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**REGULAR MEETING of the PAINT CREEK TRAILWAYS COMMISSION**  
**City of Rochester Municipal Offices**  
**400 Sixth Street, Rochester, MI 48307**

**CALL TO ORDER:** The Tuesday, April 18, 2023 Regular Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Olijnyk at 7:00 p.m.

Voting Members Present: Linda Gamage, Patrick Ross, Steve Sage, David Walker

Voting Alternates Present: Russell George, Martha Olijnyk, Aaron Whatley

Non-Voting Alternates Present: David Becker, Carol Morlan

Voting Members Absent: Brian Blust, Robin Buxar, Julia Dalrymple, Ken Elwert

Alternates Absent: Dave Mabry, Ann Peterson, Matt Pfeiffer

Village of Lake Orion Non-Voting Member Absent: Jason Peltier

Village of Lake Orion Non-Voting Alternate Absent: Jerry Narsh

Others Present: Melissa Ford, Trail Manager, Eryn Grupido, Administrative Assistant, Louis Carrio, Friends of the Paint Creek Trail, Sandi DiSipio, Recording Secretary

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** All rose and recited the Pledge.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

**MOTION** by Sage, seconded by George, *Moved*, to approve the April 18, 2023 agenda as presented.

Ayes: All      Nays: None

**MOTION CARRIED.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

a. Minutes – March 29, 2023 Special Meeting, approve and file

b. Treasurers Report – March 2023, receive and file

**MOTION** by Walker, seconded by Whatley, *Moved*, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Ayes: All      Nays: None

**MOTION CARRIED.**

**APPROVAL OF INVOICES:** Ms. Ford presented the list of invoices totaling \$15,429.68. In addition to the recorder's fee, this amount includes credit card charges for GoToMeeting monthly fee, certified mail costs for the MNRTF public hearing, refreshments for Accessibility Workshop and postage; advertisement for the MNRTF public hearing in the Lake Orion Review, reimbursement to Rochester for Bridge 31.7 engineering review fees, legal fees for review of ADA issue relative to the snow in Lake Orion, 1<sup>st</sup> Qtr wages and FICA for 2 staff positions, longevity one time salary payment to the Manager, staff shared copier costs, and 2023 mileage payment to the Manager. Estimated unrestricted fund balance is \$93,000.

**MOTION** by Sage, seconded by Whatley, *Moved*, that the invoices presented for payment are approved as presented in the amount of \$15,429.68 and orders be drawn for payment.

