

## **Meeting Minutes**

Huntingdon County Active Transportation Committee

Friday, May 26, 2023

The Huntingdon County Active Transportation Committee was called to order by Chairman Matt Price at 9:35 A.M. The meeting was in the Huntingdon Borough Municipal Building-Borough Council Chambers, 530 Washington Street, Huntingdon, PA 16652.

### **Attending:**

Chris Stevens, Judy Scott, Alisha Grove (attending for Wendy Melius), Matt Price, Debra Clark-Loner, James Lettiere, Jayme Reck, Zach Lee, George Conrad, John Turack (Penn State Extension), Laura White, Mark Lazzari (The EADS Group), Brian Wisner, Jen Bellis, Neal Fogle (Penn State Extension), Kirby Lockard (Africa Engineers), Michael Panek (Central PA Rails to Trails), Karl King (Central PA Rails to Trails), George Foster (Central PA Rails to Trails) and Ben Varner (Central PA Rails to Trails.)

### **Not in attendance:**

Vince Greenland, Charles Harper, Andrew Sharp, Barb Hauge (UpStreet Architects).

### **Minutes**

Matt Price called the meeting to order at 9:35 A.M. He introduced and welcomed representatives from the Central PA Rails to Trails organization (Mike Panek, Karl King, George Foster and Ben Varner.) It is the hope of both organizations to combine efforts and resources to improve active transportation throughout Huntingdon County.

The first item up for review and action were the meeting minutes from April 28, 2023. Matt asked for a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Chris made the motion and George seconded it. All were in favor.

The next item up for discussion were the results from the May 17, 2023 meeting regarding PennDOT right-of-way Old SR 33 parallel to Norfolk Southern's railroad. (Segment 13 of the 9/11 National Memorial Trail). Kirby Lockard with Africa Engineers said PennDOT does not have any existing plans of this section of roadway since it was officially ordained in the 1800s. The ATC would need to develop their own geometry for the actual paved portion of the road. He said it is pretty visible except underneath the railroad. The estimated cost of doing a survey was based on locating an existing paved surface and creating a geometry that would fit the center line of that. It would also attempt to show adjoining properties that border it. Kirby said when doing his research, he's not sure PennDOT has right-of-way along this previously abandoned roadway. If the new road was built in 1946 and it's been 75 years with non-use, gates erected on the road and a

PUC order that the existing road would be vacated for public use. So, right-of-way may need to be acquired from whoever owns the adjoining property the road would have been reverted back to. It may be difficult to determine. The railroad purchased their right-of-ways/parcels along the area. Crossing at the right-of-way could be an obstacle as well. Kirby brought plans to show the group so everybody had a chance to become familiar with the area. Matt said with the PUC order that vacated the right-of-way it makes negotiating with Norfolk Southern much more difficult if not impossible. When he spoke with their real estate folks, they said if PennDOT owns the right-of-way we have an in because they would work with PennDOT, but if it's private, they have a policy that they will not entertain new trail crossings or rail with trail on their mainlines. Jim mentioned the attorney said the only person that may have some vested interest in this is the abutting property owner at the end (Galen Wiser). Jim would like the group to consider Kirby's proposal and whether the group would want him to pursue this effort to do a survey.

Jim mentioned that he spoke with the new Secretary of DEP. He talked about the situation with the Norfolk Southern train derailment at the Ohio/Pennsylvania border and that this has caused a strained relationship with Norfolk Southern and DEP. As far as cooperation with Norfolk Southern and in order to get through to them, a discussion with either Senator Fetterman or Senator Casey needs to happen. The Secretary said now's the time to approach them because they're at a public relations weak point. If they would not be willing to help with development of the 9/11 Memorial Trail that would be bad PR for them. Karl King said they've had contact with Norfolk Southern and been successful in Somerset County with the 9/11 Memorial Trail in getting some right-of-way that was owned by the railroad (Norfolk Southern actually donated it). He said if the ATC needs help with contact for Norfolk Southern he can help us get in touch with 9/11 Memorial Trail property developers who can reach out to the railroad.

