

**Leelanau Scenic Heritage Route Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday, November 23, 2009 12:00 noon
Leelanau County Government Center**

Members Present

Lois Bahle, Suttons Bay Chamber of Commerce/TART
Lee Bowen, Leelanau County Road Commission
Marsha Buehler, Leelanau Township
Barbara Nelson Jameson, RTCA National Park Service
Greg Julian, Leelanau County Planning Commission
Dave Langhorst, MDOT North Region
Kimberly Mann, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore
Gary Niemi, MDOT Traverse City TSC
Tom Nixon, Suttons Bay Township
Sharon Oriel, LIWDA
Linda Payment, Village of Empire
Jill Webb, Empire Township
Yarrow Wolfe, Leelanau Conservancy
Joanie Woods, Citizen

Guests

Rick Lahmann, Leland Chamber of Commerce
Susan Sanders, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore

Staff Present

Patty O'Donnell, Northwest Michigan Council of Governments

I. Welcome and Introductions

Tom Nixon called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. Introductions were made around the table. Patty stated that Frank Wilcox from Glen Arbor Township has resigned from the Township Planning Commission and will no longer be the township representative on the Heritage Route Committee. Frank has been a member of the Committee from early on and also sat on the Trailway Work Group for the Township. The Committee sends a big thank you to Frank for his service on the Committee!

II. Review Proposed Agenda

Agenda approved by consensus.

III. Review and Approve Previous Meeting's Minutes (October 26, 2009)

Motion made by Joanie Woods, support by Linda Payment to approve the meeting minutes of October 26, 2009. Motion carried.

VI. Old Business

a. National Scenic Byways Designation Discussion with Chambers of Commerce

Tom Nixon welcomed Rick Lahmann from the Leland Chamber of Commerce. The Leelanau Scenic Heritage Route is M-22, M-109 with M-204 added about two years ago; the Committee is not a regulatory body – information, education activities, and projects to protect and preserve. What would be the advantage of applying for National Scenic Byways designation? Greater coverage throughout the U.S. and even international. The challenge is to not lose the uniqueness of the Route through tourism/signage – you market what the Route provides the traveler and work on balancing the challenges. Chambers of Commerce are for marketing and promoting the natural, historical, and cultural resources of the area. Tom Nixon passed around a National Scenic Byways booklet that has a brief description of each byway and there is a website – www.byways.org. One of the byways in Minnesota, Edge of the Wilderness, states that their route is to protect the area – looking at the uniqueness of each community. Linda Payment stated that the Empire Business Association sent a letter to the Heritage Route Committee in support of applying for national designation. The application has to contain supporting resolutions from each local government and could also include letters of support from tourist businesses and chambers of commerce. The Committee should approach the County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors for support. Marsha stated that there is a Northport-Omena Chamber of Commerce. Joanie asked about the funding support under national designation – the funding level would remain the same but with

additional exposure. It was suggested to get information to the local chambers of commerce and other organizations such as history, cultural, recreation, wineries, museums, and business owners. The Heritage Route Committee members could bring organizations/business people from their areas to the January meeting for further discussion.

V. New Business

a. OnCell Systems Demonstration

Bill Firstenberger from OnCell Systems (oncellsystems.com) joined the meeting through conference call to present their product with a call-in demonstration. The demonstration included listening to: a) welcome greeting (can be local cell phone number to put out there by the Route); create a menu – driving track for the tour; can add inside stops, stops outside the tour, nature trails; it can be a multi-track tour. The calls are “free” but do use personal cell phone minutes. The Committee members would build their own system. Cell phone coverage is around 70 miles, but there are areas in Leelanau County without coverage. MP3 players and i-Pods can also be used, but cell phones are more popular and they are with the person. The Committee thanked Bill for his time.

Susan Sanders from Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore reported that the Park Service signed up for the trial time with OnCell Systems for the Port Oneida and Glen Haven sites with 1.5 miles coverage. They only use them in specific areas where people stop and not a driving tour. The challenges depend on the location, type of phone, and coverage. The Park started small with the free trial and developed the script. The Park advertises this tool through posters and flyers. The phone number is 231-577-5555, and it is also on the Park’s website. The cost now after the free trial is two to seven lines is \$95.00 a month. About 15 people can be on at a time and the script is 2.5 minutes long. You can also put a tour or site on compact disks or download the information at the Visitor Center, but you could only use it in the car. This service is used to get the stories out there – should the Committee develop this tool for the Route or facilitate it with other groups? Is this more applicable to businesses? Thank you to Susan for attending the meeting and presenting their use of OnCell Systems. The Committee would need to work on funding resources to possibly have less signage and it would be for also promoting arts, crafts, historical sites, etc.

VI. Project Updates

a. Trailway Project Update

The Traverse Area Recreation and Transportation Trails, Inc. is taking the lead on fundraising for the Leelanau Scenic Heritage Route’s Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail project. A fundraising feasibility study is in process through a planning grant from Rotary Charities through the Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes. There will be a trail surface subcommittee for the construction of Segment 5 to look at all the suggested alternatives for that portion of the trail at the base of Alligator Hill.

b. Wayfinding Mapping Project

Patty distributed copies of the map with the completed changes and layout for the booklet. Instead of whole township being shown, the maps will show a swath of the heritage route for each township area with the sites.

VII. Educational Activities

Patty showed the desktop promotional poster for the Michigan Heritage Routes from Pete Hanses, MDOT and a brochure that was developed to go with it to use at events and displays.

VIII. Correspondence

No correspondence at this time.

IX. Committee Member Comments

Barbara: Old Mission Peninsula Scenic Heritage Route Committee has suggested that M-37 from Division be added to their heritage route. Patty stated that a sign has been placed by MDOT that shows that M-22 starts/ends at Division and would that mean also designating “M-22” from Division to the Leelanau County line?

Rick asked to get the National Scenic Byways designation information to his board.

Joanie: The Committee needs to remember the history of the heritage route designation is to protect the scenic, historic and recreational qualities of the route, not promotion; sustainability of the area for the residents first; and please be sensitive to this issue.

Yarrow Wolfe: Viewsheds are a priority for the Leelanau Conservancy. It was suggested to have the Conservancy give a report at the January meeting on priority areas, grant implementation, etc.

Marsha: The Northport-Omena Chamber of Commerce would like to promote the Lighthouse north of the Village with a sign. The village can look into getting a MI DNR brown sign for the state park there and the lighthouse. Could put brochures about the Northport area at the Suttons Bay Chamber of Commerce.

X. Public Comment

No public comment at this time.

XI. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be **Monday, January 25, 2010 at 12:00 noon** at Munneke Room at the Leland Library.

XII. The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.