

PAINT CREEK TRAILWAYS COMMISSION

APPROVED

November 21, 2023



4393 Collins Road
Rochester, MI 48306
(248) 651-9260
Paintcreektrail.org

REGULAR MEETING of the PAINT CREEK TRAILWAYS COMMISSION
Paint Creek Cider Mill
4480 Orion Road, Rochester, MI 48306

The November 21, 2023, meeting of the Paint Creek Trailways Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. in the main conference room of the Paint Creek Cider Mill. Vice-Chairperson Walker chaired the meeting.

ATTENDANCE

PRESENT

Voting Members:

Brian Blust (Oakland)
Julia Dalrymple (Orion)
Conner Reiter (Orion)
Steve Sage (R)
Ken Elwert (RH)
David Walker (RH)

Voting Alternates: None

A QUORUM WAS PRESENT.

Staff: Tom Correll, Trail Manager
Nicole Sands, Administrative Assistant

Non-Voting Alternates: None

Village Non-Voting Alternate: Stanley Ford (Village of Lake Orion)

Friends of the Paint Creek Trail: Louis Carrio, Michael Jahn

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ABSENT

Voting Members: Robin Buxar (Oakland), Linda Gamage (R)

Alternates: Martha Olinyk (Oakland), Dave Mabry (Oakland), Matt Pfeiffer (Orion), Aaron Whatley (Orion), David Becker (R), Ann Peterson (R)

Village Non-Voting Member: Jason Peltier (Village of Lake Orion)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice-Chairperson Walker 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 ELWERT, SECONDED BY DALRYMPLE, to approve this evening's agenda as presented.

MOTION CARRIED.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Friends of Paint Creek Trail: Thank You to Commission

At this time of Thanksgiving, Michael Jahn, Vice-President of the Friends of the Paint Creek Trail, expressed his thanks to the Commission for all they do.

CONSENT AGENDA

This evening's Consent Agenda consists of the following: (a) minutes of the October 17, 2023, meeting of the Paint Creek Trailways Commission, and (b) Treasurer's Report for October 2023.

Approval of Minutes

MOVED BY BLUST, SECONDED BY DALRYMPLE, to approve the minutes of the October 17, 2023, meeting as presented.

MOTION CARRIED.

Approval of Treasurer's Report

The Commissioners reviewed the Treasurer's Report for October. Commissioner Blust observed that the Commission typically maintains a balance of approximately \$150,000 at Flagstar Bank. He suggested that we look into changing this to a high yield account, which would provide additional interest income.

MOVED BY BLUST, SECONDED BY SAGE, to approve the Treasurer's Report for October 2023 as presented.

MOTION CARRIED.

APPROVAL OF INVOICES

Trail Manager Correll and the Commissioners reviewed the list of invoices dated November 21, 2023.

MOVED BY ELWERT, SECONDED BY DALRYMPLE, to approve payment of the invoices as presented in the amount of \$1,817.72.

AYES: Blust, Dalrymple, Reiter, Elwert, Walker, Sage

NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIED.

OFFICERS: 2024

The Commission will need to select the 2024 officers at the December meeting. In the past, the Commission has tried to share the leadership positions as between the several member municipalities. Commissioner Olijnyk, the current Chairperson, has indicated that she will not be able to continue to serve in this capacity. Vice-Chairperson Walker asked Commissioners to consider taking on one of the leadership positions for 2024. Commissioner Elwert asked if a Commissioner must be an elected official in order to serve in a leadership capacity on the Trailways Commission. Trail Manager Correll said he did not know, but he will look into the criteria for holding these positions.

Commissioner Sage said that his alternate, Ann Peterson, is no longer a member of the City Council, so the Mayor will need to appoint a new alternate.

AD HOC COMMITTEE POSITIONS: 2024

Vice-Chairperson Walker said that at the December meeting, the Commission will also need to consider ad hoc committee positions for 2024. He commented that he feels these committees benefit from continuity of membership.

