

ERIE TO PITTSBURGH TRAIL ALLIANCE, INC. (EPTA)
Minutes of January 17, 2018 Board of Directors Meeting
Held at the Franklin Restaurant, Franklin, PA

Voting Members

Dan Kostella	Armstrong Rails to Trails Association (delegate) (ARTA)
Chris Zeigler	Butler Freeport Community Trail (delegate) (BFCT)
Jim Fincher	Chautauqua Rail Trails (delegate) (CRT)
Courtney Mahronich	Friends of the Riverfront (delegate) (FOR)
Kim Harris	Oil Region Alliance (delegate) (ORA)
Sandy Mateer	Redbank Valley Trails Association (delegate) (RVTA)
Leah Carter	Titusville Area Trails Association (delegate)
Ron Steffey	At-Large (delegate)
Roy Weil	At-Large (delegate)
Debra Frawley	At-Large (delegate)

Guests:

Designated Alternates --

Toni Henry	Armstrong Rails to Trails Association (alternate)
Marilyn Black	Oil Region Alliance (alternate)
Mary Shaw	At-Large (alternate for Mr. Weil)
Kay Owens	Armstrong Trail
Beth Kostella	Armstrong Trail
Ronnie Beith	City of Franklin
Taylor Kendzior	City of Franklin
Mayor Doug Baker	City of Franklin
Erin Wiley Moyers	DCNR
Marty Radock	Impact Corry
John Phillips	Oil Region Alliance
Craig Smith	Trails to Ales
Bob Jennings	Volunteer

Vice President Debra Frawley called the meeting to order at 10:05 A.M. welcoming everyone to the meeting. Self-introductions were made by going around the room. Guest Craig Smith one of the owners of "Trails to Ales" spoke about the new business to open in the spring/summer of 2018 downtown in Franklin. The business desires to connect with water and land trail users in the region via photographs users of the trails submit to the business, and the business then places the images up on screens located throughout the establishment. Eventually they envision providing a small percentage of their revenue generated to the local Allegheny Valley Trails Association for continued maintenance of the trails. Greetings to the Franklin area were continued by Ronnie Beith, the Events Coordinator for the City of Franklin.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the October 18, 2017 regular quarterly EPTA Board of Directors meeting were provided in advance with a revised copy provided at the meeting. Two corrections to the minutes were noted; Galen Shirley first name is with an "e" not an "i", and the

PA Greenways and Trails meeting was in “2017” not “2016”. R. Weil moved to accept the minutes as amended, seconded by J. Fincher. Motion approved.

Treasurer’s Report: The Treasurer’s Report was provided consisting of a Statement of Financials, Statement of Activity, and a General Ledger Report generated by Quick Books software. S. Mateer motioned that the Treasure’s Report be accepted as provided and placed on file, seconded by L. Carter. Motion approved.

Invoices for the 2018 dues were distributed today to the members present; others will be mailed. R. Weil noted that he is working on the IRS Form 990. It was also noted that EPTA has been rated as an A- by Charity Watch; the minus is due to our Administrative overhead showing \$1,000 of our small budget. Charity Watch picks up non-profits automatically.

Secretary’s Report: A written report was provided prior to the meeting and will become part of these official minutes. No questions regarding the report were asked.

New Business:

1. **Grant Opportunities and Workshops-** Erin Wiley, DCNR Regional Advisory issues a fairly comprehensive list of grants, workshops, and other pertinent information via email every Monday morning. It was highly recommended if you are not currently on this email distribution list, please see Erin Wiley.
2. **Directors and Officers Insurance-** This has been discussed numerous times over the years. This is a necessity. A ballot for E-vote may follow once cost quotations are obtained. K. Harris will follow-up with B. Scholl on this matter.
3. **A Day of Giving in Armstrong County-** Officially called “Serving the Heart of Western PA” will be held May 10, 2018. It is only one day. Each entity must pay \$250 to participate. Training is required; sample letters and materials are provided. Kay Owen volunteered to be the liaison for EPTA for this event, attending training, and helping with all marketing. Discussion on this subject was held and if any impact would be felt by local trail groups if EPTA participated; there were no feelings that it would have a negative impact at this time. R. Steffey motioned that EPTA participate in this event in 2018, pay the \$250 participation fee, and authorize Kay Owen as the EPTA Liason, L. Carter seconded. Motion passed.