Ayes: All      Nays: None

**MOTION CARRIED.**

**REQUESTION FOR CONSIDERATION: Oakland Township Historical Society –**

**Placement of Railroad Signal Booth adjacent to PCT:** Mr. Anthony Kowalchick, co-president of the Historical Society came forward and introduced himself. He is present to talk about the Goodison Station Signal Booth. Currently, this small building is located underneath the pavilion of the Cider Mill. The building was originally located at the Gallagher Bay City Railroad crossing, now the trail. It was used to switch trains on the former double track. The building was moved in 1974 after the railroad was decommissioned by a person in Goodison – he used it as a storage shed for years. The Historical Society received it from the owner in 2004 and restored it at that time, but it probably needs a paint job and a new roof. Mr. Kowalchick said the Society is interested in placing it back near its original location, but on the south side of the road. He reviewed the trail right of way and it appears there is a wide enough area on the south side of the trail to locate it. Mr. Becker thinks this is a great idea for the historical information about the railroad, and feels there should be appropriate interpretative materials explaining it. Mr. Kowalchick said they have an interpretative description and would like to put a big wooden sign on the door explaining what it is including the year built (1940), and a metal plaque describing the history of the building. Currently inside the building is a fake railroad crossing sign which will be placed outside next to the building. Mr. Becker asked if the Commission could see the proposed signs before they are put up and the applicant indicated yes. Mr. Sage asked if the building ever had markings on it that denoted it as a Bay City Rail line. Mr. Kowalchick said when the structure was built it wasn't the Bay City anymore, it was New York Central. The Society is still going through the archives to see if they can find a picture of the building sitting next to the tracks; they have aerial photos, but they show only the roof. There was probably something on the building because it would have had a wooden platform at one time. Mr. Sage suggested the interpretative information reference both railroads. Mr. Walker commented the building is probably not wolmanized or weatherproofed, and is concerned how long it would last out in the elements and what level of upkeep would be required to keep it in an appropriate condition. Mr. Kowalchick indicated the Society has considered that; it would have to be painted every few years and the roof kept up to make sure it remains in good condition. He indicated there is a sister signal booth at 22 Mile & Shelby next to the tracks, but it's in horrible condition. Mr. Walker indicated that when someone places something on the trail that requires ongoing maintenance, typically there is some type of contractual obligation between the two entities that would require the Society to regularly check on it. Mr. Kowalchick indicated they have typed up a maintenance agreement to have someone check up on the building monthly. A draft was included in the packet, and the Commission commented it needs more language. Mr. Kowalchick said they would agree to sign a long-term maintenance agreement. Mr. Walker asked what's wrong with where it is located today. Mr. Kowalchick said they would rather have the building in a more visible location to show its history to the people; right now, people don't really know what it is. Ms. Gamage asked how it will be secured to the ground. Mr. Kowalchick said they would use railroad ties as they wouldn't degrade as quickly, and secure the building to the railroad ties so it stays in place. Mr. Sage asked if this would be good for an Eagle Scout project – to install and provide maintenance. Mr. Walker said probably not, as those projects are usually a one and done effort. A question was asked how people will be prevented from trying to enter the structure or trying to tip it. Mr. Kowalchick said they want to put a lot of signs on the building before it's placed on site; the structure is pretty sturdy and quite heavy with shelving inside. There is a glass window with a metal wire over it in the back that people could look into. Chairperson Olijnyk is not sure where the structure will be placed and is worried about

vandalism. She suggested the maintenance agreement be more detailed so there are no questions in the future. Ms. Olijnyk feels this request would require a permit and a formal maintenance agreement, and that more information is needed about the location, signage, etc., before the Commission can act on the request. Mr. Kowalchick understands the concerns and will forward the information.

**UPDATE/REQUEST FOR CONSIDERATION: Dillman & Upton Fuel Tank & Fence:**

Mr. Brad Upton from Dillman & Upton came forward and introduced himself. The company has been here since 1910, he's 4<sup>th</sup> generation, and a year ago, they sold their business but not the property or buildings to Mans Lumber who has been in business since 1900. He appreciates the opportunity to come to the Commission and apologizes for how the project was handled as he wants to be a better neighbor to the trail. The idea was to put up a fence to make the parking lot look better, put shelving up to stack the lumber and screen it from the trail. If a fence is approved, the Commission will be able to choose the color. He is looking to get a better image from the Commission and be a better neighbor to the trail. Chairperson Olijnyk appreciates the applicant coming tonight and agrees there was some miscommunication as the information was not coming directly from Dillman & Upton. She commented she understands why there are now two fuel tanks – one is new and the one partially on trail property will be removed. The other issue is the fence – the Commission voted not to increase the fence, and Ms. Olijnyk is not sure if he's asking for reconsideration. Mr. Upton said it doesn't really matter to him, they were trying to do good for people driving by and the trail. He wants to put racking up for the lumber to make it look better, and is open to whatever the Commission wants to see on the trail side, e.g., a fence, greenery or a mural – it's that or the lumber. Ms. Olijnyk said one concern is that we are trying to have the least amount of things on trail property. There's already a fence there, so we are looking for something more natural as a screen instead of the fence extension. Mr. Upton said they could plant trees to block the lumber. Mr. Walker added we are trying to keep the aesthetics of the trail as pure and natural as possible, and suggested something more native versus a fence. Mr. Becker's opinion is that having a fence to screen commercial property on the trail is not such a bad idea, but why not put up a fence to block the lumber and then trees to screen the fence? Mr. Upton invited a few people out to visit and get a vision that makes sense, redraw the plans, pick some trees – whatever the Commission wants. Ms. Gamage feels strongly that we don't want another structure built on our property, if the applicant wants to build a fence on their property, that's fine, but not on our property. She wants to see a natural barrier created that wouldn't require regular maintenance and us enforcing maintenance, but isn't sure what would work best for the conditions. Mr. Walker commented the fence would be 20 feet on our property, so the racking would also be on our property. Ms. Olijnyk asked if the Commission wants the Licensing Committee to have further discussions with Dillman & Upton about potential tree lines or plantings; she's fine with that. Mr. Ross commented he agrees with Mr. Becker's comments about a fence blocked by trees. Mr. Walker asked how long it will take to deplete the fuel in the tank that will be removed. Mr. Upton said he was told three weeks. Mr. Sage suggested the Licensing Committee consider alternate solutions for the mutual benefit of both sides – he would be willing to help if the Committee meets after working hours. Mr. Upton said the Licensing Committee could then give him directions as to what should be drawn up. Chairperson Olijnyk said the Licensing Committee will set up a time to meet with Mr. Upton to discuss ideas and bring the information back to the Commission. The Commission expressed appreciation to the applicant for coming in tonight.

