

WASHINGTON COUNTY AD HOC TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
MAY 15, 2019

AD HOC TRAILS COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Supervisors Shaw, Hogan, Middleton, Rozell, Hicks, Gretchen Stark, Mary Ward, Dave Perkins

AD HOC TRAILS COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Supervisors Idleman, Matthew Traver-Mayor Village of Fort Edward, Tim Ward

SUPERVISORS: Moore, Clary

Debra Prehoda, Clerk

Laura Oswald, Economic Dev. Director

Laura Chadwick, Director Real Property

Media & Public

Chris DeBolt, County Administrator

Pam Landi, Jr. Planner

Heather Weller, GIS Specialist

AGENDA AS PRESENTED IN COMMITTEE NOTICE:

1) Call to Order

2) Accept Minutes – March 13, 2019

3) Trails Updates:

A. Empire State Trail/Champlain Canalway Trail

1. Whitehall

2. Fort Ann

3. Kingsbury

4. Fort Edward – Village and Town

5. Greenwich

B. State Valley Rail Trail

1. Granville

2. Salem

4) Other Business

5) Adjournment

Chairman Shaw called the meeting to order at 11:00 A.M.

A motion to approve the minutes of the March 13, 2019 meeting was moved by Mr. Middleton, seconded by Mr. Hogan and adopted.

TRAIL UPDATES:

Empire State Trail/Champlain Canalway Trail:

- Whitehall – Mr. Rozell stated no updates.
- Grant Update – Fort Ann to Whitehall Section - Laura Oswald, Economic Development Director, stated that the State contract has been executed and she is waiting for a copy. She informed the committee that it is CFA season and in the rules for applications this year she has the ability to put in an ask to Canal Corporation for a \$150,000 which could be used for purchasing materials when we get around to construction with zero cost to the County so she plans to ask for that money. The way that this trail project works is the predevelopment part: we have to map it, and then once we know where the trail is going survey it and do all the environmental, wetlands and SHPO, etc. and get it permitted and then start building. This is a very multilayered project. Updated the committee on the current status of the project: she stated there were multiple pieces to doing the survey and had some issues with property owners in Whitehall who did not want the surveyors to step on their property while they were surveying what we believe is Canal Corp land and we were able to comply with that request. The surveyors were able to get fixed points established for the aerial survey for contours and the mapping. Once the survey is done, we will know the extent of land owned by the Canal Corp and that will tell them if the predetermined pathway is going to work or if they will need an easement off of the homeowner's property or just not feasible and go in a different direction. So, the surveying is proceeding and we are making good progress on it. We were never expecting this to be a simple process.

- Fort Ann – Mr. Moore stated Monday evening at a town Board meeting on the agenda was a resolution for a contract - Empire State Trail Work agreement between the Office of Parks and Recreation and Historic Preservation and the Department of Transportation and the Town of Fort Ann. In the agreement once the build was done the town would own the property and the town would have the liability for the trail. One Board member had concern about the liability issue on Clay Hill Road. Mr. Moore stated there have been multiple meetings on where the trail will go and it was decided at this time that the trail would come up Clay Hill Road. He has scheduled a meeting for June 3rd at 2 PM at the town hall to get this matter resolved. Could not get the agreement approved at the meeting.
- Kingsbury – Mr. Hogan had nothing new to add to the discussions today and everything is moving along. Mr. Perkins stated in 2015 the engineering firm held a stakeholders meeting and talked about what they planned on doing. He stated there were some objections from the snowmobiling community. They took those objections and came back the next year with what they could do to address the concerns. The plan they came back with would not work with the groomer used on the trails and are continuing to work to resolve this issue. The work on the tunnel is expected to start after school closes and the road will be closed for possibly a week but that has not been confirmed. This is a Canal Corp project.
- Fort Edward Village and Town – Mr. Middleton stated no new information. Mr. Perkins toured the Village of Fort Edward with the mayor for sign placement and marked them on a draft map. Mr. Shaw suggested starting the process of getting the trail off Rt. 4 south of Fort Edward but the consensus was to leave it alone for now.
- Greenwich – no representative present. Laura Oswald, Economic Development Director, stated Greenwich is looking to do some planning for Hudson Valley for the new park that will connect the trails.
- Letter distributed from a cyclist encouraged by the development taking place to create a bike trail through the county, on file.

Slate Valley Rail Trail:

- Granville – Mr. Hicks stated still going through all the paperwork process to get documents signed and back to State. When Chazen was doing the survey, they did encounter one unhappy landowner and NYS Parks and Recreation did confirm they do own the property and the survey was completed. The landowner used to own more property that the trail went through but part of that was owned by his fuel oil company and since sold the company. He has retained an attorney to challenge this and the towns plans to continue to move forward. Parks and Recreation legal department wrote a letter to Chazen assuring them they can be on the property. The Economic Development Director stated as a county we are doing our best to make sure we do not want to tread on people's property rights and the preference all along has been to create consensus and bring people along not force the issue.
- Salem – Mrs. Clary stated they are in the talking stage at this point.

OTHER BUSINESS:

- Mary Ward, Whitehall, stated the Chamber of Commerce is making conversation about getting the community ready; bike friendly business program, bike racks. Preliminary at this time.
- Heather Weller, GIS Specialist, stated they plan to move forward with data for the mapping and in the next couple of months plan to share with the group. Also provided information/files to the surveyor working on behalf of Chazen on the Empire State Trail.

- Mr. Perkins stated the Canalway Trail Working Group is moving forward planning a mayors and supervisors get together/luncheon in the area of the bridge sometime in September.
- Laura Oswald, Economic Development Director, stated as part of the County's tourism marketing program, Mannix Marketing did an article on the trails and is on the tourism website.

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, July 17th at 10:30 A.M. in the Supervisors large conference room.

The meeting adjourned at 11:35 A.M.

Debra Prehoda, Clerk
Washington County Board of Supervisors