

## **Down East Sunrise Trail Coalition Annual Members' Meeting Minutes of October 25, 2017 @ 5PM – Ellsworth City Hall**

**Members Present:** Stephen Rees, Charlie Robinson, Charlie Corliss, Ash Bladen, Polly Ceckler, Bill Ceckler, Ray Archer, Sandy Johnson, Andy Gallant, Ian Staub (by telephone)

**Others Present:** Crystal Hitchings, Kim True, Russell Smith, Pamela Morse, Roland Donovan, Jean Swaney

It was noted that several members of Acadia ATV were present, as well as representatives from the Bicycle Coalition of Maine, East Coast Greenway, and the Bold Coast Scenic Bikeway.

President Steve Rees began the meeting with an introduction to the purpose and function of the Coalition. He provided some general information about the organization and the Trail's online presence. He described the organization's purpose as being to promote four-season, multi-purpose use of the trail; to provide equal access and opportunity to all trail users; to create a space for improved health and fitness of regional residents; and to develop more partnerships with trail communities that lead to economic growth.

2017 Annual meeting quorum requirements and notice requirements are met. Minutes from the October 2016 Annual meeting are not yet transcribed and posted to the website.

2017 Board nominations for the 5 open Board positions include:

1. Gerry Nasburg, current Treasurer (he assumed this role when Ian departed)
2. Crystal Hitchings, Bold Coast
3. Ian Staub
4. Jim Fischer, Black Woods and Schoodic Scenic Byways
5. Joey McPhail, Dennysville Snowmobile Club
6. Stuart Burr, Acadia ATV club

After votes were tallied, Crystal, Joey, Ian, and Gerry each received enough votes to pass election to the Board. Jim and Stuart were tied, but Charlie called Stuart to confirm that he had been aware of the nomination – which he was not. With Ian on the telephone, Jim Fischer received a greater number of votes and was elected as the 5<sup>th</sup> new Board member.

Steve Rees proposed two Bylaws amendments, which were described as procedural. One proposal allowed for electronic notification to members; the other reduced quorum requirements from 50% of the total Board to 33%. The proposed Bylaws Amendments were both passed unanimously with a few abstentions.

The Annual Meeting notice distributed to members and the public had advertised a panel of speakers for a discussion on the economic contributions of the Down East Sunrise Trail post completed Ellsworth extension. However, the panel could not be convened for the meeting, and Steve summarized the trail economic development impact study and report Jim Fisher had created. He noted that data extrapolations from a study of the Washington Junction section showed that fuel, lodging, and dining all benefitted from trail use.

Steve expressed that goals of the Coalition going forward should include outreach to businesses and communities around the value of the trail to community and economic development, and finding ways to co-promote the trail with other assets. The Coalition could also partner with more businesses to encourage workplace use of the trail (there has been some success with this in Machias); and could partner with schools to encourage more recreational use of the trail, both in-school and after-school, by more youth. Eco-tourism is an important opportunity for the region, and building relationships with other initiatives will help to connect the trail to larger state, regional, and inter-national initiatives.

Charlie noted that the Department of Conservation purchased and installed 5 cameras on the trail, and the data is being analyzed now. In May, there were 783 walkers and 11 wheelers on the new section of trail into Ellsworth. A 2017 report on Maine's Outdoor Economy shows that Maine's outdoor rec industry generates spending of about \$8.2 billion annually. ATV users (includes the off road Motorcycles , regular ATVS and the Side By sides) in Maine alone spent just under \$755 million, which has tripled compared to a 2004 economic impact study. (The numbers of ATVS and ATV clubs have doubled and the ATV trail system has increased from 2000 miles to 7000.)

The Trail functions well only when each user group is engaged in trail use and maintenance. ATV and snowmobile users are active in this, and the Trail is unique in having a dedicated Department of Conservation staffer. The DOC, membership dues, and grants have allowed creation of the current infrastructure. It is hoped that future legislative actions will help communities and users support the trail more.

The Calais downtown extension has been an idea for years, and Charlie reports that alternate trails into town (not on rail bed) are nearly ready for use.

Roland asked about directional signage to LL Bean (Reny's won't give approval for ATVs or snowmobiles to cross the parking lot) and whether a crushed concrete trail surface has been considered (yes!!! – and the new trail extension is crushed concrete for 5.2 miles).

Ian explained that the committee has been looking into surface treatments to improve bicycling for years. Crushed concrete is estimated at about \$20K/mile at 6" deep, but the trucking is very expensive (Bucksport mill site may have some...). He would like to see the section from Washington Junction to Franklin resurfaced this way. A survey taken on a 3-mile section from Washington Junction toward Franklin shows that multi-users are happy, and that less maintenance is required. Hard costs, specific locations, and state processes need to be identified in order to move forward with resurfacing trail sections.

With no further discussion or questions from the public or the Board, the Annual Meeting was adjourned at 5:55pm

## **Down East Sunrise Trail Coalition Regular Board Meeting**

## **Minutes of October 25, 2017 @ 6PM – Ellsworth City Hall**

All in attendance from the Annual meeting remained for the Board meeting.

New Board Members were welcomed, and officers were elected.

Both Steve Rees and Jim Fischer had been nominated to serve as President. Steve accepted the nomination and recused himself from the discussion and vote. The group discussed the need for Steve to be relieved of some of his tasks if he re-assumes the position, and the possibility that Jim may move from the area if he can't find employment soon. Ian withdrew his nomination of Jim, and the group voted unanimously to retain Steve in the position of President. Steve accepted the position with a pledge of renewed energy to lead the group with their increased support.

Bill Ceckler agreed to continue in the role of Vice-President; Crystal Hitchings was voted in as Secretary; and Gerry will continue as Treasurer.

The next Board meeting will be scheduled later in January, dates and times to be explored. More regional movement and participation is hoped for in the new year.

Charlie and Joe McPhail have set up a grading test of two 1-mile sections of the trail. On mile 78-79, nothing is being done at all, but in mile 77-78 a power sweeper is being used to remove all rocks. A 25-foot section down the center of the two test sections had rocks removed by hand and collected in buckets for sieve analysis, then all the rocks for mile 77-78 were removed by grading.

Survey responses from users of these sections will be helpful in understanding if grading differently will improve the trail surface. Dust has been a regular issue for trail users, which won't be changed through grading. Some sections of the trail have been worn through extensive use back down to railroad bed, and Charlie is looking into how to resurface these sections – info obtained over several years would be helpful.

Trans Canada ATV trail activists are interested in international connections, which may increase use and wear on trail as those connections grow. ATV use is growing with club activity, and the Acadia ATV club parking lot may need to be shut down to trail users due to capacity issues.

A harder trail surface, if constructed, would also attract more ATV users.

New trail parking is being developed in Whitneyville.

Meeting Adjourned @ 6:25PM