

**ERIE TO PITTSBURGH TRAIL ALLIANCE, INC. (EPTA)**  
**Minutes of October 22, 2014 Meeting**  
**Held at River Front Park, Aspinwall, PA**

Participants

Organization

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

Toni Henry	Armstrong Rails-to-Trails Association (delegate)
Tom Baxter	Friends of the River Front (delegate)
Jeffery McCauley	Friends of the River Front (alternate)
Barney Scholl	Mercer County Trails Association (alternate)
Kim Harris	Oil Region Alliance (delegate)
Sandy Mateer	Redbank Valley Trails Association (delegate)
Leah Carter	Titusville Area Trails Association (delegate)
Roy Weil	At-Large (delegate)
Mary Shaw	At-Large (alternate)
Ron Steffey	At-Large (delegate)

**Guests:**

Deb Frawley	Council on Greenways and Trails
Marty Henry	Armstrong
Bob Jennings	

**Welcome:** Vice President Ron Steffey presided and called the meeting to order. T. Baxter welcomed everyone and provided a brief background on the Aspinwall River Front Park, and noted that 100 feet of the trail on the EPT open last week in the park. He further explained that 18 municipalities have signed a resolution to be part of the trail system that is a segment of the EPT.

**Introductions:** Participants went around the room, introduced themselves, and indicated whom they represented.

**Approval of Minutes:** Minutes of the July 22, 2014 meeting were provided in advance; B. Scholl moved to accept the minutes as provided, seconded by R. Weil; motion carried.

**Treasurer's Report:** T. Baxter, Treasurer distributed copies of the Treasurer's Report. T. Baxter noted there is a balance of \$5,307.17 as of October 20, 2014. All dues have been received except for two member agencies. Mr. Baxter also noted that income and expenses for the Jim Holden Ride are presented in the budget. K. Harris noted that there is one invoice in the amount of \$150 outstanding for insurance for the ride. After deducting this invoice, the net profit of the ride will be \$638.15. L. Carter motioned to approve the budget as presented, K. Harris seconded; Motion carried.

Discussion was held about inactive Board Members (paid and non-paid), and the effect on the organization and the possibility that there are other groups that may want a voting member seat. Kim motioned that inactive Board organizations receive a telephone call followed up by a letter from the EPTA President notifying the member that the organizations voting privileges have been suspended, and that to continue as an active voting member the membership should be paid by the beginning of the second quarter of 2015, L. Carter seconded; motion carried. K. Harris agreed to contact G. Troyer by telephone, and L. Carter will contact the Western Pennsylvania Port Authority. Those making the contacts are to inform the Executive Committee when contact has been made, so the formal letter can be sent out.

T. Baxter presented a question to the Board – does the board want to move the organizations funds on account to an investment account? After discussion, R. Weil motioned to give the Treasurer the authority to move the organization funds to an interest bearing account that does not tie the funds up for a period (if possible).

**Elections:** Nominating Committee Chair Barney Scholl read the recommended slate of EPTA Officers for the one-year term of 2013-2014, as follows: President – Ron Steffey; Vice President – Roy Weil; Secretary – Kim Harris; and Treasurer – Tom Baxter. S. Mateer moved to close nominations for officers, seconded by L. Carter, and motion carried. S. Matter moved to instruct the secretary to cast a unanimous ballot for the nominees, seconded by B. Scholl; motion carried.

K. Harris noted that the immediate Past President, Parke Wentling has indicated that he is unable to serve on the Executive Committee. K. Harris explained the bylaws state that this position may be filled by a voting board member as elected and appointed annually by the Board of Directors. The Board did not fill this position.

K. Harris reported she has been notified that R. Steffey will no longer be the delegate for Armstrong Rails to Trails Association; the delegate will be Toni Henry. No alternate has been named yet. K. Harris moved that Ron Steffey be an At-Large Member; R. Weil seconded; motion carried.

Board Terms – In accordance with the revised bylaws that were approved at the July 22, 2014 EPTA Board of Directors meeting, “A term on the Board shall be three years, with the initial term lengths of one-year, two-years, and three-years being randomly drawn to achieve staggered term ending dates. There are no term limits on the EPTA Board of Directors,” during today’s meeting Board members present drew numbers for their initial term; numbers were drawn for those voting members not present. K. Harris will add terms to the contact list and distribute and new list to all.

## New Business:

### 1. EPTA Logo Usage Request Received

- A logo request was received from Council on Greenways and Trails for use on Community Maps being developed for Oil City, Foxburg, Emlenton, and Franklin through the Nature Based Place Making Program. The maps will help trail users locate services within the communities. Approved.

### 2. Letters of Support Requested

- Provided signed letter of support to the Titusville Redevelopment Authority to accompany their grant request for a multi-modal funding for lighting, and signals on South Martin Street to Center Street – Providing a safer bike route to the Titusville Business District for bikes, Pedestrians and vehicles.
- Provided a letter of support to the Oil Region Alliance to accompany their DCED Greenways, Trails & Recreation Grant request for the funding toward acquisition of property in the Foxburg area; this acquisition will set the stage for acquiring the remaining property along the proposed trail corridor between Emlenton and Foxburg.