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The Commissioners reviewed the current list of ad hoc committees, their descriptions, and members. They discussed that this list of committees should be updated. For example, the Trailways Commission is no longer involved with the Orion Art Project. However, it may be good to continue to have a committee for the Moutrie Pollinator Garden.

With respect to the Paint Creek Trail 40th Anniversary Celebration Committee, Village of Lake Orion Representative Stanley Ford pointed out that he is a member of the Village Council, but Jason Peltier is not; the Commissioners agreed that this should be updated. Commissioner Dalrymple added that she and Commissioner Reiter can also look at the appropriate Orion Township representatives to serve on this and the other ad hoc committees.

MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND: Grant Application Update

Trail Manager Correll was pleased to report that, with our submittal of additional materials, the score for our grant application increased from 345 to 395. The MNRTF Board will announce their grant funding recommendations on December 13th.

PAINT CREEK TRAILWAYS FISCAL YEAR 2024 BUDGET

The Commissioners thanked Trail Manager Correll for the work he put into revising the format of, updating, and adding side notes to the budget spreadsheet that was before them this evening.

The Commissioners reviewed the proposed budget for fiscal year 2024. The following reflects some of the highlights of the discussion.

Revenue

Under Revenue, the “Member Unit Contribution for Commission/Operations and Staff” will increase by 3 percent.

This is our second year of the two-year contract with the Oakland County Sheriff’s Department for the mounted patrol, so there will not be an increase this year. However, several Commissioners cautioned that they have heard we may be looking at as much as a 10 percent increase in this cost for the 2025 contract.

Commissioner Elwert recalled that he had seen a third category under this cost center that showed a contribution of \$1,250 from each member municipality. Trail Manager Correll explained that this third category is for the website design project, which was originally proposed to be done in 2023. Each member municipality did make this contribution, and \$5,000 of Paint Creek Trailways funds were also budgeted for this purpose. However, the project is now planned for the 2024 fiscal year.

Interest revenue was greater than had been expected.

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The amount placed in the line item for “MMRMA Asset Distribution” is projected to be approximately 10 percent higher for 2024, although admittedly we cannot know what this will be.

There is an increase in projected revenue from license fees as we will have new rates in place.

Trail Manager Correll estimated revenue from the 40th Anniversary Celebration 5K event registration at \$3,500 (100 participants at \$35). This event is planned for the spring. Mr. Correll thought that the 40th Anniversary event may be the start of a new annual spring event (with a new name, to be determined), so he proposed that we also include a line item in the budget for the 2025 fiscal year. (The 40th Anniversary Celebration will be discussed in more detail later this evening.)

Trail Manager Correll asked about the “Transfer from Fund Balance” line item (line P1700) in the amount of \$6,900, and shared the notation he found from former Trail Manager Melissa Ford. Vice-Chairperson Walker noted that the Commission’s offices are located in Oakland Township’s Paint Creek Cider Mill; there was a change/adjustment in our rent, so he speculated that this may reflect that adjustment. The Commissioners also discussed that there may have been some costs associated with the southeast Rochester property development project.

Expenditures

The Commissioners and Trail Manager Correll then considered expenditures. Under the “Office” cost center, Manager Correll included \$1,100 to purchase a small conference table and chairs, as well as an entry table in order to make some improvements to the office space. He included additional monies under “Office Operating Expenses” for various services such as GoToMeeting, Adobe, Amazon, and the photo copier. Commissioner Dalrymple noted that the Trailways Commission can set up the Amazon account as a business account, which enables us to take advantage of business pricing on items.

The “Office and Trail Equipment” line item covers expenditures such as minor sign repairs, the purchase of dog waste bags, etc.

Regarding the line items for “Rent” and “Telephone and Computer Network Services,” Manager Correll said he confirmed with Oakland Township that these amounts will stay the same for the next two years.

