

**ERIE TO PITTSBURGH TRAIL ALLIANCE (EPTA), Inc.**  
**Minutes of January 20, 2014 Meeting**  
**Held at Greenville Chamber of Commerce, 182 Main Street Greenville, PA 16125**

Participants

Organization

**Trail Organization and At-Large Members:**

Bill Weller	Allegheny Valley Trails Association (delegate)
Matt Lehman	Allegheny Valley Trails Association (alternate)
Ron Steffey	Armstrong Rails-to-Trails Association (delegate)
Toni Henry	Armstrong Rails-to-Trails Association (alternate)
Jim Fincher	Chautauqua Rails-to-Trails Association (delegate)
Parke Wentling	Mercer County Trails Association (delegate)
Barney Scholl	Mercer County Trails Association (alternate)
Greg Troyer	Northwest PA Trails Association (delegate)
Sandy Mateer	Redbank Valley Trails Association (delegate)
Roy Weil	At-Large (delegate)
Mary Shaw	At-Large (alternate)

**Guests:**

Debra Frawley	Greenways Coordinator, Council on Greenways and Trails
Marty Henry	Armstrong Rails-to-Trails Association
Kyle Garner	Mercer County Trails Association

**Welcome:** The Chamber of Commerce welcomed attendees and described some of the amenities and projects in Greenville. It is a Community for all seasons that is seeing economic impact and people moving to the area because of the outdoor recreation. The canoe/kayak rental business has now added bicycles for rent. There are also partnerships with Thiel College.

**Approval of Minutes:** Minutes of the December 23, 2013 meeting were provided in advance. It was moved by R. Weil, seconded by R. Steffey, and motion carried to approve the minutes as prepared.

**Treasurer's Report:** No changes since the previous meeting.

**New Business:** None

**Old Business:**

1. Meeting dates and locations were discussed at the last meeting with groups volunteering to host. Some still need to be confirmed.
2. EPT Logo: Barney Scholl was present and needed some information for the state registration paperwork. He asked when the logo was used for the first time and was answered April 2013. He also asked if he had the correct, official version in his possession and was answered yes. He requested permission to pay the \$50 filing fee which is renewable every five years. The motion was made by R. Weil and seconded by R. Steffey and was approved. B. School will submit the paperwork and the EPT logo will be registered in the state of Pennsylvania as a Trademark Service Mark.

3. EPT Website: At present no one is maintaining the website which is hosted by Reeves Information Technology in Greenville. The site is under the name of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance with Barney Scholl as signatore.

R. Weil has begun to develop a new site in Word Press and presented the proof of concept site to the Board for discussion. Mr. Weil is willing to develop the site, get it live and train someone to maintain it. He would prefer not to maintain it. Several sections and items were discussed:

- A Store with, for example, EPT logo signs or patches with the logo embroidered can be added. The public could make purchases with Pay Pal.
  - This seems premature as EPTA does not have items for sale yet.
  - Is the Friends of the Riverfront (current fiscal agent for EPTA) willing to also accept the responsibility of a PayPal account and receiving purchases and donations?
  - Who would handle inventory and shipping?
- Maps – R. Weil is developing a Google map of the current trails. It will be interactive as in the public could click on a trail or trailhead and get Google directions.
  - It was discussed that Google is not always accurate in their directions for bicyclists.
- Recommendation that there not be a calendar of events as it needs to be updated often and that tends to not happen. Most agreed and said that links could be featured to individual trail group websites.
- Further discussion looked at the Administration page. The sample contains the minutes, treasurer's report, etc. Some Board members like the idea of having such documents available in one location rather than searching through past emails. But all felt that those items should not be available to the public. This section of the website, if included, will be password protected. But a warning was given that the Board should be careful as to what is put on there anyway as passwords can be stolen. Documents such as the logo use policy, bylaws, etc. will be available to the public.
- The Committee was instructed to make a plan for maintenance of the site and whether a stipend could be provided for someone to do that.

Motions regarding website:

1. Authorize the web committee to explore means to put an update plan/procedure in place – moved by R. Steffey, seconded by J. Fincher, motion approved.
2. Remove the trail news/events page, as this is a very time consuming operation to get information from the trail groups – moved by R. Steffey, seconded by J. Fincher. Discussion centered around adding instead links to and maintenance of social network sites such as the current EPT Facebook group, and links to any of the groups' Facebook pages. If possible, have the EPT Facebook news feed come across the website. Motion approved with the addition of the social networking.
  - a. A social networking committee was formed consisting of Greg Troyer (NW PA Trails Assoc.) and Kyle Garner (Mercer Co. Trails Assoc.) with a motion by M. Shaw and seconded by R. Steffey. The objective is to determine on which social networking sites EPTA should be active. Motion approved and members appointed.
3. Authorize the web committee to change the CMS (current website operating system) to a standard, commercial system such as Word Press or Joomla. Motion made by R. Weil and seconded by S. Mateer; motion approved.
4. Authorize the web committee to move the site to a national hosting service at a cost of approximately \$100 or so per year (current site is \$119/year). Moved by R. Weil and seconded by J. Fincher; motion approved.
5. Authorize the Treasurer to set up an account such as Pay Pal to accept donations. Motion made by R. Weil. Discussion centered around the example donation page on the proof of

concept website. It includes accepting donations to each of the member groups. M. Shaw amended the motion to have the committee investigate the types of accounts available. D. Frawley questioned accepting donations for all groups and discussion changed to only accepting donations to EPTA and not the individual member groups. B. Weller seconded the motion with amendment and discussion. Motion approved.

