

Lake Vermilion Trail Joint Powers Board Meeting Notes

3/22/18 – Greenwood Town Hall, Tower

Called to order at 10:00 AM

Board members

Cathi Hiveley – *Beatty Township*

Carol Booth - *Beatty alternate*

Sidra Starkovich - *Bois Forte*

Joel Astleford - *Bois Forte alternate*

Tim Johnson - *City of Cook*

Tim Kotzian - *Kugler Township*

Tom Lantry - *Owens Township*

Stephen Peterson, Jr. - *Vermilion Lake Township*

Attendees

John Bassing – *Greenwood Township*

Steve Lotz – *Vermilion Lake Township*

Jim Ganahl - *Beatty resident*

Holly Larson – *National Park Service*

1. Legal updates

- a. Legal update – Holly Larson has investigated the legal status of the JPB given that St. Louis County (SLC) has not decided how they wish to proceed. A League of Cities contracts attorney, Chris Smith, believes that the JPB is not created until all parties listed in the agreement have signed the agreement but recommends that the parties should check with their attorneys. Attorneys for Cook, Greenwood (used also by Beatty & Vermilion Lake), and Tower have no issue and believe that the JPB may proceed. At the work group meeting on 3-14-18 it was also noted that when approving the second version of the Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) in which Breitung Township had been removed, a number of parties (including Beatty, Greenwood, & Vermilion Lake) discussed and noted that SLC had not and might not sign the JPA and approved the JPA knowing so. Motion by Tom Lantry-Owens, second by Cathi Hiveley-Beatty, to move forward with grant applications without SLC, all six ayes, motion carried. Joel Astleford will check with Bois Forte's attorney and the BIA for an opinion.
- b. Carol Booth reported on the SLC Board meetings where in December the SLC Board sent the Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) for legal review and in January the JPA was tabled on a 4-3 vote. She noted that SLC is in the process of hiring a trails planner. Any approval of the JPA by SLC would likely come with language changes to the agreement, which would require another round of approvals. Holly Larson felt this is a poor time to be making changes to the JPA to accommodate the County. Tom Lantry will contact Tom Rukavina. Steve Peterson asked if SLC took any action at their 3-20 meeting at Gilbert. Carol said

they did not. Tim Johnson felt waiting for SLC could delay the Master Plan indefinitely and that it was time to push forward and finish the Plan.

- c. Recent elections – Greenwood’s election results are not finalized pending a recount. Vermilion Lake has one new supervisor and a new supervisor vacancy will be created when a sitting supervisor resigns to take the clerk’s position. Vermilion Lake did not feel these changes would affect their participation.

2. Mater Plan

- a. State/Greater Minnesota Regional Parks & Trails Commission (GMRP&TC) requirements – Legacy grants require an updated Master Plan with specific elements. The updated Plan must be submitted to the GMRP&TC by April 30 for their review to meet the summer application round deadline.
- b. Holly Larson reported that the steering committee had been working on portions of the Plan and that she and Russell Habermann have been working on Plan text.
- c. Public meetings – schedules, notifications, & logistics
 - i. Mater plan draft #1 will be distributed to JPB & work group members March 22.
 - ii. A two week comment period will end April 5. Additional photos of the trail corridor are requested.
 - iii. Holly Larson and Russell Habermann will make revisions.
 - iv. Master plan draft #2 will be available for review and comment by the public and JPB and work group members from April 13 through April 23. Public meetings/open houses to allow the public to interact with the Plan will be held at the Tower Civic Center on April 17, the Cook Community Center on April 18, and the Greenwood Town Hall on April 19, with all meetings held from 5:30 to 7:00 pm.
 - v. Holly and Russell will propose changes based on comments received.
 - vi. Master plan draft #3 will be offered for approval to the JPB at the April 26 meeting.
 - vii. Plan will be put into final form based on JPB comments/changes.
 - viii. Plan will be submitted to the GMRP&TC on April 30.
- d. Motion by Tom Lantry-Owens, second by Cathi Hiveley-Beatty, to approve the Master Plan timeline as presented, all six ayes, motion carried. The Master Plan will be posted on lakevermilliontrail.org beginning April 13 with links to the site on the Bois Forte, Cook, Greenwood, and Tower web sites. A public survey had been planned but Holly Larson felt there was not enough time for that now. Steve Peterson agreed that time was too tight. Sidra Starkovich reported that Bois Forte was working on a new comprehensive plan. It was noted that Cook, Greenwood, and Tower had all recently update their respective comprehensive plans, which had recent survey data. It will be important to have JPB and work group members at the various Plan meetings.
- e. Goals
 - i. Trail uses – non-motorized uses and motorized mobility assisted devices would be allowed, which led to a discussion of skate boards. Tom Lantry and Steve Peterson both felt that skate boards or long

boards should be allowed. Neither wanted to create a skate park and neither felt that skate boards would be used in skate park fashion. Initially horses will not be permitted with the possibility that they may be allowed in the future where sufficient right-of-way is available for a separate horse corridor.