Under the “Staff Travel/Training” cost center, the Commissioners and Manager Correll discussed “Education/Memberships,” and the Commissioners recommended increasing this line item to \$750.

Next, they discussed the “Insurance/Professional Services” cost center. The “Recorder’s Fee – Monthly Meeting” has increased. The “Legal Fees” line item has also increased as the

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Commission continues to work on the licensing agreements. However, Manager Correll said he does not anticipate any significant legal projects in the 2024 fiscal year.

The Commissioners then looked at the “Publicity/Marketing/Education” cost center. Staff is currently working with a vendor to explore options for shirts. These could first be made available at the 40th Anniversary event, and then offered for sale afterwards.

Manager Correll estimates that expenses to put on the 40th Anniversary Celebration 5K event will be \$2,500 (the race coordinator will cost approximately \$700 or \$800 plus a percentage of the sign up fees, and there will be other expenses associated with the event).

Manager Correll added a new line item, “Staff Uniforms/Wearables.” The Commissioners agreed that they like the idea of having shirts and other items for staff to wear, particularly at public functions.

The Commissioners next reviewed the “Administrative Personnel” cost center. Wages include a 5 percent increase.

Under the “Trail Projects” cost center, Manager Correll suggested renaming the “Signage Project” line item to simply “Signage,” and that we keep an amount to cover any signage expenses that may come up.

The “Patrol Program” cost center includes budgeted monies for the bicycle patroller to have his bicycle tuned up twice a year, and for the purchase of a new seat and helmet (under “Bike Patrol Equipment/Misc.”).

Under the “Printing/Logo Expenses,” the Commissioners noted that we are budgeting for the purchase of shirts, so they asked that the correlating revenue category (“Trailways Saleable Items” P1500) be increased to at least \$1,000 to reflect anticipated sales of the shirts.

Finally, the Commissioners considered the “Miscellaneous/Contingency” cost center. We need to maintain a minimum balance of \$10,000 in the Community Foundation for Greater Rochester (“CFGR”). The Commissioners briefly considered amounts they would like to transfer to the CFGR as opposed to transferring to the Trailways Commission’s fund balance. Trail Manager Correll will inquire about what the growth is of our monies in the CFGR.

Trail Manager Correll will make the revisions discussed this evening. The Trailways Commission will review the revised budget and consider adoption at the December meeting.

40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

5K Event

The Commissioners discussed holding a 5K run in the spring to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Paint Creek Trail. While they would have liked this event to take place on the 2024 National Rails-to-Trails Day, April 27th, they were not able to book the race coordinator for that day. Instead, staff has reserved the coordinator for April 21st.

Vice-Chairperson Walker had concerns about the condition of the trail in April, noting that in the past the trail surfacing has sometimes been soft and somewhat fragile until later in the spring. Trail Manager Correll pointed out that Lake Orion holds an annual event on the Trailway in early May. Commissioner Elwert said we will need to assess the condition of the trail to make sure it is safe for users for such an event.

Given that this event will mark the 40th anniversary, Commissioner Blust said he would like to share some historical information with event attendees. He has been working on his home videos, pictures, etc. and can use some of these skills to put together information for the Trailways Commission. Commissioner Elwert added that he has access to the sign shop through the City of Rochester Hills, so this resource can also be available. Commissioner Blust recalled that the Oakland Township Historical Society put together information that they displayed at the Paint Creek Junction Northern Trailhead grand opening event held earlier this year. He will contact Colleen Barkham for more information. Other potential sources of information include Patrick McKay of the Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm, and Jimmy Johnson of Orion Township.

Sponsorship Form

The Commissioners reviewed the draft Sponsorship Form. As the April event will be held closer to Lake Orion, the Commissioners would like to have the presenting sponsor be from that area if possible. There will be only one "Presenting Sponsor," and the cost of that sponsorship will be \$1,000. Vice-Chairperson Walker proposed that we consider adding more sponsorship levels with different benefits for each level. He has done this in the past with other groups, and had great success in obtaining additional sponsors. The Commissioners agreed to offer an unlimited number of lower level sponsorships at the \$100, \$250 and \$500 levels.