4. 2013 Trail Survey and Economic Impact Analysis: The draft report is being reviewed by D. Frawley and M. Black. The economic impact figures appear to have increased by over \$2 million. It was recommended that the name of the report be EPT Titusville to Parker rather than “northern” or “central” region. It shouldn’t be divided into sections until the entire route and length is known.
5. Member organizations and delegates: (this topic mixed with the By-laws update discussion)  
M. Shaw suggested the voting members be determined as follows:
  - A. Voting members
    1. Trail groups (owners) along the main line of the EPT – pursue them to participate.
    2. Other trail groups (such as connecting trails) that are participating or may want to – invite.
    3. At large members and by the discretion of the Board.
  - B. Non-voting members
    1. Government agencies, municipalities
    2. Organizations such as Chambers of Commerce, Rails to Trails Conservancy, Pennsylvania Environmental Council
    3. Individuals
    4. Other trail groups that want to be part of the discussion but not vote.

The suggestion is returned to the By-Laws committee.

Members must now have dues paid in order to have a vote. Invoices are to be sent by early January or before. If a member does not pay the dues by the beginning April, that entity loses voting privileges. They will not necessarily be dismissed from the Board.

6. By-laws update: The By-laws Committee provided a discussion guide of sections of the EPTA by-laws that may need amended. The Board went through them one by one and decided on some but sent others back for further research.
  - The EPTA articles of incorporation must be consulted to see if the organization is listed as a member or non-member organization. If it is not a membership based organization, then a membership cannot elect the Directors. This question must be answered before several of the other discussion items can be decided.
  - Dissolution: This should already be written into the Articles of Incorporation.
  - P. Wentling appointed Sandy Mateer and Mary Shaw to the By-laws committee.

Notes from today’s discussions will be relayed to the Bylaws Committee for follow through research and/or amendment drafting as appropriate.

7. National Recreation Trail application: M. Shaw previously provided a summary with a brief background of the process and next step questions. After today’s discussion, it was decided that this committee is to contact, such as clarification about landowner permissions (or right-of-way agreement holders). M. Shaw motioned with a second by R. Steffey to continue with the application process; motion approved. A letter is to be sent out to the member groups to invite them to participate with the application process and submit one for their trail. The Secretary is asked to do this; a draft letter was presented in M. Shaw’s handout.
8. EPT signage plan: No report

9. Jim Holden Memorial Ride: This will be the first of EPTA's annual rides which will become fundraisers. This year though, will be in honor of Mr. Holden (who was a founding member and leader of the EPTA) and will be more intimate than a fundraiser.

- A date must be set soon.
- This year invite and make known to the EPTA groups and friends but not advertised to the public at large as much.
- Consider "Friends of Jim" in the name.
- Need registration and a cutoff date set so that arrangements can be made for food and shuttle services.

10. Member Reports on Progress and Plans:

Chautauqua Rails to Trails Association

- West Field Development Group has a functioning lighthouse and they plan to develop a trail from there to the Chautauqua Rail Trail and on to the Chautauqua Institution. They have received a \$600,000 grant for the project.
- Several famous people are from that area including Roger Tory Peterson whose Institute of Natural History is being expanded. There will be QR codes placed on signage along the trail.
- The State of NY College of Fredonia seniors need a public relations project. The trail group volunteered themselves as needing a plan. Another senior will implement the plan next year.
- The trail group did a manual survey count and estimate they had 10,000 trail users this season.

Clear Lake Authority

- The East Branch Trail extension between Corry and Spartansburg Feasibility Study is complete. Landowners continue to be spoken with including a sit down meeting with the Western New York & Pennsylvania Railroad. The railroad strongly indicated that the new trail can probably be placed on their property.

Armstrong Rails to Trails Association

- There has been flooding in the area that has crossed state roads. The County and State both want access onto the trail for emergency use. ARTA would like them to also provide some financial assistance to help with maintenance costs.
- There is now a question about a \$238,000 grant for the Climax Tunnel that they received under the Transportation Enhancement program that then became the Transportation Alternatives program. Now PennDOT is not sure if the funding can be used for the project. But the funding was already committed as match for a recently approved DCNR grant.

Adjournment: R. Weil moved, S. Mateer seconded, and motion carried to adjourn today's meeting; 1:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Debra Frawley, Greenways Coordinator  
Council on Greenways & Trails  
for Kim Harris, EPTA Secretary  
Minutes prepared 1/23/2014