

PAINT CREEK TRAILWAYS COMMISSION

APPROVED

September 19, 2023



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

The September 19, 2023, regular meeting of the Paint Creek Trailways Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. in the main conference room of the City of Rochester Municipal Offices.

Voting Members Present: Brian Blust, Robin Buxar, Ken Elwert, Linda Gamage, Conner Reiter, Steve Sage, David Walker

Voting Alternates Present: David Becker, Matt Pfeiffer

Non-Voting Alternates Present: Carol Morlan, Martha Olijnyk

Voting Members Absent: Julia Dalrymple

Alternates Absent: Russell George, Dave Mabry, Ann Peterson, Aaron Whatley

Village Non-Voting Member Absent: Jason Peltier

Village Non-Voting Alternate Present: Stanley Ford

Others Present: Tom Correll, Trail Manager; Eryn Grupido, Administrative Assistant; Josh Moo, Trailways supporter and Scoutmaster with Scouts BSA; Louis Carrio, Chairman, Friends of the Paint Creek Trail; Michael Jahn, Vice-President, Friends of the Paint Creek Trail; Ingrid Kliffel, Recording Secretary

A quorum was present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairperson Olijnyk led the Commissioners, staff and those present in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

AMENDMENTS TO AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOVED BY BUXAR, SECONDED BY BECKER, to approve this evening's agenda as presented.

MOTION CARRIED.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Moutrie Pollinator Garden: Update

Friends of the Paint Creek Trail President Louis Carrio and Vice-President Michael Jahn were present to give an update on this garden, which was established in 2020. Mr. Carrio shared photos of the site when the garden was first created in June of 2020, and photos of how it looked this summer. Overall, it is performing very well. Jean McBride has continued to assist with coordination of the volunteers and garden needs. The plantings are primarily native varieties, with some annuals added to provide color. He was very pleased with how the garden is progressing.

The Friends group is thankful to the City of Rochester Hills for their support with watering, which has largely eliminated the need for watering through volunteers in nearby King's Cove Condominium Association. Additionally, the City of Rochester Hills has provided additional boulders that the Friends group requested. Mr. Carrio said the volunteers did not apply mulch to the garden this year as it already has a thick layer.

Mr. Carrio then shared information on matters that presented challenges and how the group addressed them. He stated that the garden requires a significant amount of upkeep, but the Friends of Paint Creek Trail volunteers have been able to work together to accomplish this. The mulch spills out of the garden and onto the path, and sometimes the path surfacing material gets into the garden, particularly when there is a heavy rain; currently the volunteers rake the materials back when this occurs. Dutchman's pipe vine is creeping underground; they need to figure out how to address this. The vines were pulling down the obelisk, but the volunteers were able to remove the vines and secure the obelisk. Dogs have been relieving themselves in the garden; the Friends group addressed this with humor by posting a sign that reads, "Dear Dogs, please do not water our plants." Children like to play on the rocks and sometimes jump on the plants, and Trail users in general sometimes step off the Trail near the entrance sign to the garden; they posted a sign requesting that people stay off the rocks.

Mr. Carrio and Mr. Jahn were pleased that many are enjoying the Moutrie Pollinator Garden – including both pollinators such as bees, moths and butterflies, as well as people.

Chairperson Olijnyk asked if the Friends of Paint Creek Trail would be interested in having help from middle and/or high school students looking for community service hours. Mr. Carrio was not sure that this would be a good fit, but said he would contact her if he needs help. Commissioner Gamage noted that the Rochester Pollinator Group maintains a list of volunteers, and this would be another resource; Mr. Carrio said he will continue to keep the group involved with this project.

The Commissioners thanked Mr. Carrio, Mr. Jahn and the Friends of the Paint Creek Trail for all they have done to establish the garden and for continuing to maintain it.

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CONSENT AGENDA

This evening's Consent Agenda consists of the following: (a) minutes of the August 15, 2023, meeting of the Paint Creek Trailways Commission, and (b) Treasurer's Report for August 2023.

MOVED BY BECKER, SECONDED BY ELWERT, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, specifically to approve and file the minutes of the August 15, 2023, meeting of the Paint Creek Trailways Commission, and to receive and file the Treasurer's Report for August 2023.

MOTION CARRIED.

APPROVAL OF INVOICES

Trail Manager Correll and the Commissioners reviewed the list of invoices dated September 19, 2023.