Trail Manager Correll will revise the form as discussed. Commissioners and staff will start soliciting sponsorships after the Christmas holiday.

WEBSITE REDESIGN

Manager Correll asked that the Commissioners review the draft “Request for Proposal – Website Upgrade.” He developed this together with Julie Schoenherr of Oakland Township, who is putting together a similar Request for Proposal to update Oakland Township’s website. The Commissioners can review this document in more detail at a future meeting.

Commissioner Elwert suggested that the RFP specify where the website would be hosted (for example, would it be hosted through the designer’s hosting service, or would it remain where it is currently, where Trailways staff could manage it). He suggested that the RFP deliverables should also provide for two or three mock-ups.

With respect to potential bidders, Manager Correll has information on the vendor recently used by the Polly Ann Trail for their website. Treasurer Dalrymple will share information about Jimmy Johnson, the person designing the website for Orion Township. Commissioner Elwert said the City of Rochester Hills also has a vendor that they have used.

The Commissioners will review this matter further at the December meeting, with the view that we can solicit bids in early 2024.

MANAGER’S REPORTS

Advisory Committee Reports

40th Anniversary Committee

The 40th Anniversary Committee met twice to discuss this event. The Committee would also like to create a high quality graphic timeline of the history of the Paint Creek Trailways, which could be added to over time. This could be displayed at events, and could also be kept where in the Trailways office where it could be viewed.

Licensing Committee

The Licensing Committee met, reviewed the license agreements, and made edits. Manager Correll forwarded the proposed changes to the attorney for review and finalization.

Complaints, Vandalism, Feedback

Complaint of Human Waste Along Trail:

There has been one additional complaint from the same person regarding what they believe to be human waste on the trail.

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Trees that Overhang Trail:

Trail Manager Correll visited the two overhanging trees identified by a citizen at last month's meeting. He has shared his observations with Oakland Township's Parks and Recreation staff.

Repairs and Maintenance

Dutton Road Bridge Project:

This project is complete, and the parking lot is now paved.

Administrative Assistant

The Commissioners welcomed Nicole Sands, who recently started as our new Administrative Assistant.

Medical Emergencies, Police, Fire Calls on Trail

There were no medical emergencies reported on the Trail.

Follow Up

Encroachment:

Trail Manager Correll has not heard back from the property owners regarding the path and staircase that were constructed on Trailways property. Manager Correll will contact the attorney to ask how we should proceed.

Bald Mountain Project:

Manager Correll contacted representatives regarding the project plans, particularly items that Commissioners had asked to be called out on the plans. However, the person he contacted needed to confer with someone else, and he has not yet gotten back with Manager Correll.

License Agreement Invoices:

Invoices for the 2023 year were sent out this fall, and we have started to receive payments. The Commissioners and Trail Manager Correll noted that license agreement invoices for the year have typically been sent out in the fall of that year. This tends to create some confusion with the licensees as to which year they are paying for.

For 2024, the new license agreements will be in place soon. The Commission's plan is to start sending out the 2024 year invoices in February.

COMMISSIONER BLUST'S REPORT

Future Meetings, Treasurer Position

Commissioner Blust will not be able to attend the December meeting.

He said he would be willing to serve as Treasurer. However, he has recently retired and may move out of Oakland Township but has no immediate plans.

TREASURER DALRYMPLE'S REPORT

Orion Township's Purchase of Great Lakes Athletic Club

Orion Township recently purchased the Great Lakes Athletic Club in Gingellville, with the plan to turn this into a community center.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY SAGE, SECONDED BY DALRYMPLE, there being no further business before the Commission, to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted,

Ingrid R. Kliffel
Recording Secretary

Approved,

David Becker
Secretary

Approved,

Tom Correll
Trail Manager