**DISCUSSION/APPROVAL: Friends of the Paint Creek Trail Memorandum of**

**Understanding:** Mr. Louis Carrio, President of the Friends Group, came forward and indicated last year he appeared before the Commission and expressed concern about the sustainability of the organization, in particular as we might have a change in leadership or trail management and

he felt it was important to have a better understanding with the Commission as to the Friends relationship roles and responsibilities. It was suggested a Memo of Understanding be prepared to document this relationship, which will be helpful if we have changes to members. He and Ms. Gamage worked together to prepare a document which reflects what is actually happening now. He and Ms. Ford reviewed the agreement, and agreed it reflects the current situation and not any new responsibilities. Mr. Carrio asked if there are any questions. Mr. Walker said the document reflects the way it operates today including the Moutrie Garden, which the Friends are maintaining and taking care of, and thought that the Commission was going to take this over at some point. Mr. Carrio explained the financial responsibility shifted to the Commission, and Ms. Ford added we have a dedicated fund to cover this, but the garden itself will be maintained by the Friends. Mr. Carrio asked if something should be added to the Trail Management section. Mr. Walker said if we have a financial obligation to support the Friend's efforts, it should be called out. Mr. Carrio said work on the garden is also done by the City of Rochester Hills. Ms. Gamage has some concerns moving forward that with new leadership, so many things going on and the number of staff hours involved, this agreement might be obligating management to more administrative support that we might be able to provide in the future. To her, the Friends Group supports the Trail; it is mutual in many ways, but to her the Friends Group is designed to support the Trail. She agrees with the Trail being the physical location, address and phone number for the Friends, but as far as administrative support with making copies, completing permit requests for events, etc., she has concerns moving forward. She thinks we should switch it so that the Friends Group is taking care of these efforts, and alleviating some of this work for trail management. Perhaps the wording "to the extent permitted by resources" could be added to #7. Mr. Carrio suggested that an Item #9 be added under Trail Management – "all of the above responsibilities are subject to the availability of resources", which would cover everything. Mr. Carrio asked staff for clarification that these administrative responsibilities are not that demanding. Ms. Ford indicated Ms. Grupido usually handles these requests. For example, Mr. Carrio explained when there is a Friends meeting, he's looking to have an agenda, minutes and a financial report (5-10 pages) copied for the meeting – that's the type of administrative work that would be done. He doesn't have the capability of doing that himself, and doesn't think it's a huge burden, but if the resources weren't available, he'd have to go someplace to have the copies made. Mr. Becker commented that #7 under Trail Management is open-ended and won't know if it's a burden or not until we try it, and suggested adding the #9 verbiage and see how it works, and if it becomes too much of a burden, we could renegotiate and reopen the Memorandum of Understanding. Chairperson Olijnyk suggested making the suggested changes (Moutrie financial obligation and #9) to the Trail Management section and put it on next month's agenda for approval. Mr. Carrio agreed to revise the document. He noted the one thing that would really help in the relationship is if the Friends Group had a page on the Trail's website and could eliminate the cost and burden of their individual website. He's asking that if the Trail's website is redesigned, we look to see how to merge the existing Friends website; as right now there is redundancy of message and cost. Mr. Carrio explained if that could be done, the Friends Group could share in this cost, and eliminate their website cost. Mr. Becker agreed, asked then if there should be something in the Memo about when the document can be cancelled or amended. Ms. Olijnyk suggested a statement that says "this Memorandum of Understanding can be revised upon mutual agreement between the PCTC and Friends Group".

