

# HERITAGE ROUTE - ALCONA COUNTY

May 8, 2008  
Meeting Minutes

**Present:** Karen Sanderson (Chairperson); Dan Mullen (Harrisville State Park); Art Laatz (Lions Club and Chamber of Commerce); Ken Timm (Alcona County); Marlana MacNeill (Alcona County Road Commission), Ken Gauthier (Sanborn Township), Scott Thayer (MDOT), Dave Langhorst (MDOT), and Denise Cline (NEMCOG).

**Motion by Marlana MacNeill, supported by Dan Mullen, to approve the minutes of the April 17, 2008, meeting. Motion passed.**

Treasurer's Report –There were no changes in the balance of \$145.43.

**Motion by Marlana MacNeill, supported by Dan Mullen, to approve the treasurer's report. Motion passed.**

It was noted that there was no Management Council meeting in May.

## **Alcona Trail:**

Karen Sanderson explained that the first stages of the trail through Alcona County have begun with the trail designation through Harrisville, the paving of a portion of that trail, and the work to construct a trail through Harrisville State Park. In addition, several members of the committee met with Lake State Railway to discuss the possibility of the trail existing beside the active rail line. Lake State was not interested in such an arrangement. The railroad still being active in addition to the instability of the railroad bed were listed as their reasons for disinterest.

The committee is still interested in getting the trail to Lake Shore Drive to provide access to the Sturgeon Point Lighthouse. Karen spoke with citizens associated with the Sunrise Preserve about the trail traversing that property. There are issues with the unreasonable property owners adjacent to the preserve. The committee discussed possible routes for the trail. Currently, the trail ends at the Township Park north of Harrisville. The trail could go out Washington to connect to US 23. An agreement would be needed with the Alcona County Road Commission since Washington is a county road.

The right-of-way of US 23 is 33 feet from the centerline. It would be difficult to put a trail into a 33 feet right-of-way. One possible option is to purchase additional easements from property owners along the highway. North of Lake Shore Drive, the right-of-way increases to 75 feet. Also, the land is swampy along US 23 from the city to Lake Shore Drive. The committee briefly discussed the possibility of crossing US 23, but the narrow right-of-way would still be a problem. Topography is also an issue. There is enough room for a wide shoulder to be put in place for the purpose of bike traffic. In addition, the trail could be split so that the trail on one side of the road is for north-bound bike traffic and the other side is for south-bound. However, users might not obey the directions.

Scott Thayer suggested that the committee walk the proposed trail route to identify possible issues.

It was also noted that an agreement would be needed from the Road Commission to designate a trail along Lake Shore Drive. Signage could be added to Lake Shore Drive and it could be used for walking and biking as it is now. Marlena MacNeill noted that there needed to be a way to calm traffic along Lake Shore.

Dave Langhorst discussed the three options being a trail designation, paved shoulder, or separate bike path. In addition he talked about what type of user the trail would be aimed at. While a paved shoulder along US 23 would be feasible, it is not the best solution for families from the State Park, for example. He also noted that federal aid can be used to pave a shoulder but not to pave a road.

The group discussed trail maintenance. There would need to be a formal agreement between MDOT and the local units of government stating the local units' maintenance plan. Bike groups could possibly maintain that trail. Sweeping, fixing washouts, and mowing grass would be included. It was also noted that the design and construction of the trail needs to meet ADA guidelines.

There is an interest at the State in non-motorized trails. Dave stated that currently successful grant applications are bringing a 35 % - 40% match from the applicant. 15% - 20% would be a hard match from the local units of government, while the rest could come from MDOT if MDOT was the applicant. Possible sources of funding for the match could be the townships, local businesses, private foundations (such as Kellogg, Dow, or Midland), and fundraising activities. Multiple funding sources are desirable. However, the match cannot come from federal funds. An application can be submitted and given conditional commitment even if the funds are not in place yet. However, the funds must be in place before the application is made into an actual project. Dan noted that a fund-raising committee could be set up. Scott Thayer discussed marketing the trail as an economic development tool for the local communities in order to gather support. The group could count the people using the trail to Hoeft State Park to help support this concept.

Members of the committee, MDOT, and the Road Commission will meet to walk the trail. Scott noted that MDOT can give the group an idea as to the feasibility of the trail and provide engineering support if the project is a viable one. Marlena will set up a final date for the walking meeting (tentatively May 22 at 2 pm).

#### **Heritage Route Website:**

Denise Cline updated the group on the website progress. A new map of Harrisville has been posted using the GPS coordinates gathered by Art. She also stated that she met with Jeff Gray from the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary, and he is interested in a partnership to develop the website to highlight the Heritage Route and the Maritime Heritage Trail. Denise had explained to Jeff that to make the website truly interactive, web mapping software would be needed rather than using the static maps with links as

are on the site right now. Jeff had indicated that some funding might be available to purchase web mapping software. He also said that they could provide some technical assistance for website development. Dave Langhorst noted that Denise should talk to Pete Hanses (MDOT Heritage Route Program Manager) about funding for this software which could be used all along the route.

### **Brochures:**

The rest of the Heritage Route counties are in the process of creating brochures to match the Harrisville brochure. The inside will contain a map highlighting recreational sites throughout each county. The outside will highlight 10 selected sites as well as contain a numbered list of the rest of the sites in each county. This list will correspond to numbers of the map. Denise requested that each committee member email her their top 5 choices of recreational sites to be highlighted in the brochure with text and a photo.

### **Regional Map:**

Denise explained that she had created some maps for the new Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary museum, and she is planning on expanding one of those maps to include the rest of the Heritage Route counties for use as a Heritage Route regional map. The group looked at the draft of the Sanctuary map. It was noted that the Alcona Trail could be a major asset to the county because of the connections that could be made between Harrisville State Park, Sturgeon Point, and Negwegon State Park. A discussion occurred about the benefits of using crushed limestone for trails. Denise noted that she would like photos sent to her to use on the regional map and brochure.

### **Other:**

- Dan Mullen stated that a NRTM meeting will be held on October 28<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm concerning Negwegon, Rockport, and Thompson's Harbor. Members from both the Alpena and Alcona County teams should attend. Trail connections will be discussed.
- A brief discussion occurred concerning the DNR plan that exists for the Devils Lake area.
- The team asked Denise to check on the status of the funding for technical assistance from NEMCOG.
- A dedication of the Harrisville Trail will be held in June.
- Stop signs need to be put up on the city trail.
- The Garden Club will beautify the trailhead by the harbor.

**Next meeting: June 12, 2008 at 9:00 am.**

Meeting adjourned at 10:50 am.