Chris mentioned to Matt that the Borough has access up to the rail line, but Chris said underneath the connector is where the Borough has sewer and water lines. They're about to approach Norfolk Southern because they'll need to go under them to the west. Chris also said if Jim wants to meet with Senator Casey the Borough has a call with him on May 29, 2023 and he'll be in the Borough on June 2, 2023. Jim said he'll get in touch with the Commissioners to see if they would approve meeting with the Senator.

Jim mentioned on May 17 he met with Linus Fenicle, Brian Wiser, Lucas Parkes and Mark Lazzari. They discussed developing the trail from the Henderson Township side and dead end it where we have the bottleneck. He knows it's not ideal, but at least part of the trail would be developed and then they could work with Norfolk Southern. Jim feels the group should move forward with Kirby doing the survey and discuss how to acquire funding to proceed with it. Debra and Matt had mentioned funding it, but they would need to reach

out to their respective boards. The estimate to do the survey is \$4,928.00. Brian asked/wanted clarified by Kirby that a survey will not prove ownership, just physical geometry. Kirby said he'll try his best to identify ownership, but it could be more a legal question. He said the fact that they acquired it by act of assembly the government started the title and they've owned it at least until 1946, when PUC said it should be vacated. Typically, it goes to the adjoining property owners. Brian said if we can determine who we think the adjoining property owners are that at least gets us most of the way. Jim feels if the group did notification to the adjoining property owners and advised them of the decision to hire Kirby, then they could prove to us they have acquired those properties through the vacation, and if they can't produce the documents, in his opinion, they don't own it. Matt is willing to approach his board to cover part of the cost of the survey and Debra said she will approach her board for funding, and Chris will take it to Borough Council as well. Zach said he will talk with his transportation manager about any possible funding they could provide.

The next item up for discussion was the public survey/poster dissemination to the public by the EADS Group. Mark said the survey is going well with 83 responses and the information they are receiving is useful and useable. He handed out an interim report for the group with some data collected from the survey so far. He said he hasn't gotten any specific comments back on wheelchair use and we need to think of some other ways to capture this information. Laura mentioned she sent the survey information to the Huntingdon County Human Services Council and asked them to help distribute it to their clients. She told them that the ATC is looking for input from people that use mobility devices. Brian mentioned sending it to the Huntingdon County Housing Authority. Mark said the interactive map has received 20 comments with useable information so far and that a lot of those are around the Huntingdon area. Mark asked the group to look at the interim report and see if they have any questions or comments before the June 8, 2023 public meeting.

The public meeting will be held June 8, 2023 from 3:00-6:00 P.M. in the Huntingdon Borough Building Council Chambers. They will have the interactive map up for the public to view and the survey available to take. They'll also display maps and have a screen/projector in use to display information. John mentioned what jumped out to him from the interim report so far, was the gap between neighborhoods and how we, as a group, can work to connect them. Mark mentioned that they'll take the collected data from the survey, interactive map and the public meeting and use it to help prioritize areas/details at the charrette on June 12, 2023 which will be held from 10:00 A.M.-3:00 P.M. Debra will reach out to WE Gather to reserve a space for that meeting. Mark also mentioned that Barb is currently working on key person interviews and starting to contact

people on the list Jim provided to her. He said they should have a working draft of the plan by July for Sam Pearson (Walk Works) to review.

In other business, Matt mentioned that Huntingdon is having its' Summer Walking Tour again. The tour will start on June 15, 2023 at 10:00 A.M. at the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> & Penn streets at Merchant's Park, and go 10 weeks throughout the summer. There will be a different tour each week. George will be doing a presentation today (5/26/23) about the Thousand Steps at the Huntingdon County Visitors Bureau. The representatives from Central PA Rails to Trails offered the ATC their help in distributing the survey in any capacity that they can.

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, June 30, 2023 at 9:30 A.M. at the Huntingdon Borough Municipal Building-Borough Council Chambers.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:52 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jayme Reck  
Assistant Community Development Administrator