MOVED BY ELWERT, SECONDED BY GAMAGE, to approve payment of the invoices as presented in the amount of \$3,348.34.

AYES: Blust, Buxar, Elwert, Gamage, Pfeiffer, Reiter, Sage, Walker

NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIED.

SIDE PATH TRAIL AND OBSERVATION DECK PROJECT

The Trailways Commission was approached by attorney Christopher Kroll with a proposal to construct a side path trail and observation deck on the trail spur near Bloomer Park in memory of one of his longtime clients who passed away. Mr. Kroll is eager to start work on the project.

Earlier this year in February, former Trail Manager Melissa Ford obtained a quote for professional services from Anderson, Eckstein & Westrick, Inc. ("AEW"). AEW would start with the preliminary plans created by The Mannik Smith Group as part of their broader design project completed in 2019, and would provide additional engineering design services as necessary, obtain the necessary permits for the project through EGLE as work is to be done in the floodplain and floodway, develop a project cost estimate, assist with the bidding process, and provide construction/project management services.

On August 30th, Trail Manager Correll met with Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance ("MTGA") Director Andrea Lafontaine, MTGA Board member Neil J. Billetdeaux, and Mr. Kroll to discuss the project. The estimated project cost is approximately \$200,000, which Mr. Kroll approved. At that meeting, the group also agreed that they would like the process to move forward as follows: the Trailways Commission should sign a contract with AEW to

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serve as the project manager for this project. AEW will then begin the project and will submit invoices to the Trailways Commission for approval. Once the Trailways Commission approves an invoice for payment, Trail Manager Correll shall forward that invoice to MTGA. MTGA will serve as the fiduciary for the donor's funds, and MTGA will make payments to AEW and any other vendors as necessary for work on this project.

Commissioner Elwert pointed out that this project will likely take some time as we will need to obtain permits through EGLE. Trail Manager Correll responded that he has shared an estimated project timeline with Mr. Kroll to make him aware of this.

The Commissioners noted that AEW has already performed some preliminary work in the amount of approximately \$1,200. They have not submitted an invoice, but that amount is included in their February 3, 2023, quote for professional services.

Commissioners Elwert and Buxar proposed a motion regarding the contract with AEW and payment of their approximately \$1,200 invoice for services already rendered but which has not been invoiced. After discussion, all Commissioners agreed to table that motion to first consider another aspect of this project.

MOVED BY WALKER, SECONDED BY BUXAR, to authorize Trail Manager Correll to negotiate a formal written agreement with Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance for the Side Path Trail and Observation Deck project in an amount not to exceed \$210,000.

AYES: Blust, Buxar, Elwert, Gamage, Pfeiffer, Reiter, Sage, Walker

NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIED.

At this time, the Commissioners agreed to now consider the tabled motion.

MOVED BY ELWERT, SECONDED BY BUXAR, to authorize the Chairperson to sign the contract with Anderson, Eckstein & Westrick, Inc. and request that AEW immediately send the Paint Creek Trailways Commission the approximately \$1,200 invoice, with the understanding that no other work shall be performed under this contract until the Trailways Commission receives reimbursement from the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance.

AYES: Blust, Buxar, Elwert, Gamage, Pfeiffer, Reiter, Sage, Walker

NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIED.

PAINT CREEK JUNCTION PARK WAYFINDING SIGNS

At the August meeting, the Commissioners had asked Administrative Assistant Grupido to obtain additional quotes from our signage vendor to replace a damaged sign, and to update two signs to better direct Trail users to the Paint Creek Junction Park – Northern Trailhead. Once the Bald Mountain Connector is complete, we will also have to update signs to advise Trail users of this connection. Ms. Grupido reviewed her memorandum of August 28th.

Commissioner Gamage asked if there is any update on the Bald Mountain Connector project. Trail Manager Correll responded that it is expected to be completed in the spring, but he had nothing further to report at this time. Commissioners Buxar and Blust inquired if we need the signs completed now, or if this can wait until we are ready to include the Bald Mountain information. Ms. Grupido responded that the signs are readable, but the one is dented, and our signs do not currently direct Trail users to Paint Creek Junction Park.

After further discussion, the Commissioners agreed to wait on updating and replacing signs and to obtain more information on the anticipated timeline for the Bald Mountain Connector project.