- ii. Winter uses – initially it was felt that there would be no snow removal. Joel Astleford is a member of the Transportations Alternatives Board and he said funding was being limited to trails maintained for year-round use. After some discussion it was decided that various portions of the trail would be plowed or groomed depending on local preferences
- iii. Hunting – many trails simply close during the firearms deer season. Points of discussion included the type of underlying land ownership and preference, whether hunting would otherwise be allowed in a given area, possible liability for allowing hunting on or from the trail, and what other area trails allow. More research will be done.
- iv. Condemnation – Motion by Steve Peterson-Vermilion Lake, second by Cathi Hiveley-Beatty, that condemnation will not be used, all aye, motion carried.
- v. Segment priority rankings – at their March 14 meeting the work group reviewed and adjusted segment priority rankings. Segments ranked high were 1A (Wakemup Hill to The Landing), 5 (Greenwood Town Hall to Fortune Bay), and 7 (Y intersection to Tower). Segments ranked medium were 1 (Cook to ski trail parking), 2 (Wakemup Hill to Wakemup Campground), 3 (Wakemup Campground to Frazer Bay Public Access), 4 (Frazer Bay Public Access to Greenwood Town Hall), 6 (Fortune Bay to the Y intersection), 6A (ferry route), and 8 (Hoodoo Point Campground to Breitung Town Line - segment 6B on some maps). Segments ranked low were 1B (Northwoods School spur) and 3A (Timbuktu access spur). Segment 4A (Greenwood spur connecting the Greenwood trail) was dropped. The JPB reviewed the work group's rankings and they were accepted with one change, moving segment 6 from medium to high. Reasons for the change included the following; Bois Forte is actively seeking funding to extend their trail out to County Road 77 and with segment 7 the existing Bois Forte trails would be connected to the existing Mesabi Trail segment in Tower, and a trail passing the Pike River rapids and dam would be a highlight feature. Sidra Starkovich and Joel Astleford explained that a portion of the segment from the existing Bois Forte trail to County Road 77 west of Tibbetts Trail involves a large wetland, will be difficult to complete, and may rely in part on roadway shoulders.
- vi. The five year plan that the work group laid out at their 3-14 meeting was presented. It calls for applications to be submitted for both segments 1A and 7 in 2018.

- vii. Trail corridor - there was a discussion of the trail corridor. Holly Larson reported that State and Federal grants generally required a 10 foot paved surface allowing five feet for each direction of travel, with a two foot shoulder on each side and an additional two foot mowed area on each side for a total of 18 feet. Any signage should be beyond the mowed area so 20 foot easement would be a minimum with 25 to 30 feet preferred. A 20 year or longer easement is preferable to holding fee title to the land in most cases.
 - viii. The JPB accepted the work group's fund raising goals of: 2018 - 100,000, 2019 - 150,000, 2020 - 200,000, 2021 - 150,000, and 2022 - 150,000. It was noted that once a grant application is accepted design and environmental review will start and a part-time director will likely be needed full time, which will require additional funds.
 - ix. With regard to Master Plan draft #1 specific language changes are preferred by April 5.
3. Trail development/Fundraising
- a. Resolution number 3 AUTHORIZING LAKE VERMILION TRAIL JOINT POWERS BOARD TO MAKE APPLICATION TO AND ACCEPT FUNDS FROM THE LEGISLATIVE-CITIZEN COMMISSION ON MINNESOTA RESOURCES' ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND for segment 7 was offered. Motion by Steve Peterson-Vermilion Lake, second by Tom Lantry-Owens, to approve resolution number 3 as presented, 6 ayes, 0 nays, resolution 3 approved. Sidra Starkovich said that Bois Forte will be offering a letter of support for the application. Holly Larson reported that the LCCMR taps lottery dollars and if accepted the funding request would then go to the 2019 Legislature for approval.
 - b. The Trail will be receiving a \$3,000 grant from the IRRRB for grant writing.
 - c. Carol Booth has been contacted by the Vermilion Lake Association, formerly known as the Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion. They are asking for a short piece on the Trail for their annual meeting on August 12 and she will supply that.
4. Board administration
- a. Election of officers - Sidra Starkovich offered to take the secretary position. Motion by Cathi Hiveley-Beatty, second by Steve Peterson-Vermilion Lake, to elect Sidra Starkovich secretary, all six ayes, motion carried. Steve Peterson offered to take the treasurer position if Tom Lantry would accept chair, which Tom did. Motion by Cathi Hiveley-Beatty, Second by Tim Kotzian- Kugler, to elect Tom Lantry chair and Steve Peterson treasurer, all six ayes, motion carried.
 - b. Holly Larson will be available to the JPB until September.
 - c. Treasurer Peterson will research obtaining a tax ID # and send out dues notices.

Meeting adjourned at 12:10 pm.

**NEXT MEETING: Thursday, April 26, 2018 10 a.m. to Noon
at the LaCroix Ranger Dist. Office, USFS, Cook**