliquippa and Aliquippa area. Shell Corporation and Range Resources are "setting up shop" in these areas for the Marseilles shale industry, perhaps they would be willing to fund the project. Other companies such as C J Betters, (developers) may also be interested. Infrastructure improvements are needed on roads in and around our area so developers are typically notified that bike trails would be necessary there as well. Mario stated that if we bring all the resources together the total burden of</p>

	fundraising would not fall on the ORTC. Phase III could involve the connection of Monaca to Beaver County YMCA continuing on to the existing Beaver Falls trail and Vanport.
DISCUSSION	Dr. Troia announced that Bill Weber has volunteered to chair the fundraising committee. He has implemented a letter-writing campaign along with a list of businesses and corporations to solicit as a start. Every board member is required to write a letter and is responsible for fundraising. ORTC letterhead and a fundraising letter template along with useful information is available on the ORTC website. The North Shore feasibility study received a grant from First Energy. There are corporations willing to help. The Sample letter template will be provided to everyone and a list of corporate donors will be divided up among board members. If there is anything contained in the letter or website we don't understand, we should contact Bill Weber, Dr. Troia, Mario Leone, or Diane Kemp.
DISCUSSION	A Website Banner Advertising Committee is being established and is in need of volunteers to sell ads on website. \$500.00 per year for an ad is a suggestion.
DISCUSSION	Pat Majors proposed a golf outing for a fundraising event and would also need volunteers. Norm Kraus reported that a golf outing is not something that could be done this spring but could be coordinated for a fall outing or a project for next year. This type of fundraiser is customarily planned a year in advance, is a lot of work and a lot of volunteers are necessary. Pat mentioned that fundraising could also be done in conjunction with a communities' Outreach committee. Ideally, if each community has an Outreach they could get their volunteers to "come on board" with the ORTC. Money could be raised for public awareness along the trail. This would not be a community event but a trail council even working with volunteers from the Outreach program. Some courses suggested for a golf outing were Seven Oaks, Shadow Lakes, Rolling Acres or Patterson Heights since it overlooks the Beaver River and the area of the proposed trail. We would need to make proposals to the golf courses and take bids. Norm will work with Pat. Anyone interested in volunteering should contact Patriciamajors@comcast.net
DISCUSSION	Pat Majors also reported on the Monaca Outreach Committee Pergola Park Street Crossings Project. The electrical work is in progress along with the green space for part of the trail. Monaca is known as a very walkable community so it will be a nice rest area constructed by volunteers with donated material. The "Future Ohio River Trail" sign is located there. Insets or paint will be added to the sign so it matches the pergola. Monaca Street Crossings crosswalks for beauty and public safety have been completed. There are two on Ninth; they want to complete two more by the borough building and bank. The Borough helped with manpower and funding. The plan is to finish Pennsylvania Avenue and Ninth Street however they must raise \$22,000 by the first of June to finish the project. The Borough has purchased C.J. Mangin School as well. Outreach has been given office space in the school. They are working to make the office as green as possible. Work is currently being done to install flooring, paint the office area, replace existing lighting with energy efficient lights and install water saving equipment.
DISCUSSION	The Easement Negotiation Committee consisting of Jack Manning, Chairperson, Attorney Vince Tucceri, in Coraopolis and Attorney Chad McMillen in Coraopolis and Moon Township are concentrating their efforts on Duquesne Light right-of-way. They would like to build a trail there in the area across from the PennDOT park-and-ride lot. Bill Sweterlitsch is the contact for Moon Township and Dana Kasler is the contact for Moon Township.
DISCUSSION	Dr. Troia indicated the National Fuel Gas Supply Pipeline across the Monaca Bridge along Riverfront Park. He commented that they cut brush along the lines so they have access and perhaps we would be "doing them a favor" by utilizing their access route. The National Fuel Gas Supply Corporation Pipeline Encroachment Manual can be accessed through a link to the ORTC website.

DISCUSSION	The Pittsburgh Cycling Expo will be held on March 25, 2012 at the Airport Marriot. Proceeds benefit the Montour Trail. ORTC needs volunteers work our table to sell T-shirts, hats and answer questions about the ORTC project. Nathan Peluso and Dr. Troia volunteered.
DISCUSSION	CSX has brought to our attention a Railroad property abandonment of a right-of-way near Koppel, PA, North of the Beaver River Trail. Dr. Troia reminded everyone that any time these become available we should take advantage of it. Dr. Troia showed the Wallace Run area near Koppel which is a proposed water trail launch for the Beaver River.
DISCUSSION	The Underground Railroad is a National Trail project recognizing the slave route from Mobile, AL to Canada. This project would bring a lot of attention to our project because of the Pittsburgh Spur. Most of this route follows the Ohio River Trail. It is a wonderful opportunity to gain additional funding. The Pittsburgh spur starts in Pittsburgh and continues to Coraopolis, Ambridge, along Route 51 to Monaca, North to Ellwood. There is a historically significant house located in Monaca and Jack Manning informed us that there will be a program held this summer about the Underground Railroad at the Vicary House. Since we do not have any rights-of-way through Crescent Township, possibly we could use the Underground Railroad route as access and it would become part of the North Shore Extension/Allegheny County master plan. The spur is 152.5 miles total between Pittsburgh and Erie, PA.
DISCUSSION	Peg Schweinsberg reported on the Independence Conservancy. They have many major projects underway, particularly the Raccoon Creek Canoe Trail and Rocky Bottom Nature Area Project. The area consists of 26 acres including a mile of frontage along the lower reaches of Raccoon Creek near its mouth at the Ohio River, Potter Township. The area provides free public access to Raccoon Creek. Planned improvements include access for canoeing, parking, picnic shelters, restrooms and interpretive signage. Victoria Michaels is the Executive Director of the project.
DISCUSSION	Mario Leone motioned to adjourn the meeting; Pat Majors second; all were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 6:15 PM