### 3. Upcoming Grant Opportunities and workshops

- Northwest Pennsylvania Greenways Block Grant – due October 30, 2014
- Western Pennsylvania Conservancy; Canoe Access Development Fund- Roy Weil and Mary Shaw established this funding source. Although not directly bike trail related, some projects are both trailhead and water access areas that may be interested in this opportunity. Grant deadline November 15, 2014.
- Trail Volunteer Fund – The next request deadline is December 1, 2014. This fund provides grants to purchase tools, materials, and supplies to be used by volunteer trail projects that create, maintain, or enhance the network of trails suitable for bicycle touring in western Pennsylvania and interconnected trails in nearby areas. [www.they-working.org](http://www.they-working.org)
- DCNR C2P2 Grant Workshops – Workshops for our area will be held November 18, 2014 at the Pine Township Recreation Center, Wexford, PA and November 19, 2014 at the Quality Inn, Franklin, PA
- The Commonwealth Finance Authority – S. Mateer noted grant awards are being announced today.
- PA Wilds Summit will be held November 12, and 13, 2014 in Williamsport.

### 4. Other New Business

- Deb Frawley, Coordinator for Council on Greenways and Trails provided an update on the status of the Trail Town Program in Emlenton, Foxburg, Oil City and Titusville. She noted the first Trail Town Summit is to be held November 5, 2014 in Oil City at the Days Inn. R. Steffey asked if there is anyway to track business due to trails so that increases in revenue can be seen. This information is valuable as trail organizations work to get partners to “buy in” on supporting trails. Bob Jennings, guest, asked if there was a way to get a report from the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) as to what was there and what is there now due to the trail system. It was noted there have been a number of

studies completed along the GAP and are available on line. It was also noted property values due the trail is something else that should be shared.

- The group discussed the need for baseline trail count data to compare to in the future. Several thoughts were discussed on how to gather the information including purchasing two counters to be shared along the trail route, including high school seniors as a school project to crunch numbers. It was determined that this is something that could be included in the organization's strategic planning.

## **Old Business:**

### 1. Conflict of Interest Policy

The Conflict of Interest Policy was approved at the July 22, 2014 EPTA Board of Directors Meeting. K. Harris, Secretary passed the Policy around for signature by all board members present. K. Harris, will send out copies of the policy and a signature page for all Board Members not present at today's meeting. Bob Jennings stated that it might be a good idea to have others that attend the meeting to sign a confidentiality agreement, so that attendees at the meetings feel free to discuss issues, projects, etc. R. Steffey mentioned that this is something that possibly can be looked into with the upcoming EPTA strategic planning.

### 2. Strategic Planning

T. Baxter reported that the contracted consultant, Bob Good from Pashek Associates is on vacation, but as soon as he is back in the office, he will be issuing a list of items he would like to have for review prior to the first meeting of the Committee. K. Harris confirmed that the committee for strategic planning consists of T. Baxter, R. Steffey, M. Black, and B. Scholl. The strategic planning is being funded by a Pennsylvania Recreation and Parks Society Rec-TAP grant.

### 3. Jim Holden Memorial Ride

K. Harris provided an overview of the Jim Holden Memorial Ride held on September 7, 2014 from Titusville to Foxburg. Participants were asked to complete a survey; the survey results were distributed. A 2015 ride was discussed. K. Harris noted that when the 2014 ride was approved by the EPTA it was decided that in following years the ride would be held on different sections of the EPT. Other trail organizations present were asked if they wanted to host the ride in 2015. There was no definite 2015 host identified; therefore it was asked that Board Members discuss with their organizations, and further discussion will be held at the January 2015 EPTA Board meeting.

### 4. E-Magazine

D. Frawley distributed the Front cover and page two of "NWPAssages," September 2014 edition. She noted there are currently 2,000 subscribers and subscriptions are free. Back issues are available online. Responses to the electronic magazine have been very positive, and D. Frawley encouraged submissions of articles, and possible photographers.

### 5. EPTA Website Update

R. Weil stated the website should be up by the end of this month.

### 6. Social Networking Update

Greg Troyer, Chair was not in attendance at today's meeting. D. Frawley noted that the Facebook Group now has reached 275 members. The Facebook page is still under 100.

## 7. EPT Signage

Signage has been installed on the sections of trail from Petroleum Centre (Oil Creek State Park) and through Oil City that are not on State Roadways. The reflective signage for the sections that share-road- with state owned roads has been approved by PennDOT, and will be installed sometime in November. Funded by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy mini-grant.

J. McCauley noted that Friends of the River Front has installed EPT signage through Tarentum, and will go through Harrison Hills. Funded by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy mini-grant.

## 8. National Trails Designation

M. Shaw reported that she discussed the designation with NPS representative, and it appears that it is best that each section seek designation individually. In regards to the Seaway Trail, NPS relayed that it should not have received such designation, and they are not sure how the trail actually received national designation. K. Harris indicated that the Oil Region Alliance would not be seeking designation for McClintock Trail by itself. T. Henry indicated that Armstrong Trail would not seek designation at this time due to scheduled work to occur in 2015.