Also discussed were other days/weeks of giving in the other counties along the EPT. It was noted that the Bridge Builders Community Foundation that serves Venango, Clarion, Forest and Jefferson Counties Week of Giving is March 19 – 23, 2018. Allegheny and Crawford Counties each have their own day/week of giving as does Erie County. K. Harris moved that EPTA participate in the days/weeks of giving, if eligible along the EPT corridor and have no registration fee, but have a willing volunteer to be the liaison for the EPTA with each participating Community Foundation. Marilyn Black volunteered to check into the Bridge Builders Week of Giving, and be the volunteer liaison for this particular event. Marty Radock will check into the Erie County Event.

4. Changes in Organization Staff- A few changes in staffing at organizations that have dealt with the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance have occurred. Deb Eckelberger from the Titusville Redevelopment Authority/Titusville Trail Towne Action Team has resigned her position to accept a position with the Franklin Industrial and Commercial Development Authority in Franklin PA. Kathy Wyrosdick has left her position as Erie County Planning Director to take the position of City Planner with the City of Erie. Ron Steffey, Executive Director of the Allegheny Valley Land Trust will be replaced by Chris Zeigler effective July 1, 2018.
5. Freewheeling Easy- A bicycling guide to northwestern PA is being prepared for the next version, and Roy Weil and Mary Shaw, authors of this publication, are looking to include as many updates as they can. A link to the location where the publication can be found on the internet for review was provided to attendees. If there are any factual errors, or additional access points, or miles of trail that have been added, please let Roy and Mary know by February 15, 2018. Small corrections may be considered until March 1, 2018 as long as they do not change the layout. The publication will go to the printer on March 15, 2018. Retail outlets for the publication are welcome; (10+ books can be purchased at a discount of 40% off list price; the list price is approximately \$25.00. Anyone interested in carrying the publication for sale should contact the authors. Proceeds from the publication go toward trail development.

A break brief break was taken at 11:00 AM - Franklin Mayor Doug Baker welcomed and thanked those on the Board of Directors for serving on the EPTA, and stated “the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail is going to be a blessing for us.”

Old Business:

1. 2018 EPTA Board of Directors Meeting Schedule- The April 25, 2018 meeting will be in the Chautauqua, NY area with Jim Fincher of the Chautatuqua Rail Trails hosting. The July 18, 2018 meeting will be held in the Pittsburgh, PA area with Roy Weil and Mary Shaw as hosts; and the October 17 meeting will be held in Corry, PA with Impact Corry hosting. The April meeting was pushed to one week later than we typically hold meetings, so that Board President B. Scholl can attend. R. Weil moved that the schedule of regular EPTA Board meetings be approved as stated, J. Fincher seconded. Motion approved.

It was noted that EPTA should have a newsletter. This is something that needs to be considered into in the future.

2. Doppelt Family Trail Development Fund- It was realized while going through some files, that the Doppelt Family Trail Fund had not been closed out. Since we are just now completing the strategic plan that the fund had provided matching funds of \$1,000 for, K. Harris prepared and sent letter updating the funder on the progress of the project. Once the project is complete, a closeout report will be sent.

3. Bureau of Charitable Organization Certificate- No certificate has been secured duplicate or original. R. Weil, the Treasurer will continue working on obtaining the BCO Certificate.
4. IHTC- A handout was provided at the meeting for attendees. The last meeting of the IHTC was held in Titusville on November 16, 2017. The upcoming schedule of meeting is February 20 which will be a webinar based meeting; date to be determined in May in conjunction with the Mid-American Trails and Greenways Conference. Hopefully the IHTC team can offer a webinar setting to those that cannot attend in person, and then in October the IHTC Summit will be held on October 2-3, 2018.

