



US 23 Heritage Route
Management Council Meeting
 Tuesday, September 25, 2018 at 1 pm
Location: Maritime Heritage Center, Alpena

MINUTES

Present:

Adam Poll, Sarah Waters, Dave Wentworth, Nathan Skibbe, Greg Sundin, Belle Flora, Pat Shiflet, Mary Ellen Jones, Anne Belanger, Patty O’Donnell, Steve Schnell, Kevin Schaedig, Doug Wilson, Katie Wolf, Brandon Schroeder, and Denise Cline.

Adam Poll called meeting to order at 1 pm. The Council added two items to the agenda: (1) Signs and (2) Top of Michigan Trails Council.

Motion by D. Wentworth, seconded by Katie Wolf to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

Minutes of 9-19-17 stand approved.

Management Council Membership:

Anne Belanger spoke about the contributions made to the program by Karen Sanderson, who passed away recently. It was also noted that MACNE has dissolved, so Mary Ellen Jones was asked if she could continue on the Management Council representing the Harrisville area by taking the seat held by Karen Sanderson. She said she would consider that. The group discussed the vacancies on the Council as well as members which have not participated in several years. Denise Cline will contact those members to ask if they still want to be part of the Council. The group also discussed restructuring membership to get representatives from specific communities and other interests along the route. Denise Cline will work on drafting changes to the bylaws to accommodate this. Possible names that were mentioned for official inclusion on the Council: Chris Witulski, Nathan Skibbe, Jim Conboy, Robert Heilman, Aaron Weed, and Jack Matthias. The Council will send Denise any more names that they come up with.

Corridor Management Plan & Brochures:

Denise Cline stated that the US 23 Corridor Management Plan is due to be updated this year, so she will be working on that. The Council will be meeting more often to review. Brochures will also be updated and reprinted this year. Denise will send pdfs of brochures to see if updates are needed prior to printing. MDOT provided funding for the printing.

Website:

Denise gave highlights of the website statistics provided in a written report. The site has now had over one million pageviews, and Ocqueoc Falls still ranks as the number one page viewed on the site. In addition, funding has been obtained through MDOT to overhaul the website with the new LIAA software that is now available this coming fiscal year.

Lake Huron Discovery Tour:

Mary Ellen Jones and Katie Wolf discussed the success of the Lake Huron Discovery Tour, which was held for three years. The committee took a hiatus this year. It was noted that a very small number of volunteers made the event possible, and there was a need to take a break from the intense hours of planning. Anne Belanger suggested that the Chambers, CVBs, and DDAs might step in to re-establish the event. It is possible that a sub-committee of the Management Council could get together to determine the feasibility of holding the event. NEMCOG had applied for funding for the event in previous years and that could happen again. Greg Sundin said the City of Alpena would entertain another proposal for funding if the event was re-established. Nathan Skibbe stated Alpena Township should also be included and that all communities

Voting Members:

1. Sue Stein (Arenac County)
2. *Vacant (Arenac County)*
3. Dave Wentworth (Iosco County)
4. D. Jay O’Farrell (Iosco County)
5. Marlena MacNeill (Alcona County)
6. *Vacant (Alcona County)*
7. **Adam Poll (Alpena County) - Chair**
8. Ken Gauthier (Alpena County)
9. Anne Belanger (Presque Isle County)
10. Deb Stiller (Presque Isle County)
11. *Vacant (Cheboygan County)*
12. *Vacant (Cheboygan County)*
13. Heidi Dewald (Private Tourism Rep)
14. Ian Dockrill (Private Tourism Rep)
15. Sarah Waters (TBNMS)
16. Belle Flora (Sunrise Coastal Coalition)
17. Patty O’Donnell (MDOT)
18. Don Seal (Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe)
19. **Mary Ellen Jones (MACNE) – Vice Chair**
20. *Vacant (NRTH)*
21. Mary Beth Stutzman (CVB)
22. Larry Clark (South Bay Corridor)
23. Katie Wolf (Friends of the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary)

Non-Voting Members (Ex-Officio):

1. Andrew Kenyon (US Forest Service)
2. Blake Gingrich (Michigan DNR)
3. Brandon Schroeder (Michigan Sea Grant)

Alternates for voting members

1. Jim Klarich (Alpena County)
2. Rich Sullenger (Alpena County)
3. Frank Cloutier (Saginaw Chippewa Tribe)
4. Pat Shiflet (Sunrise Coastal Coalition)
5. Doug Wilson (MDOT)

should contribute to the baseline funding to leverage other funds. Belle Flora inquired as to who was contacted in Iosco County and summarized that different groups needed to be engaged there in order to reach the appropriate people. She also spoke about an artisan hall in the Oscoda area which is looking for a way to promote arts and culture. The group spoke about needing better measurable statistics from the event. Currently, the only stats that exist are website usage, the number pathtags issued from the geocaching trail, and the state park usage. Mary Ellen said she is willing to sit down with the sub-committee to discuss the formula for making it happen even though she can't participate in planning the event. Denise will contact people to get a sub-committee established to see if there is any interest in continuing.

Maps:

Denise updated the group about the Scenic Byway Maps. The contractor NEMCOG hired to produce the materials did not complete the project, therefore the project will be completed by NEMCOG staff.

Signs:

Patty O'Donnell spoke with the Council about the Byway signage that MDOT is making available to replace the old Sunrise Coastal Highway signs. This part of their regular sign replacement program. The Council decided that they would like to have the Pure Michigan Byways signs (provided at no charge by MDOT) and that they would also raise funds to have the US 23 Heritage Route logo placed on the same post in specific locations. Denise will send the Council a copy of the Heritage Route Signage Plan that shows how that would be structured.

Motion by Anne Belanger, seconded by Belle Flora, to replace existing Sunrise Side Coastal Highway signage with Pure Michigan Byway signage, to raise funds to pay for the creation of US 23 Heritage Route logo signs to be placed on the same posts at select locations, and to keep the brown "Recreational Heritage Route" signs at the north and south ends of the route. Motion carried.

Top of Michigan Trails Council:

Anne Belanger updated the group of the efforts of the Top of Michigan Trails Council to promote "Trail Towns." This goes hand in hand with the Up North Trails website www.upnorthtrails.com, which shows all trails in northern Michigan. Denise updated the group on the inclusion of other regions into that website (the Upper Peninsula and Genesee County). The Up North Trails website is undergoing an overhaul to include these other regions as well as a new look/functionality.

Updates:

South Bay Corridor: Katie Wolf and Nathan Skibbe provided updates on pursuit of a bike trail and park.

Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary: Sarah Waters provided updates on the Maritime Festival, film festival, lecture series, the Lady Michigan shipwreck tours, and visitor numbers.

Northeast MI Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative. Sarah Waters/Brandon Schroeder provided updates on activities.

Great Lake Fisheries Trail Website. Brandon Schroeder provided updates on the new website <http://www.greatlakesfisheriestrail.org/>.

Sunrise Coastal Coalition: While there is no Sunrise Coastal Coalition, Belle Flora updated the group that Oscoda CVB will be participating in their own Pure Michigan campaign this year.

MDOT: Doug Wilson provided updates on road projects on US 23. Patty O'Donnell updated the group on the Statewide Byways meeting in Mackinaw City (date is being determined). Management Council members are invited.

DNR: Denise read Blake's written report.

County Reports:

- Presque Isle County – Anne Belanger updated on the Rogers City Theater (library has taken over).
- Alpena County – Greg Sundin updated on the public art project (sculptures).

*Meeting adjourned at 3 pm
Submitted by Denise Cline*