

**M-119 Tunnel of Trees Scenic Heritage Route Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, January 8, 2008  
West Traverse Township Hall**

Members Present

Richard Cobb, Emmet County Lakeshore Association  
Dave Shear, Emmet County Lakeshore Association  
Dell Weitzel, Emmet County Lakeshore Association  
Joey Arbaugh, West Traverse Township  
Carolyn Sandford, West Traverse Township  
Bob Sandford, West Traverse Township  
Bill Prall, Friendship Township  
Eric Rasmussen, Friendship Township  
Joe Englehard, Readmond Township  
Ron Krause, Readmond Township  
Larry Wallen, Readmond Township  
Rob Deane, Cross Village Township  
Henry Singer, Cross Village Township  
Naomi Singer, Cross Village Township

Guests Present

Nancy Salar, Emmet County Planning and Zoning Department

Staff Present

Patty O'Donnell, Northwest Michigan Council of Governments

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

Richard Cobb called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m. Introductions were made around the room.

**II. Review Proposed Agenda**

Patty O'Donnell added to IV. New Business D. Appointment of Committee Chair and Vice Chair for 2008. The agenda was and accepted with addition.

**III. Approval of the November 13, 2007 Meeting Minutes**

Motion made by Joey Arbaugh, support by Carolyn Sandford to approve the November 13, 2007 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

**IV. New Business**

**A. Non-Motorized Transportation Strategy Proposed Trails Map Result**

Patty presented the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments' non-motorized transportation strategy proposed trails map for Emmet County. She met with the local governments, stakeholders groups, and the public to place proposed trails on the map and then prioritize trails 1-5 for future projects with the Michigan Department of Transportation. Discussion followed.

## **B. Management Plan Updating Process**

Patty stated that the M-119 Heritage Route Management Plan needs to be updated every five years and 2008 is the year. The Committee will begin the process in May with a brainstorming session and prioritizing by consensus. Also, the photograph inventory update will be scheduled for May or June.

There was a question regarding the MDOT Fiscal Year 2008 funding. Patty reported that full funding of the Heritage Routes was restored.

## **C. State Road Traffic County Map**

Patty distributed copies of the traffic count map for State Road that was requested by the Committee. The traffic counts were for 2000-2006. Discussion followed.

## **D. Appointment of Committee Chair and Vice Chair for 2008**

Dell Weitzel nominated Richard Cobb for Chair, support by Joey Arbaugh. Nominations closed. Richard Cobb accepted as Chair. Henry Singer nominated Dell Weitzel for Vice Chair, support by Joey Arbaugh. Nominations closed. Dell Weitzel accepted as Vice Chair.

## **V. Old Business**

### **A. Signs**

#### **1. Adopt-a-Highway Signs Project Update**

Matt Radulski, MDOT sent an email report stating that he has been working on a design concept for one sign and has three different scenarios. He feels that the sign would be very large or broken up into two signs. Matt has recommended to Dave Langhorst that the Committee leave the signs as is for the following reasons:

1. If a sponsor changes the whole signs needs to be replaced at about \$200 per sign plus labor and equipment (\$400).
2. The signs will be very large.
3. People will not be able to read the sign because the letters would be too small unless the traffic came to a stop.
4. The MDOT sign people stated that sponsors get changed, dropped or added a lot.

Discussion followed. The Committee stated that they wanted to continue to pursue one sign with MODT and see this issue be resolved. Patty will invite Matt Radulski to the next Committee meeting.

#### **2. Tunnel of Trees Sign to West Traverse Township Update**

The sign has not been moved and probably will not be moved until spring. Patty will ask Matt Radulski about the timeframe.

#### **3. Real Estate Signs**

Patty reported that the letters to the real estate companies that were listed on the inventory were sent out. There were no responses to the letters from the real estate companies. It was stated that some of the signs have been removed. Bob Sandford had sent a note that West Traverse Township has a sign ordinance that prohibits "signs affixed to trees, shrubs, rocks, or other natural features", and that includes real estate signs.

**Other:**

Henry stated that the Middle Village Church has added a section below the area's scenic sign that is on its own metal stand. It is a beige color with green print. There was a question if this was approved by MDOT.

**B. Township Resolution Update**

Henry reported that the Cross Village Township Board approved the M-119 Tunnel of Trees resolution. West Traverse Township will look over the resolutions. Discussion followed on how to proceed with the actions requested in the resolutions and included the following items: match the Tunnel of Trees protection examples with the community survey results again; add to project list; ordinances vs. voluntary measures (personal responsibility); education; conservation easements; nature preserves; what about MDOT enforcement in the right-of-way; need the same protection measures across the four townships; West Traverse Township has its own zoning and Friendship, Readmond and Cross Village are under County zoning. It was suggested to check the M-119 property owners survey results again and their views on zoning ordinances; greenbelts; etc. It is hard to develop a cultural ethic and what is needed is constant education and media. Townships feel that education is great but is there more that can be done to protect the Tunnel of Trees. What is the county commissioner's and county attorney's thoughts on possible regulations. Discussion followed.

**C. Educational Activities Update**

The handout was distributed listing the educational activities that have been suggested for tools for protection. Patty reported that she and Carolyn staffed a table at the Harbor Springs Christmas Open House in early December. There was a suggestion to make an educational presentation to the Emmet County Board of Commissioners with Brentt Michalek.

**VI. Correspondence****A. Wooden Bridge Project**

Dave Langhorst sent a report that Northwest Design Group and MDOT continue to work on the preliminary designs. There are seven design exceptions to the MDOT bridge standards. As requested, no design includes a walkway.

**B.** Dell asked the Committee if they had received a letter regarding a helicopter issue. Patty stated that the Committee's mailing list is never given out.

**VII. Public Comment**

Henry commented on an article he received regarding motorcycle noise. Please bring copies of the article for the rest of the Committee to the next meeting.

**V. Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be **Tuesday, March 11, 2008 at 9:30 a.m. at Readmond Township Hall.**

Motion by Dell Weitzel, supported Rob Deane to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 a.m.