If you are interested in obtaining counters for your trail if they are available, please email Eric Oberg.

5. Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations- All EPTA Board Members can should now be able to login to the PANO website and have access to their libraries that contain an abundance of good materials and sample documents.
6. Website- No changes
7. Social Media- See the Secretary's written report. No major changes; we continue to see growth in both the audience of the page and group.
8. PEC Western PA Environmental Awards- Nominations are being accepted until February 8, 2018. PEC and Dominion are the sponsors of the award; winners receive \$5,000 and a plaque presented at the annual dinner. Discussion as to apply as the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance or as individual projects. R. Steffey noted he has begun preparing a nomination for the Allegheny Valley Land Trust. R. Weil moved that the EPTA offer a letter of support for AVLTT's nomination, S. Mateer seconded. Motion approved.
9. Strategic Plan- Copies of the final draft strategic plan were provided electronically to Board Members prior to the meeting. There was much discussion of the plan in general, with several concerns noted such as whether all trail groups should be permitted as voting members even if means at some point the board becomes very large. It was noted that EPTA needs to keep all engaged; trail groups need to be at the table.

Also noted, is the Strategic plan does not tell how to accomplish the goals or who will carry them out. It was stated that the strategic plan is not an action plan, but rather a map of sorts to direct the Board.

On Page 8 of the plan the chart does not include Presque Isle Trail. R. Weil cited the March 31, 2011 meeting minute that read "Today, attendees defined Perry Monument in Presque Isle State Park at the upper end, recognizing that overnight parking is not allowed on the peninsula, and thus the parking lot at TREC would be advised." K. Harris referred to the July 24, 2008 minutes stating that there was a motion that the end points be the Bayfront in Erie, and the Point in Pittsburgh, this motion was seconded, and motioned passed by a vote of the Board. She explained to attendees at today's meeting

the March 31, 2011 discussion as noted above had no official action taken, thus it does not supercede the official action taken by the Board. [*For reference the actual motion and action as reflected in the July 24, 2008 minutes; “J. Morgan motioned to adopt the following mission statement: “EPTA is an active coalition of trail organizations and individuals dedicated to the promotion, acquisition, development, and maintenance of a safe non-motorized trails network that connects the “Point” in Pittsburgh to the “Bayfront” in Erie. EPTA will seek to improve the quality of life for communities along the trail network while stimulating economic development and recreational tourism activities.” The motion was seconded by Brenda Sandberg. One member opposed. Motioned passed.”*]

The suggestion was made to add the 2015 plan “*Organizational Analysis of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance*” as an appendix to this strategic plan because it contains a lot of the background information that this plan used.

Lunch Break at 12:00 PM; reconvened at 12:35 PM.

Strategic Plan (Continued)-

- Key Issue #4 - It was noted that this is very broad, some noted, we need to keep it broad. It was also noted that this does not benefit the trails. It was noted this is a strategic plan not a work plan; it is a guide. S. Mateer moved that we add “public” to Key Issue #4 list, K. Harris seconded. Motion carried.
- Key Issue #3- Discussion on being regional trail connections, and the map does not show the connector trails, and the cost to redo the map at this time. R. Weil moved that the EPTA spend \$2,000 to produce a revised map for this document and other EPTA uses. There was no second to this motion. R. Steffey moved that for the strategic plan, keep the map that is currently in the draft, L. Carter seconded. Further discussion brought up the possibility of adding an appendix of the spur maps. No further discussion, the motion stood and passed with 1 opposed.

L. Carter moved that at the bottom of page 12 add a sentence to acknowledge the other spur and connectors and expand on the Redbank paragraph about the Climax Tunnel, S. Mateer seconded. Motion carried.

There was discussion as to whether the DCNR Major Greenway Corridors map included in the draft plan was the most recent, E. Wiley will verify. [*Follow up – E. Wiley reported the map in the plan is indeed the most recent.*]

- Key Issue #2- After a brief discussion of the Partner Organizations Support it was noted that we should have the trail organizations serve on the board. R. Steffey moved that “Opportunity to have Board representation” be included in the list of possible ways EPTA could support Partner Organization, K. Harris seconded. Motion approved.