## 9. Power of 32+

R. Steffey, T. Baxter and D. Frawley provided updates on the Power of 32+. The trail network map needs updated. The current map shows that there are 50 gaps left in the network of trails that run through 53 counties in five states. The group is scheduling corridor meetings and one needs to be scheduled with EPTA. It was suggested that since the EPT corridor is so large have two meetings one in the north, and one in the south. The Power of 32+ has contracted with a branding firm to come up with a name for the network of trails, and determine ways to market the system. T. Baxter cautioned that trail organizations to consider the bigger picture with branding the Power of 32+ network of trails, each trail might want to keep their identity and not get lost within the big network. Volunteers and contributors identify with the local trail not the larger trail system. M. Shaw noted that maybe the Power of 32+ should step back from being a big brand and become a collection of smaller brands.

The Power of 32+ is trying to determine the amount of political input they want to provide. A question was asked, "Do politicians have to sign on?" They did at first, but unsure now. B. Jennings noted that it is a powerful statement to say part of the network of trails through 53 counties.

## 10. 2015 Meeting Dates and Locations

A draft schedule for the 2015 EPTA Board meetings was discussed, and is as follows:

- Wednesday, January 21, 2015 - B. School will arrange near I-79 in the Mercer and Grove City Area. Details for this meeting will be announced as soon as arrangements are made.
- Wednesday, April 22, 2015 - possibly in the Erie area. L. Carter will contact the Erie Port Authority to see if they are interested in hosting.
- Wednesday, July 22, 2015
- Wednesday, October 21, 2015 - D. Frawley will speak to the people interested in trails in the Corry area to see if they will host.
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Once meetings locations are confirmed EPTA Board members will be notified. All meetings will begin at 10:00 AM unless otherwise noted.

## 11. Peer-to-Peer Study

There are no set deadlines to submit a grant application to DCNR. Submission for a peer-to-peer study will be determined by the strategic planning that the organization will be initiating in the near future.

## Member Reports on Progress and Plans:

Armstrong Rails-to-Trails Association – The annual membership meeting was held October 13. The Association will hold a BOD retreat on November 1, 2014. The annual “Eat, Play, Ride” event is scheduled for May 16, 2015, mile 61 -66 trail opening ceremony will be held with National Trails Day and the 100 year anniversary of the Brady tunnel in June 2015. The BOD voted to move forward with the Phillipston Turntable project, but to do the restoration as close to historical accuracy as possible. Arrangements will be made for the delivery of donated material from A&K Railroad. A workday is scheduled in November to install historic sign and bench at the Redbank Bridge. Port-a-potties will be removed at the end of October, and reinstalled in the spring of 2015. Work has begun on a trail parking lot at Redbank Creek; a similar project will be planned for the trail lot in Phillipston. Allegheny Valley Trails Association – The creation of a transition and ADA Access on donated land at the junction of the Allegheny River Trail and the Sandy Creek Trail has an a wetland issue. This will require some engineering. Clear Lake Authority – Partnering with the City of Corry and FCVC and PEC (provided funds to purchase the bridge). Landowners accepted French Creek Valley Conservancy’s offer for land and the bridge will be given to the trail project; the deed is currently being searched. Chautauqua Rails to Trails Association – No report. Erie-Western Pennsylvania Port Authority – No report. Friends of the Riverfront – Looking to partner with Norfolk Southern for a feasibility study. A former NFS employee now serves on the FOR Board. One mile of trail open less than a week ago in Aspinwall, a parcel in Etna is to be purchased to be a park with trail. The group continues to work with municipalities for continuation of the trail north. Mercer County Trails Association – Two ride events were held this year that raised \$6,000 - \$7,000. Partnering with Pymatuning State Park to connect the camp ground to the trail. Mercer County would like to have a Greenways position to assist with projects. Parke Wentling won the election for State Representative of the 17<sup>th</sup> District. Oil Region Alliance - Oil Creek Memorial Landing engineering is nearing completion, advertising for bids to be this fall with construction to begin in the spring of 2015. The ORA is partnering with the Borough of Emlenton seeking funding for the implementation of signing the trail route through Emlenton. Redbank Valley Trails Association –The Climax Tunnel project is completely funded with a C2P2 from last year, a C2P2 from this year and a CFA grant. The Run the Redbank II has 180 participants registered. In Brookville, the trail group is working on the Depot connector, which will connect the trail to town. Titusville Area Trails Association – This year will mark the 5<sup>th</sup> Oil Creek 100, this event has now become an international event. Ron Steffey – DCNR is working on their five-year plan and everyone is encouraged to take the public survey. Roy Weil/Mary Shaw – had nothing new to report.

Adjournment: R. Weil moved, S. Mateer seconded, and motion carried to adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kim Harris, EPTA Secretary  
Minutes Prepared 11/21/2014