

Meeting Minutes of the River Trail Commission

(Towns of Cloverland, St. Germaine and the City of Eagle River)

April 14, 2021 4:00 PM

Eagle River City Hall, 525 E. Maple St. Eagle River 54521

Also available via Zoom

1. Meeting called to order 4:02 PM Public Present included:

Tim Wright (Zoom), Mike Robillard - Lincoln, Christopher Nofziger - Three Lakes, Fritz Laeser - Lincoln, Gary Meister (GM) - Eagle River, Mike Bishop - Cloverland, Carlton Schroeder- Sugar Camp, Jeff Currie (JC)- Cloverland, Jim Meiers - Lincoln, Francine Gough (FG) -Supv. Cloverland, Robin Ginner Eagle River City Administrator

2. Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. Meeting Posted was verified for all 3 participating townships.

4. Roll Call - Present: Joe Spitz (JJS), Ron Kressin (RK), Jim Swenson (JS) - Chairman. Quorum present.

5. No objections were made to taking the agenda in any order at the discretion of Chairman

6. Minutes from the January meeting of the RTC had been sent out prior to the meeting. RK moved to approve the minutes, JS seconded the motion. Board vote approved the minutes without changes.

7. Bringing Town of Lincoln into the RTC - There has been an effort by people in GHT and some Town of Lincoln residents and Jim Swenson in interceding with the Town of Lincoln Chairman, to have Lincoln join the RTC as a member. This would make the absorption of easements etc. much easier, and provide representation for all 4 of the municipalities that the trail will traverse. The existing RTC agreement, and a draft of the Steve Garbowitz suggested agreement add on, were distributed prior the meeting. The latter is attached to these minutes. The proposed agreement would need to be signed by all the existing townships as well. This would provide for the addition of the Town of Lincoln to the Commission. JS asked for comments. JJS said that it would be great to have Lincoln join the commission but requested that the draft only cover the addition to the RTC and the requirement for the \$500 annual donation to the commission so that it is consistent to the elements within the original agreement signed by the current 3 member townships. Nothing has been approved by any town board regarding maintenance and ongoing expenses so it is inappropriate to include it in Lincoln's commitment document. FG pointed out it was not part of the 7/11/18 Agreement. The Draft 10/10/20 Maintenance agreement is added in as an attachment to these minutes to assure it is in the record.

Hopefully Lincoln would see this as a positive as they will have a voice in the determination of an acceptable maintenance plan along with the other town boards involved. Based on the conversation at a recent Cloverland town board meeting on this subject, JJS invited someone from GHT to attend the May 5 Cloverland Meeting to be there for discussions on the maintenance topic. JJS noted in a previous town Cloverland meeting reaction was not favorable "told we would never be responsible for anything for maintenance, that FORT would take care of all of it" Holding of Easements was also a surprise. JC agreed to have someone(s) attend.

RK agreed that it will be great to have Lincoln on board with the RTC noting it was wonderful if Lincoln will participate because the trail will go through all the towns and it is great that the RTC could include all. JC expressed agreement that the original and the Lincoln addition agreement needed to be brought in accord relating to the issue of maintenance. The handout of the 1st draft agreement for Lincoln discussed it is an attachment for these minutes.

JS Lincoln joining has brought back up the subject of ongoing maintenance. JJS noted that it is great that FORT has a pledge line in the first Draft Maintenance agreement. It was also noted that the \$412 /mile town contribution was based on some experience with the Boulder Jct. trail as a 5-year sample. The Commissioners need to agree first to a draft agreement that we can take to our towns. He suggested that GHT meet with the towns and Eagle River to get some sense of the various ideas/feelings/positions so RTC could come together with GHT to develop final proposal for the towns and GHT's Board to consider. JC said GHT is not opposed to meeting with the towns. GHT hasn't taken a formal vote on the trail maintenance issue as a board either.