**UPDATE: Grant Opportunities & Trail Capital Improvement Projects:** An update memo was included in the packet. Ms. Ford explained she has an update on the Community Foundation \$50,000 grant we received for the Bridge 31.7 design engineering. The original grant period end date is April 21<sup>st</sup>, but we're not done at this point. She requested a grant extension from the Foundation. After talking with the engineers, it sounds like whether we get the TAP grant or not, will influence the way the plans are put together as MDOT requires certain specifications. They

indicated a six-month extension would be preferable. The Foundation agreed, so the grant period has been extended to October 27<sup>th</sup> with a final report due in November. The same thing is true for the grant the city of Rochester received from Oakland County Parks. Ms. Ford needs to speak with the Rochester's DPW Director as he is the coordinator about requesting a grant extension for the same reasons. The current grant period end date is May 19<sup>th</sup>. Application for the TAP grant was submitted. Ms. Ford reported that Bridge 31.7 was determined not eligible to be designated as a historic bridge; the TAP grant coordinator was happy to hear that and they are moving along with their review. A technical review meeting for this round of TAP funding is on April 26<sup>th</sup>, and the grant coordinator will keep the Commission updated. The Section 106 review report completed by the consultants was submitted to SHPO for review. The MNRTF grant application was submitted. Ms. Ford said we've also talked about the Community Foundation/Ralph C. Wilson Trails Maintenance Fund – that funding has become available. Ms. Ford doesn't know how the Commission feels about trying to apply for this grant; the maximum grant is \$400,000, but a 1:1 funding match is required. Since Rochester has committed \$191,000 towards the bridge project, this grant may be an opportunity for them to apply for this grant; she has not spoken to Rochester about this. Mr. Sage commented if this is a formal request from the Commission, it needs to be brought to the City. As Ms. Ford is leaving, Ms. Gamage feels it would be prudent to ask Rochester to consider pursuing this grant for a match to their financial commitment. Ms. Ford will make the city of Rochester aware of this grant opportunity, and let them make the decision whether or not to pursue it. The Commission will not pursue this grant.

**UPDATE: Southeast Rochester Property Cost Estimate:** Ms. Ford indicated AEW submitted the cost estimate, construction costs will be \$88,650, and they provided an additional amount for contingency and an amount to provide construction administration and observation, so that total is \$138,650. There were some amenity items added that we had talked about that would be nice to add to the site – so the estimated total project cost is \$170,733. Both estimates were sent to Andrea LaFontaine at Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance, but Ms. Ford has not heard back from her and will follow up.

**UPDATE: 2023 National Trails Day:** An agenda from Ms. Milos-Dale about what will be happening at the Paint Creek Junction Ribbon Cutting on June 3<sup>rd</sup> was included in the packet. Ms. Ford commented all Commissioners are invited to attend. Ms. Olijnyk will make some remarks about why this trailhead is important to the trail and OTPRC will be recognizing all the donors who contributed to the project. Ms. Olijnyk suggested asking the Mounted Patrol to stop by; Ms. Grupido will ask them.

