

**M-119 Tunnel of Trees Scenic Heritage Route Committee
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 13, 2009 9:30 a.m.
Emmet County Offices Health Department Conference Room**

Members Present

Joey Arbaugh, West Traverse Township
Bob Sandford, West Traverse Township
Carolyn Sandford, West Traverse Township
Eric Rasmussen, Friendship Township
Bill Prall, Friendship Township
Joseph Engelhard, Readmond Township
Ron Krause, Readmond Township
Larry Wallen, Readmond Township
Rob Deane, Cross Village
Dick Cobb, Emmet County Lakeshore Association
Dave Shear, Emmet County Lakeshore Association
Dell Weitzel, Emmet County Lakeshore Association

Partners

Nancy Salar, Emmet County Planning and Zoning
Kieran Fleming, Little Traverse Conservancy

Guests

George Reindel
Cathy Reindel

Staff Present

Patty O'Donnell, Northwest Michigan Council of Governments

I. Welcome and Introductions

Dick Cobb called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Introductions were made around the table.

II. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Carolyn Sandford suggested a process change for the positions of Committee Chair and Vice Chair. This change would be that each member entity (townships, ECLA) takes turns being chair and vice chair by rotating each year and that they would be from different entities. The vice chair would become chair the next year. Discussion followed.

Motion by Dave Shear, support by Bob Sandford to change the process of appointing the chair and vice chair by appointing them on a rotating basis each year from different member entities at this meeting. Motion carried with 11 Yes; 1 No.

Motion made by Joey Arbaugh, support by Carolyn Sandford to have Naomi Singer, Cross Village Township for the position of Committee Chair. Motion carried.

Motion made by Joey Arbaugh, support by Dell Weitzel to have Bill Prall, Friendship Township for the position of Committee Vice Chair. Motion carried.

III. Review Proposed Agenda

Dick requested that 2009 Committee schedule be added under V. New Business, A. Motion made by Rob Deane, support by Joey Arbaugh to approve the agenda with addition. Motion carried.

IV. Review and Approve Previous Meeting's Minutes (November 11, 2008)

Motion made by Dell Weitzel, support by Rob Dean to approve the November 11, 2008 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

V. New Business

a. Committee Meeting Schedule

Dick Cobb listed the proposed 2009 meeting schedule. Motion made by Ron Krause, support by Rob Deane to approve the 2009 Committee meeting schedule. Motion carried.

b. Committee Membership

Carolyn Sandford proposed to the Committee that other groups be added as members of the Committee and have voting privileges. One group she would like to suggest is the Little Traverse Conservancy because of all their assistance they have provided to the Committee and working with them. Joey Arbaugh added that she agrees with added the Conservancy to the Committee because of their M-119 Corridor Project. Ron Krause asked if added groups to the Committee would they have one person or three like the other entities. Discussion followed. Kieran Fleming stated that the Little Traverse Conservancy does not need to be on the Committee to change their role as a resource and that the Committee and the Little Traverse Conservancy could create a closer liaison.

Motion made by Dell Weitzel, support by Dave Shear to keep with the current Committee membership. Motion carried.

c. NWMCOG Green Infrastructure Project

Patty O'Donnell presented an overview of the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments' Green Infrastructure project. This project is being funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Great Lakes National Program Office/Lake Michigan Watershed Academy and is being implemented in the Council of Governments' ten county service area. Activities include workshops on low impact development and green infrastructure; working with local governments, land conservancies, and other non-profits to develop a natural resources assets inventory map; and distributing the maps and green infrastructure tools and techniques back out into the communities. Projects and actions connection with the Heritage Route include nature preserves, trails, stormwater control, and agriculture to name a few.

d. Signs on Heritage Routes

Patty O'Donnell reported that a Heritage Routes and Signs Work Group is being formed with the three heritage routes she coordinates to work on this issue with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). The meetings will be by conference calls and some face to face meetings. Dell, Carolyn and Rob volunteered to be on the Work Group.

It was reported that one side of the Robinson Road Tunnel of Trees sign has been taken out again. The Committee suggested that sign be relocated to one side or the other or be taken down in November for the winter.

VI. Old Business

a. Council Tree Update

Joe Engelhard gave an update on the Council Tree: 1. the Tree was measured; 2. After death, male and female cones were collected from the white pine tree; 3. the Tree has been photographed; 4. the Tree has landmark status for canoe and boat travel index; 5. there were multiple lower branches; 6. during a storm, 2 large pieces were broken off and taken away; 7. the Tree right now is about 18 feet tall and breaking down; 8. the Tree is still an ecological resources especially for birds looking for insects; 9. the records of existence put the Tree at about 300 years old.

b. Update the Guidebook

Patty stated that the Guidebook will be undergoing a revision this year. Copies will be given to the newer Committee members with an explanation.

c. Education Activities: Topics and Scheduling

- Workshop topics from the Community Survey could be held in the summer, maybe at Thorne Swift.
- Identify township activities to take part in
- Distribute the Guidebook to all corridor property owners; tourists; seasonal residents
- Good Hart Fair

VII. Correspondence

Dick Cobb presented a letter from Charles and Susan Glass dated November 20, 2008 stating the they had received a letter from the Michigan Department of Transportation approving their request for utilizing the existing driveway to the proposed property and that they extended a thank you to the Committee for support on minimizing the impact to the corridor. They attached a copy of the letter from MDOT.

Patty reported that the Michigan Heritage Route Statewide Conference will be held October 13-15th.

Patty stated that the M-119 Tunnel of Trees Scenic Heritage Route Management Plan Update 2008 was submitted to Pete Hanses, MDOT in early December for approval.

VIII. Committee Member Comment

Rob Deane asked if the Heritage Route program budget for 2009 is facing any changes with the Michigan budget problems. Patty reported that she has not been informed of any changes in the budget that started October 1, 2008 and goes to September 30, 2009.

IX. Public Comment

Cathy Reindel suggested that from the community survey response that the Committee widely distribute the Management Plan Update information and to let the general public know about what the Committee is working on. The Management Plan could be sent out to the corridor property owners. The information could be sent out in tax mailings to let the people know that the Management Plan and the Update are available at township halls and at www.nwm.org/m119.asp.

Rob Deane would like to thank Dick Cobb for the many years of great work as the chair of the Committee on the implementation of the Management Plan. It was unanimous that the Committee appreciates all of the work Dick did the past years.

X. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be **Tuesday, March 10, 2009** at Readmond Township Hall.

XI. The meeting was adjourned at 11:07 a.m.