

Meeting Minutes of the River Trail Commission

(Towns of Cloverland, St. Germaine and the City of Eagle River)

July 14, 2021 4:00 PM

Eagle River City Hall, 525 E. Maple St. Eagle River 54521

Also available via Zoom

1. Meeting called to order 4:03 PM Public Present included:

Gary Meister (GM) - Eagle River, Jeff Currie (JC)- Cloverland, Francine Gough (FG) -Supv. Cloverland, Robin Ginner Eagle River City Administrator

2. Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. Meeting Posted was verified for all 3 participating townships.

4. Roll Call - Present: Joe Spitz (JJS), Ron Kressin (RK), Jim Swenson (JS) - Chairman. Quorum present.

5. No objections were made to taking the agenda in any order at the discretion of Chairman

6. Minutes from the April meeting of the RTC had been sent out prior to the meeting. Corrections for two typos were noted. JS moved to approve the minutes, RK seconded the motion. Board vote approved the minutes with noted changes.

7. Bringing Town of Lincoln into the RTC - JS discussed the May meeting where the town of Lincoln was to decide on whether they would join the commission. There was little discussion this time compared to the previous one where many residents had come to show support for the consideration to have Lincoln join the RTC as a member. This would make the absorption of easements etc. much easier, and provide representation for all 4 of the municipalities that the trail will traverse. After limited discussion, the Board decided to table the topic due principally to the uncertainty of the maintenance costs.

Equistrian use along the trail was discussed briefly to see if that might build some positive sentiment in the township but it was generally considered and non-compatible use due to space limitations in the right of way.

8. GHT Reports/recommendation

Jeff Currie talked about the lack of support by Lincoln as a problem and suggested that the project needs to take a step back and go through an "Evaluation Phase." Though GHT has ~~in their mind~~ answered all of Lincoln's questions and objections/concerns about the trail, it seems as though Lincoln board members are not hearing them as they ask the same questions again during the most recent meeting. Such a Evaluation should have a time frame associated with it and include the issues like:

1. What municipality will hold easements and permits related to trail ROW for each part of the trail? (What easements and permits will be required? What is the best route and what options are worth considering?)
2. What is the value and usefulness of the trail. What is the payoff resulting from its development and for whom?
3. What is the plan for how the owners of the trail – the four municipalities – will operate and maintain the trail?

Jeff mentioned that he thinks the RTC needs to invite Lincoln to participate in the Evaluation Phase. Much of the Lincoln proposed trail **path is in DOT Right of Way.**

Gary Meister mentioned that **DOT TAP Funding requires** a percentage share (20%) with the municipality sponsoring the grant. There were mentions of the "light pole issue" with Town of Lincoln and DOT. He suggested more of developing a Q&A format with data answers. How will the trail be managed? Will there be an endowment? He said that the State of MI is trying to develop a trail from Ironwood to connect with a trail that will allow people to bike from there all the way to Dearborn, MI. There is an effort to extend the trail from Mercer to Ironwood as well. When that and the River Trail are complete, it would connect a link all the way from Three Lakes, WI, to Dearborn.

Gary also mentioned that GHT needs to broaden its leadership base to include someone to take over his **role as he becomes unavailable.** Also said that we need citizens coming forward to the Lincoln Board as well as getting it back on their agenda.

All agreed that we need the GHT/RTC folks to work together getting together the questions and answers. JJS agreed to work with Jeff to try and start gathering the questions and working on getting data on safety statistics.

9. Letters and communication. None

10. Public Comments. None

Next meeting date agreed: October 13 Wednesday 4:00PM ER city hall.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:37 PM