**DISCUSSION/APPROVAL: Rochester Hills Visitation Trackers on PCT:** Summary information was included in the packet. Mr. Dennis Andrews and Ms. Dakota Coats, Rochester Hills Parks Department, came forward and introduced themselves. They are here to request approval to install two trail counters, one at Dutton and the other at Tienken. Mr. Andrews brought a tracker for the Commission to see. They've installed one on the Clinton River Trail. As far as the mounting goes, Ms. Coats explained on the Clinton River Trail, they put wood posts in the ground with the tracker inside an electrical box with a lock to prevent vandalism as they are expensive and passed around pictures of what it looks like. She explained how it works, when the infrared beam is broken, it records anyone going by. Mr. Andrews indicated the goal of the project is to collect data on usage. Ms. Coats added the count is broken down into hours, which is useful to see when people are using the trail. Mr. Becker asked if there is a reason to mount the tracker on a post rather than hide it on a tree; he would like something less obtrusive. Ms. Coats explained they installed the one on the Clinton River Trail on a post in a box so someone couldn't take it off a tree. Ms. Gamage asked if the tracker can be installed on an existing post or sign so there isn't an additional post on the trail; Ms. Coats responded yes. Ms. Gamage also asked if

there was any signage near the post explaining what is and letting people know they're being counted. Ms. Coats said yes – it's a sticker saying it's not a camera, it's a counter, so please do not disturb. Ms. Coats then explained how the data is retrieved. Ms. Gamage thinks this is great to do, and asked how often the information will be shared with the Commission. Mr. Andrews said Mr. Elwert is on the Commission and will provide it to the members. A question was asked of the price; Ms. Coats said it's about \$590 per unit, \$2,490 for a set of three and includes five years of using their on-line data. Mr. Ross asked if a QR code could be put on the post to take users to the website for an explanation instead of a sign. Ms. Gamage thinks a sign would be helpful to people. Mr. Whatley said this tracker information would be useful in Orion. A question was asked if this tracker is temporary, Mr. Andrews said the tracker is hopefully permanent, and will confer with the Commission about placement.

**MOTION** by Gamage, seconded by Walker, *Moved*, to approve placement of two trail counters on existing posts on the trail, and hopes that we get regular reports.

Ayes: All      Nays: None

**MOTION CARRIED.**

**DISCUSSION/APPROVAL: PCT Brochures at Michigan Welcome Centers:** Ms. Grupido said we've been approved to distribute our brochures to the 14 Michigan Welcome Centers; MDOT recommends 100 brochures for each center to start with and then each center will request more based on how much demand there is. She feels it would spread information about the trail to different parts of the state for people traveling through. The only cost at this point is shipping the brochures. We would ship to one location, and MDOT would distribute to the centers. They recommended we initially send 1,400 brochures, but we could send any amount, and they would distribute them evenly to the 14 centers. Ms. Ford said we currently have 5,000 brochures. Ms. Gamage asked if there was any other way to get this information distributed, i.e., maybe cards with QR codes on them; that might be less expensive than reprinting the brochures? Ms. Grupido will look into this idea.

**MOTION** by Ross, seconded by Sage, *Moved*, to approve sending 1,400 brochures to MDOT for distribution.

Ayes: All      Nays: None

**MOTION CARRIED.**

**UPDATE: Personnel Committee:** Chairperson Olijnyk indicated 19 applications were received, which were narrowed down to the top six who were interviewed via a Zoom meeting. They also solicited written answers to five questions prior to the interviews and told the candidates we would be making recommendations – if the Commission would like to interview the top three candidates, it's their call, but the Committee did rank the top three candidates, and their top candidate was Thomas Correll. Application materials for the top three candidates were provided to everyone this morning and hard copies provided tonight. A discussion ensued relative to the top candidate's experience and qualifications. Ms. Olijnyk said if the Commission feels they would like to conduct interviews, feel free to do so (it would have to be done Thursday, make an offer and get someone in to have some time with Ms. Ford to talk about the job), but if they don't feel the need to, and would agree with the Personnel Committee's recommendation, their recommendation is Mr. Correll for the next Trail Manager. Mr. Becker hopes the Commission would consider the recommendation. Mr. Whatley and Mr. Sage support the recommendation. Ms. Olijnyk said if we make an offer, we need to know what the Commission wants us to communicate – the Committee recommends offering \$27.00/hr; the range is \$25-30/hr, with a start date of Monday.