JJS explained that while 5-year average estimate from Boulder Junction is interesting benchmark, but, there will come a time when, the asphalt will eventually need to be replaced. From our town road experience the 10 mile, 10' wide trail is comparable to resurfacing 5 miles of town road at \$186,000 per mile in today's dollars. As well, the trail has some interesting terrain where there will be boardwalks etc. with differing cost and life expectancy. If a maintenance fund is formed with towns and FORT, RTC would hold the checkbook, and decide with Fork input, how funds are spent? We also need some clauses regarding what happens if the fund becomes insolvent. Also, what would we do if a nature disaster causes significant damage (tornado, straight winds, floods etc.) well beyond "budget" planning. As representatives of our townships and taxpayers, we need to present a more thorough plan that will stand the test of time. JC agreed we need to assure sustainability and that Steve Favorite would be a good consultant to help guide the agreement. JS mentioned ST. G. 's trail was done in 2 segments in different timeframes from Chamber of Commerce to Sayner, and from the Chamber to Cty O. In these they have experienced different things like having to take out trees close to the trail, i.e., there is

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a need to prepare for future growth of trees so roots don't start breaking up the asphalt. JC stated that this has been great beginning to a conversation that is long overdue to develop the maintenance agreement. He was glad that the conversation is starting with "the river trail is a great idea" and the hope that it is here 100 years from now. Sustainability is an important issue.

FG suggested separating the \$500 annual fee from the "Lincoln" agreement from the maintenance statements. Essentially this means striking the "in addition ... annual maintenance fee" section. She suggested that maintenance be separated from Lincoln joining the commission. GM noted that Lincoln would join and be able to work together to get the maintenance budget system determined and negotiated initially and annually. As the original Commission document states, the Commission would look at the amount of funding required and sources of funding. Lincoln would have a voice in the determination of what the maintenance agreement will be.

JJS suggested we ask SG to reform the "Lincoln" agreement to have it consistent with the original Commission agreement separating the maintenance commitment statements in the revision. RK made motion, 2nd by JS. Motion approved.

JJS motioned that after revision of the agreement separating the maintenance agreement statements from Lincoln joining the RTC that it be sent to RTC members and Dick Stoegbauer, to get on our respective next town meeting agendas ASAP. Ron Kressin seconded. Motion carried.

A special meeting in May of the RTC was suggested to bring Lincoln in. In case there are problems or a round 2 Revision based on discussion at the Town/City boards. Further discussion suggested that RTC get the "Lincoln agreement" revised then quickly get it to the town boards for their next meetings for hopeful approval. St. Germaine next Thursday or second Monday, May 10th to agree to the new amended agreement. Cloverland May 5, ER May 11th, Lincoln May 11th. That is the goal. If problems are encountered at the town boards, we can convene a special May meeting. RTC will communicate if there are any problems, and then schedule a special meeting if required.

8. GHT Reports/recommendation

Gary Meister reported. that there has not been a huge amount of field work since last meeting in the field (snow was deep) but progress has been made on "letter reports" (legal description to enable writing an easement) from Lake Country Title. LCT is pulling together (for free to GHT normally \$75-100 each) the letter reports. There are some being received. The Nikolai property Letter of Intent received at Cloverland, was given to GHT. LOI's allow engineers to exactly measure the easement for design and complete first level of engineering on the easement. GHT will be doing some additional communication to property owners to show that the project is still active and well.

JC reported that FORT is working with Tara Lila and the Three Eagle trails and Chris Nofziger who represents them. Jeff stated that they are "on board" to support the development of the RT. FORT is working on publicizing the effort with more of its participants in the farmers market booths and promotion of Septimber Ride. They are also trying to keep their members informed and involved to keep fanning the flames.

9. Letters and communication. None

10; Public Comments. None

Next meeting date agreed (barring special meetings): July 14 Wednesday 4:00PM ER city hall.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:03PM

Attachments:

1. 10/10/2020 Draft of River Trail Maintenance agreement
2. First Draft of Agreement adding Town of Lincoln to the River Trail Commission