Commissioner Gamage reiterated her concerns about safety in the vicinity of the Bald Mountain Connector, as she feels the space is tight for bicycle riders as they come off the bridge. Trail Manager Correll recalled that the MDNR has agreed to add bollards in this area to alert and slow down Trail users, and they will cover the costs of this addition to the plan.

LABOR DAY BRIDGE WALK

Approximately 150 people participated in the 16th Annual Labor Day Bridge Walk along the Paint Creek Trail, which took place on Monday, September 4th, from 8 a.m. to 12 noon. Trail Manager Correll thanked the Commissioners and others who obtained event sponsorships, donations, took photos, volunteered, or helped in other ways to make this such an enjoyable family-friendly event.

Manager Correll reviewed the revenues and expenditures for the Bridge Walk. Despite the staff's best projection of what snacks would be needed, there were many donuts leftover; these were donated to Neighborhood House where they were very much appreciated.

ENCROACHMENT

Trail Manager Correll reported that on August 29th, he was informed by an Oakland Township Parks and Recreation staff member of a new path and stone staircase that had been installed on Trailways property between Gallagher Road and Silver Bell Road, near Flagstar Bank. He visited the site, but it was not clear as to on which of two neighboring properties the path and staircase had been constructed. Consequently, he sent a notice of encroachment with attachments (including the Encroachment Policy, Encroachment Removal Procedures, and Application for Limited Use Permit for Private Access to the Paint Creek Trail) to both

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houses. He has not received a response at this time. Manager Correll will keep the Commissioners updated on this matter.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT POSITION

The Personnel Committee met to review the job description for this position and to create a job posting. They kept the range for compensation where it was for the last posting, which will give them some flexibility when reviewing candidates and hiring.

The position was posted on the Paint Creek Trailways website on Friday, but Manager Correll said we have not received any applications yet. The Commissioners agreed to also post the job opening on their respective municipal websites as possible.

Commissioner Gamage wondered if the Commission would want to consider adding the responsibilities of recording secretary to this position and increasing the hours. Commissioner Elwert said this is not currently contemplated in the job description.

Trail Manager Correll said the Personnel Committee hopes to have a recommendation of a candidate for the Commission's consideration at the October meeting.

RECORDING SECRETARY

Longtime Recording Secretary to the Paint Creek Trailways Commission, Sandi DiSipio, informed Trail Manager Correll that she will be unable to return to the Trailways Commission for the foreseeable future as she deals with medical issues. Ms. DiSipio has been with the Trailways Commission since 1999 and is sad to have to make this decision.

The Commissioners discussed the level of detail that they would like to see in their meeting records, noting that some municipalities have moved to providing a video recording and "skeleton" minutes. They agreed that reviewing video footage is cumbersome, and they prefer minutes that include detail on the discussion held as well as actions taken. Such minutes are helpful for new Commissioners to become educated on the various matters that come before the Commission, provide a continuum of information sharing when alternates attend meetings, and also promote transparency to the public.

After further discussion, Recording Secretary Kliffel said she would be pleased to continue to take minutes on a fill-in basis until a new Administrative Assistant is hired, and until the Commission determines how they wish to proceed with respect to the Recording Secretary responsibilities.

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ELECTION OF TREASURER

Former Commissioner Patrick Ross was serving in the capacity of Paint Creek Trailways Commission Treasurer for the 2023 calendar year. However, he has moved out of state, is no longer eligible to serve in this capacity, and the Commission must fill this vacancy for the remainder of the term (i.e., until the end of 2023).

Commissioner Dalrymple has indicated her willingness to fill this vacancy and serve as Treasurer for the remainder of 2023.

MOVED BY BUXAR, SECONDED BY GAMAGE, to nominate and appoint Commissioner Dalrymple to fill the vacancy and serve as Treasurer of the Paint Creek Trailways Commission for the period of September through December 2023.

MOTION CARRIED.

Chairperson Olijnyk reminded the Commissioners that the election of officers for the 2024 calendar year will take place at the December meeting.

MANAGER’S REPORTS

Trail Manager Correll reviewed his report of September 14th.

Complaints, Vandalism, Feedback

Slippery Surface Near Orion Art Center: A bicyclist reported that the trail surfacing was slippery at the connector bridge to the Village of Lake Orion near the Orion Art Center, north of Atwater Road. Manager Correll noted that this is not technically a part of the Paint Creek Trail; he contacted the Village of Lake Orion to notify them of this concern.