**MOTION** by Whatley, seconded by Gamage, *Moved*, to make an offer to Mr. Correll within the salary range for 20 hours per week starting Monday, with the Personnel Committee making the final decision as to the hourly rate.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Ayes: Gamage, George, Olijnyk, Ross, Sage, Walker, Whatley

Nays: None

**MOTION CARRIED.**

If the offer doesn't work out, further interviews will be scheduled.

**MANAGER'S REPORT:** Ms. Ford summarized her written report included in the packet. The first complaint about grading was received by staff, but it's too soon to grade. Staff had a request to trim overhanging branches on the Bridle Path near Gunn as cyclists are using this path, which they are not supposed to be using as it's for the horses. Oakland Township did trim the branches. Another complaint was received about snow removal at Atwater. Our attorney spoke with the Village attorney; Lake Orion's explanation was because they don't remove snow on the rest of the trail, they don't feel the portion of their license agreement regarding maintenance was intended to include snow removal; they offered to contract for that service, but we would have to pay for it. The Train to Trails Half Marathon sponsored by Eastside Racing Company proposed on a portion of the trail has been moved to Macomb County.

**COMMISSIONER REPORTS:** Ms. Gamage suggested we include the trail counters on the inspection report, so the bike patroller can check on them. Mr. Ross recommended we don't install bike pumps at the fix-it stations as they get broken, but access to the tools is very helpful. Each Commissioner thanked Ms. Ford for all she has done, her service to all the member communities and the trail, and Congratulations on her new endeavor – she will be missed!!!

Chairperson read the following Resolution:

**PAINT CREEK TRAILWAYS RESOLUTION #2023-003  
HONORING MELISSA FORD**

WHEREAS, Melissa Ford began her employment as Trail Manager with the Paint Creek Trailways Commission (the "Commission") in 2018; and

WHEREAS, Melissa has been instrumental in the continued development of the Paint Creek Trail, the outreach of the Trailways Commission, and the advancement of the Paint Creek Trail; and

WHEREAS, during her career with the Commission, Melissa was professional, dedicated, knowledgeable, and loyal to the Commission's mission to provide trail users with a natural, scenic and educational recreation experience while preserving the natural integrity of the Trail for the enjoyment of present and future generations; and

WHEREAS, Melissa's efforts over her years of service have contributed significantly to the Trail as well as the Commission's ability to provide exceptional service to area residents and visitors that enjoy the Trail and her level of commitment to the Paint Creek Trail set a positive example for others to follow; and

WHEREAS, Melissa's commitment to high work quality and her dedication to the Trail and the Commission has proven to be a great asset to the Commission and to Trail users; and

WHEREAS, her commitment to the Trail and the Commission leaves an invaluable legacy for Trail users to enjoy far into the future.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Paint Creek Trailways Commission by adoption of this resolution honors Melissa Ford for her outstanding quality of work, her commitment to provide a superior Trail for all Trail users, and extends its sincere appreciation for her countless contributions, and the lasting, positive impact she made during her years of dedicated service to the Paint Creek Trailways Commission as the Trail Manager.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Paint Creek Trailways Commission extends to Melissa Ford its best wishes for continued success in all her future endeavors.

**MOTION BY** Olijnyk, seconded by Gamage, *Moved*, to approve Resolution #2023-003

Ayes: All    Nays: None

**MOTION CARRIED.**

Ms. Ford said it's been a pleasure working with and getting to know everyone. She won't be a stranger and thanked everyone for their support and everything they've done over the years. Everyone has been instrumental in the successes we've had.

**ADJOURNMENT OF REGULAR MEETING:**

**MOTION** by Sage, seconded by Gamage, *Moved*, to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Ayes: All      Nays: None

**MOTION CARRIED.**

**NEXT REGULAR MEETING: May 16, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. – City of Rochester Municipal Offices**

Respectfully submitted,

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TOM CORRELL, Trail Manager

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DAVID BECKER, Secretary