

Recreation Committee Meeting

Date: January 8, 2014

When: 10:00 a.m.

Where: Portage Township Office

Who Present: John Ollila and Bill Bingham (Rec. Comm. Members), Anne Clancy Klemme, Pete Wickley, Dan Dalquest (Public Representatives), Bruce Petersen, Supervisor, Ron Yesney & Lee VerBekmoes (MDNR).

Discussion Points:

- The homeowners representatives indicated that their constituency had concerns over:
 - A groomed snowmobile trail
 - Any sort of lighting
 - A “hard” surface ie: asphaltic versus a small gravel pervious surface.

Those three concerns were the most talked about.

- Ron Yesney indicated that the MDNR will have to spend the earmarked \$50,000.00 by October 1st 2014. They will be doing some safety signage this spring. The money cannot be used for local match so the group would have to pursue another grant for additional monies. Local sponsors can utilize equipment/labor time to make the \$50,000.00 go further. The project will have to go to bids this spring for the gravel surfacing, brushing and culvert repair/replacement. Only the items mentioned in the grant proposal’s first page will go to bid. The MDNR’s Office of Technology, Management and Budget will handle all the formal bidding advertisement and award process. That Dept. does have administrative costs for the bid letting so there will be approximately \$45,000.00 to actually spend on the on-the-ground projects.
- Dan D. and Pete W. both volunteered to walk the entirety of the trail This spring with the MDNR to assist in the pin-pointing of the problems and to identify just which can be address locally and which need to go out to bid.

- There was concern at the meeting that only Portage Twp. residents/representatives were present at today's meeting. There are many drainage problems along the trail in the Chassell Twp's end of the trail. Pete will encourage more representation from Chassell Twp.
- A lengthy discussion followed concerning the brushing dimensions. Ultimately it was decided to see if the MDNR could write in to their bid spec's a 10' trail width, 12' in height with a 14' width at all the road access crossings. That 14' width would taper back approximately 20' feet on either side of the road crossing.
- Time frames for utilizing the \$50,000.00 "Recreational Trails Program" monies is bid out in early spring – award to a contractor and have completed by Oct. 1, 2014. These monies come from the .002% national gas tax on each sale.
- The State cannot dispose of any property along this railroad corridor – ultimately the existing easement widths have to be maintained for the railroad bank thru MDOT and any possible future reopening of the railroad. The MDNR will be putting small posts in earmarking the width of the corridor on all the individual landowners corners. This protects both the rights of the landowners as well as the States.
- The snowmobile usage needs to be removed from this trail according to the homeowners. Until there is another alternative, safe route the MDNR cannot remove the snowmobile usage along this corridor. Pete Wickley indicated that he would work with Dave Sleeman who is affiliated with the Chassell snowmobile club to see if the Chassell to Painesdale route could be opened up again. The MDNR has small amounts of money for snowmobile access easements plus it can help with state insurance. The new power line access could also be key in completing this route. The State of Michigan has about 6,300 miles of snowmobile trails at the present time.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:16 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Bruce Petersen
Portage Twp. Supervisor