Vandalism/Graffiti: Someone spray painted graffiti on one of the kiosks and in other areas near the Tienken Road Trailhead. Manager Correll filed a police report with the Oakland County Sheriff’s Department. A detective has been assigned to this matter, and Manager Correll will keep the Commissioners updated as information becomes available.

Right-of-Way Signage: A Trail user requested that we post right-of-way signage at road crossings. This was included on our old signs, but is not on the newer Iron Belle signs. Manager Correll will look into this.

Repairs and Maintenance

Dutton Road Construction: The Dutton Road bridge construction is underway. Barriers have been placed on either side of the Trail in the area, so Trail access has not been affected. However, Trail users cannot access the parking lot there.

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Water Fountain at Tienken Road: The water fountain located just north of Tienken Road was pooling water at the base. Commissioner Elwert reported that this repair was completed today.

Medical Emergencies, Police, Fire Calls on Trail

There were no medical emergencies reported on the Trail.

Follow Up

License Agreements: Trail Manager Correll has forwarded information to our attorney. The attorney anticipates having information prepared for the Trailways Commission to send out next week.

MNRTF Grant for Bridge 31.7: We received the initial scoring on our grant application last week. Trail Manager Correll and the Commissioners discussed ways in which we can improve our scores, including incorporating sustainable systems and materials. Additional information may be submitted until October 1st. Manager Correll will also discuss these preliminary results with our grant coordinator.

COMMISSIONER WALKER'S REPORTS

Tripping Hazard Near River Walk

Commissioner Walker said that following the Labor Day Bridge Walk, he heard mention of a tripping hazard of some sort. Commissioner Gamage explained that it is the lip/transition where the River Walk connects to the Clinton River Trail. This is not part of the Paint Creek Trail property, and the City of Rochester was contacted and informed of this concern.

Labor Day Bridge Walk

Commissioner Walker shared a hearty thank you to all who donated, volunteered or helped in any way to make the Labor Day Bridge Walk a success. He looks forward to continuing to have such enjoyable community events in the future.

COMMISSIONER BUXAR'S REPORT

Commissioner Buxar said her work has been very demanding lately, and she apologized for not being able to participate as she typically would.

COMMISSIONER BLUST'S REPORT

Trail Improvements Committee

Commissioner Blust thanked the Trail Improvements Committee for moving forward with this discussion.

Structural Review of Bridges Along Oakland Township Portion of Trail

In the 2024 fiscal year, Oakland Township Parks and Recreation Commission will be having structural inspections conducted of the bridges within Oakland Township.

Fortieth Anniversary Celebration

The 40th Anniversary celebration is scheduled to take place on November 18th. The 40th Anniversary Committee needs to meet to work on this project.

COMMISSIONER GAMAGE'S REPORTS

Recognition Committee

The Recognition Committee also needs to meet to gather information to be presented at the 40th Anniversary event.

Adopt-a-Trail

This group typically meets the first weekend in October. However, her group will conduct trail clean up on September 30th instead because of the holiday weekend.

Administrative Assistant Grupido will send out reminder information later this week or early next week.

COMMISSIONER ELWERT'S REPORT

Bridge Structural Evaluations

The City of Rochester Hills recently had structural evaluations conducted of the bridges. He will share the findings at an upcoming meeting.

COMMISSIONER REITER'S REPORT

Thank You

Commissioner Reiter thanked everyone for helping him make the transition to Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER FORD'S REPORTS

Labor Day Bridge Walk

Commissioner Ford enjoyed attending this event, and was pleased to meet people from various communities along the Paint Creek Trail.

Atwater Crossing – Blinking Sign

He encouraged Trail users to use the button to activate the crosswalk sign at Atwater. With the construction in this area, it is especially important to do this for safety.

Kern Road/Clarkston Road Crossing

Commissioner Ford feels that the cones and signs placed at this road crossing are doing a good job alerting Trail users and drivers of this crossing.

CHAIRPERSON OLIJNYK'S REPORT

Budget

The Commission will consider the 2024 fiscal year preliminary draft budget at next month's meeting.

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ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY GAMAGE, SECONDED BY PFEIFFER, there being no further business before the Commission, to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted,

Ingrid R. Kliffel
Recording Secretary

Approved,

David Becker
Secretary

Approved,

Tom Correll
Trail Manager