

FCRT Board Meeting June 28, 2023, at Ernst Conservation Seed

Attending were: Dick Eglinton, Marci Finton, Sherry Mason, Bill Dross, Keith Knighton, Tom Maxeiner, Calvin Ernst, Bill Eldridge, Dave Hotchkiss, Joyce and Tom Hayden, Jerry Boyle, Ed Easley, Susan Miller, Jean Weber and Cameron Guffy

Financial Report: Jerry sent before meeting. An accountant bill is expected to be coming for tax returns.

Trail Blazer 2023: Date has been set for Sunday, July 9, 2023. Three wheelchair participants are expected. Dick will contact them for confirmation. Members and volunteers should arrive at Ernst Farm by 6:15am to set up. Registration starts at 6:30. So far 40 participants have registered. Bill Dross will pick up large mats from SunBelt at no cost to smooth the transition between surfaces, specifically the railroad tracks and Mt Pleasant Rd. Tom Hayden stepped off a start/finish and turn around, so the wheelchair participants complete a true 5K and be able to start and end on the pavement at the end of the driveway.

Spring Support Letter: Jerry reported approximately \$5000 in donations have arrived. This is down from last year.

Connector Report: Peter will continue with the paving bidding process. Dick will give quotes to Post's plant manager, Tom Shorts, for the pavilion, concrete pad and smoothing dirt. Post may be willing to pay for it. Post will do the mowing on their property, being mindful of the Wildflower area. Dick will get a certificate of insurance sent to Post. There was an email discussion on a proposed parking area at MGP. Peter reports there is no downside to getting the easement for the parking area now, and for the paving. We should pave it like a trail, and plan to put bollards past the turn to the future parking lot. He suggests getting an easement for everything north of the trail and between the trail and the river. With construction of the parking lot, it would be nice to plant trees on the rest of the property to eliminate the grass, in order to improve the habitat adjacent to the creek. We could approach Post to grant a conservation easement to FCVC for the entire section of riverbank that is between the trail and the creek, all the way to Smock Bridge. It would be a nice section to protect. Peter is concerned with Vernon's transfer of the property to Post, the section of Shippen that is past Park Row may actually be no longer township property. We need to understand exactly where Vernon believes their roadway ends, then get the necessary permission from them, then we would need to get additional easements from Post to access the rest of the lot.

MGP to Bicentennial Park: Ed met with representatives of Michael Baker International in May. He will forward the minutes from that meeting.

Trail Maintenance: Bill is still planning to rent a brush style scraper, or two, to remove the moss on the sides of the trail. Bill contacted Union Township to grade Mt Pleasant Rd where the trail crosses because of washout. The township filled it, but it continues to wash out with heavy rains. Dick E reported large woodchuck holes on the trail East of Johnson Rd that still need to be filled. Several leaning trees will need a professional tree service. Cory Nichols was contacted but he has not responded. Vernon mowed the from Smock Bridge to Dross Bridge and knocked down the knotweed. Bill Dross has been working with Brian Bean to fabricate a pull for the mower and new blower. Bill D and Cameron will be working on preparing the site under 79 for a new bench in memory of Dick Silverling. FCRT received a request for a new adopt a trail volunteer plus a request for a little lending library to be placed at Krider or Mercer Pike trailhead. The family was ok'd by the board as was the little library.

A work day is planned for July 5, 10:00 am to help fix the approaches to the covered bridge and the 3rd bridge before the race. Mount Pleasant Rd needs fill again since the rain this weekend and the third bridge needs some railing replacement. _

Conneaut Lake end: CL Garden Club hosted us at their meeting on June 13 held at CC Winery. Calvin Ernst and Katy Flaherty did a presentation on the plants that can be found along the trail. Calvin reported the engineers inspected the piers for structural stability over Watson Run. Original quotes for a 3 piece bridge from ADM were \$85,000 for bridge, \$10,000 for engineering and \$15,000 for installation, but we may want to expect an additional \$25,000 may be needed. We may designate this bridge as the project for Crawford Gives this year. Bill Eldridge will share some names for us to send letters outlining our progress at the CL End and our need for support. Jerry will develop the letter.

Bill Eldridge, CL Historical Society and Jean Weber will get together to discuss size and placement of a kiosk being built by Jean's grandsons.

One of the porta-johns at McMichael Rd was tipped over by vandals. Tom K contacted Powells.

By-Pass Trail end: no report

Grants: Ed reported PennDOTs application for the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA) has been filed for the Tunnel project under 19.

Bike Rentals: Bill Dross reported the installation is complete of both bike workstations, one at Bean's Trailhead, the other at Krider Rd Trailhead. Sherry is working on sticker style signs to be placed on the workstations acknowledging the donors, Meadville Bikeshare, and the family of Kathie Miller.

Vernon Township: Calvin reported that Vernon would like better site distance at S Watson and Bailey Rd and they like the parking lot at Brown Hill Rd. Rob Horvat asked for a plan update. He and Ashley Porter will look for the old one so we can review.

Other business: A man has been seen entering and exiting the Bean's trailhead regularly. He is presumed to be camping somewhere along the trail. Since the meeting, Jerry and Bill have spoken with him. He has been using our trash can for his waste and any trash he sees along the trail. He has been given permission by Brian Bean to discreetly use Bean's dumpster instead of our trash can.

Crawford County Drug and Alcohol has requested use of the trail August 27 for a 5K. They have submitted the application, insurance and fees. Marci will speak with Edward Reagle about the details of the application.

Next meeting will be August 8, 2023 7:00 at Ernst Conservation Seed

Meeting adjourned 8:40. Submitted by Marci Finton