- Key Issue #1
 - Strategy A- Discussion regarding this strategy included the recommended changes to the bylaws.
 - Article 1.2 regarding modify it to agree with the purpose in the Strategic Plan. After discussion regarding the Vision, Mission, and Who We Are statements that were adopted by the Board in April 2017, it was discussed that we could ask the consultant to clarify what he referred to since “purpose” is not specifically addressed in the strategic plan. L. Carter moved that the purpose statement in the bylaws be modified to reflect the adopted Mission and Vision statements as defined in the Strategic Plan, R. Steffey seconded. It was noted that the EPTA needs to be very careful changing the purpose could be a legal issues regarding our non-profit status. R. Weil moved that the recommendation for Article 1.2 of the EPTA bylaws be deleted from the strategic plan entirely, S. Mateer seconded. Motion approved.
 - Article 2.7 regarding the recommended change to 51% for a quorum; it was thought that 51% is too high; although it was noted that there is a clause in our bylaws that Board Members are permitted to attend the meeting via telecommunication, but should give the Secretary notice so arrangements can be made. S. Mateer moved that the quorum be changed to 33%, R. Weil seconded. The the motion passed with 2 opposed.
 - Strategy B- Review of this strategy brought to light that if a volunteer was found to serve in the capacity to focus on the gaps, an agreement needs to be written and executed acknowledging that such participation does not create an expectation of compensation or direct hiring. It was discussed that there are a number of ways that a staff person could be obtained, as noted in the strategic plan, in addition to staff being shared with another organization, it could be multiple organizations. It was also noted that Circuit Riders require a Peer-Peer Study, and most Circuit Rider positions have ended shortly after the DCNR subsidy ends. DCNR will pay the a percentage of salary that declines each year through this 5 year program, but does not pay for benefits. It should be a very solid plan for future funding.

It was suggested a list serve be developed, so that questions could be posted, and those with information could share.

- Strategy C- Under the Projected budget categories, it was mentioned that administrative fees be added to the list of expense categories.
- Strategy D- Noted were the following comments regarding a Circuit Rider Position. EPTA should line up large funding partners so we can verify ability to match funding for the circuit rider. Erie County is currently doing a comprehensive Park, Trail, and Greenways plan. Erie County seems primed to

be a possible applicant for the circuit rider. Encourage Counties, municipalities, etc. to address particular gaps and keep EPTA all volunteer.

Discussion regarding specific ending points, and trails that the EPT consist of were again briefly discussed relating to the listing of trails on page 8 of the draft Strategic Plan. K. Harris moved that since the listing of trails is not necessary in the document it be deleted, S. Mateer seconded. Motion passed.

- Strategy E- Reviewed, okay as written.
 - Strategy F- Discussion regarding the list of priorities and all were in agreement that priorities vary somewhat with the opportunities that present themselves.
 - Strategy G- A formatting issue moves it to the correct page within the written plan.
- Successful Implementation – was reviewed without any notable discussion.

R. Steffey moved to adopt the strategic plan as per today's edits by the board and move forward with implementation, L. Carter seconded.

R. Weil noted that he feels this strategic plan radically changes goals and forces of the EPTA Board, while needed, some items may be better done by some other entities. S. Mateer questioned if there is a better model out there that would better suit our structure. Vote taken on the motion on the floor, two opposed. Motion Approved.

S. Mateer moved that the Organizational Analysis of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance Completed in April of 2015 is included as an appendix to the Strategic Plan, R. Weil seconded. Motion Approved

Member Reports on Progress: - Written reports received from members were distributed electronically with the agenda packet prior to today's meeting. Written reports will be filed as part of the official minutes.

Adjournment: - The next meeting will be held in the Chauttaqua, NY area on April 25, 2018, location to be determined. With no further business to discuss, presiding Vice President Debra Frawley declared today's meeting adjourned at 2:35 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Kim Harris, EPTA Secretary
Minutes Prepared February 1, 2018