

## Meeting Minutes

### Huntingdon County Active Transportation Committee

Friday, February 23, 2024 @ 9:30AM

The following members were present at the meeting:

Matt Price, Judy Scott, Laura White, Laurie Nearhood, George Conrad, Charles Harper, Brian Wiser, Jane Sheffield

Others in attendance included:

Tracey Isenberg, Sam Isenberg, Ron Dively, Nathan Querry, Alicia Grove

#### **I. Call to Order**

Chairman Matt Price called the meeting to order at 9:32 A.M.

#### **II. Review and Action on January 26, 2024, Meeting Minutes.**

Matt asked the committee to review the January 26, 2024, meeting minutes for any additions or corrections to be made. Laura submitted an addition to the minutes to add “Ilona Ballreich” from Penn State University under Other Business. Matt had a correction, as well, which included changing “Nathan Reigner” to “Jeff McCauley” under Other Business. Laurie also noted that the title for item #2 included the incorrect calendar year and should be changed from “2023” to “2024”. Matt asked for any other additions or corrections and after hearing none, asked for a motion to accept the minutes. George Conrad made a motion and Charles Harper seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

#### **III. Committee Member Terms of Office**

The Huntingdon County Commissioners, through discussions with the Committee, said that they could initially appoint members for two or four years. This is a new thing, so any members already on the committee need to decide when terms are going to expire to get on the same cycle of the Commissioners. The current terms would have started back in January of this current year (2024). Matt asked the group for volunteers for two- or four-year terms. George Conrad volunteered for a two-year term. Judy Scott volunteered for a four-year term. Brian Wiser noted that he is a non-voting member but is fine with either option. Laura White volunteered for a two-year term. Charles Harper volunteered for a four-year term. Matt volunteered for a two-year term. Matt asked Alicia (representing Wendy Melius) if Wendy would prefer a two-year or four-year term. Alicia is unsure but will be asking Wendy. Jane Sheffield volunteered for a four-year term, but she is unsure if she'll be

representing or if someone else from her office will be. Zack Lee was not in attendance. Matt will follow-up with any other members not in attendance.

#### **IV. Formation of Subcommittees**

Matt noted that the formation of subcommittees hasn't been fleshed out, but according to the Committee's charter with the Commissioners, the Committee is permitted to create task force(s) and/or subcommittees. Matt thinks it would be important to create these groups to handle various tasks and keep things moving. Judy mentioned that in regard to Segment 1, she has reached out to other individuals that are willing to participate in a subcommittee. This subcommittee would focus primarily on Segment 1, which proposes to connect the Lower Trail to Alexandria Borough. The suggested meeting time would be the second Tuesday of the month at 6:00 P.M. Judy also wanted some clarification on how to establish this subcommittee. Matt suggested that Judy should function as the "chair" of the subcommittee and be the representative on behalf of the Active Transportation Committee.

Matt asked the Committee if anyone would be interested in chairing a subcommittee on Segments 13 or 19. Brian stated that he'd like to participate in the subcommittee(s), but that someone else should be the chair. Jane mentioned that she's happy to help and that it'd be a good idea to include Jeff McCauley to assist. Brian also mentioned that it may be appropriate for the Committee to present the Active Transportation Plan at the Mount Union Borough's March 6<sup>th</sup> meeting and ask for their approval. It would be a good kick-off discussion for any future conversations regarding involvement in subcommittees.

#### **V. Huntingdon County Active Transportation Plan Priorities**

Judy attended a Porter Township meeting and mentioned that the public had concerns about eminent domain and that trails were going places that they shouldn't be going to. Basically, there were too many specific details being thrown around that led to a misunderstanding of the project and/or plans. Judy was asked to attend the meeting to correct the spread of misinformation. Sam Isenberg stated that the lack of publication of the meetings and unwillingness of public to attend meetings may have led to this, as there's multiple plans being proposed and it's hard to understand what is actually being done. Brian responded by saying that the public typically hears "eminent domain" and automatically think that it means something horrible will happen or be forced upon them. However, Brian explained that the project development process starts with identifying the preferred option for the project and then outreach will be done to each landowner to talk to them. The conversation includes the preferred option for the project, potential impacts, and ways to mitigate those impacts.

Sam also asked, if the Committee decides to implement a pathway that isn't desired by the landowners, what's the plan of attack for overcoming this? Matt responded by saying that the committee will not be determining the final route or pathway. Whoever owns the trail will be seeking funding, conducting assessments, talking to landowners, etc. It could be

PennDOT, a municipal authority, a local trail group, etc., but it will never be the Committee. Brian added that it also depends on the local sponsor and what specific funding source is being utilized. If it's coming from a government source, such as PennDOT, there's an entire process for outreach. Brian also mentioned that earlier in the week another segment of the September 11<sup>th</sup> National Memorial Trail has been put out for advertisement to select an engineer. This section is from Garrett to Berlin in Somerset County, PA. The trail has such a national interest that situations like this are occurring in other nearby counties as well. Jane added that they were able to negotiate with Norfolk Southern to reach an agreement for five different parcels in Cambria County, PA, to connect Summerhill to the Path of the Flood trail. Jane also mentioned that Somerset County was able to secure a Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) Grant that the park service uses to connect their parks and trails to various communities.

The next item that was discussed was Main Line Canal Greenway Segment 13. Matt mentioned that Jane Sheffield, with the Allegheny Ridge Corporation, has had some recent success working with Norfolk Southern on other parts of the 9/11 Trail. Jane stated that they hired a group called Northeast Track Solutions made up of two folks, one of which used to work in the real estate department of Norfolk Southern. They've had some success working with Norfolk Southern because of this relationship and think it could be replicated elsewhere. Jane mentioned that to have this group work on Norfolk Southern issues, they would need a proposal to do it. She can't commit the 9/11 Trail Alliance to pay for it, but sometimes, there are resources within the budget to do it. In Portage, the local school district raised \$5,000 to create a bank account and the fund continues to grow. Other local communities see the opportunities and it would be nice to see them looking at ways to pull together resources to help match other funding.

The next item is Trail Management Coordination. George attended the Rothrock Trails Alliance public meeting and about 200 people showed up. Of those 200 people, George thought that only about 10 people were from Huntingdon County and that this was slightly disappointing. The project is very focused on Centre County and Huntingdon County is not on-board with the project because much of the project impacts will occur around the State College area. George wanted to get the Committee's thoughts on whether or not to be a part of the Alliance. George thought it would be a good idea to have some representation from Huntingdon County and volunteered himself to do so. Matt mentioned that there's potential for the County to host and/or coordinate a "trails summit". This is an opportunity for a subcommittee, as well, to bring together trail organizations, municipalities, and experts on trail maintenance.

## **VI. Huntingdon County Visitors Bureau Destination Excellence Awards Nominations:**

The Huntingdon County Visitors Bureau is hosting the annual tourism summit and for the first time, are going to honor employees, managers, volunteers, and others for Destination

Excellence Awards. Matt asked that if Committee members knew of any dedicated volunteers that conduct trail maintenance, to please use the link within the agenda to nominate them. The event will be held at the Huntingdon Country Club in May.

**VII. Set next meeting date and time**

Friday, March 22, 2024, at 9:30AM in the Huntingdon Borough Municipal Building – Borough Council Chambers, 530 Washington Street, Huntingdon, PA 16652

**VIII. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 A.M.