

DEST Extension Public Meeting
Taken by Jim Fisher
10/29/2014
Ellsworth City Hall

Attending: Lana LaPlant-Ellis, Charlie Corliss, Scott Ramsay, Skip Varney (Engineering Director - Lead) all DACF, Dan Stewart, MDOT - Steve Fuller, The Ellsworth American – Michele Gagnon, City of Ellsworth - Robert Webber, Schoodic ATV Club – Eileen Lafland, MSA – Larry Lafland, MSA – Ian Staub – DEST Coalition – Bill Ceckler, DEST Coalition – Rich Hunnewell, Ellsworth Snowmobile Club – Leslie Harlow, Sunrise Trail/Beals Ave. Resident – Eve Young, Comfort Inn – A. Martin & Hazen Martin, Doweast ATV Rentals – Sandy Johnson, Sunrse Trail – Carol Cuddy, Sunrise Trail Coalition – James Fisher, HCPC – D. Jordan and Kenneth Jordan, Ben Beverly and Sandra Klausmeyer, Brian Potts, Narraguagus SC – Thomas West, President NSC – Robert Merrill, Merrill Furniture – Roy Allen, Allen’s – Vaughn and Melanie Lech, Acadia Area ATV Riders – Aileen and Doug Young, Acadia Area ATV Riders – Jake Taylor, Ellsworth Snowmobile Club – Russell Smith, Acadia Area ATVers – Pamela Morse, Acadia Area ATVers – Ray Archer, DEST Coalition – Candy Perkins, Resident

Met with city representatives earlier today

- Law Enforcement
- Planners
- Rail owners – supporting trail to get people off of the tracks
- Access challenge at High Street
- Distance from the rail
- Where to end the trail
- Shared use policy
 - All users to the comfort inn
 - Non-motorized after a point

Organizational Model

- MaineDOT Agreement to maintain the trail – with DACF
- Construction is an extension of the existing contract

Steps

- Environmental Assessment
- Engineering and design
- Construction
 - Tie and rail removal
 - Trail surface – effort to make it work for bicycles
 - Biking and walking – not in our shop
 - Tested recycled cement – very satisfied with results

- Bridges
- Washouts
- Parking areas
- Maintenance
 - Re-grade every other year – alternating halves
 - Managing beavers and washouts
- Public participation
 - Good support from rider groups, law enforcement,
 - All season use
 - But, no ATVs with tires in the winter
 - No horses in the winter
- New Construction
 - Beal Street
 - Woods
 - Card Brook
- Issues
 - Which side of the tracks
 - Prefer west side – avoid crossings
 - North/East side has more wetlands
 - Washington Junction Road Crossing
 - Corridor is 66' wide
 - 33' on each side of the tracks
 - Discussing separation
- Construction techniques
 - Turnpike - Mounding fabric, braces and soil
 - Elevated boardwalk
 - Elevated bridge – set on pilings
- Issues
 - Environmental
 - Economic
 - Social
 - Parking and access
 - Washington Junction – particularly for motorized uses
 - Dust and noise
 - Safety
 - Crossing High street to purchase fuel
- Skip
 - Will be working on design and permitting this winter
 - Ideally would start construction

Questions and Comments

- Acadia ATV has purchased land at Washington Junction to build a club house and provide access and services
- How will people get through Spring Street?
 - o Michele – still working on this, but it’s not part of this planning process
 - o Dan – need to come up with a way to share Spring Street for non-motorized users
- Access to restaurants
 - o Acadia ATV is looking at options for crossing Card Brook to the bowling alley
 - o Also looking at enabling crossing at the traffic light
- Comfort Inn Owner – very excited about this
 - o When do you expect trail to be operational
 - Optimistically – open next summer
 - May take longer depending on permitting and design
 - o Biggest obstacle is 5,000 feet of wetlands – mitigation plans
- Leslie Harlow – live on Beals Avenue - Where will people park?
 - o Skip – looking at building a small parking lot
 - o Also looking at working with businesses to create or designate overflow parking
 - o Trailer parking would be at Washington Junction
 - o Example of Gardiner – Hannaford signed an agreement to share parking.
 - o Ellsworth Hannaford my
- Abutting land owner on section between Washington Junction and Ellsworth
 - o What elevation? What separation?
 - o Trail would probably be lower.
 - o Haven’t decided about separation.
 - o Owner plans to put a road across the tracks
- Ian - Store owner of LL Bean is open to having a connection to the LL Bean parking area
 - o Might provide some parking
- What is the closest the trail can be to the tracks - Dan Stewart
 - o 15’ no fence
 - o 10.5’ with fence
 - o May be able to waive the fence requirement – would help if Downeast Scenic Rail supports that- requires approval of the chief engineer
 - o The elevation difference may help to wave the
- Bill Ceckler
 - o Strongly encourage use of crushed concrete
 - o May also want to pave sections to reduce dust
 - o Recycle asphalt didn’t work well on other trails
 - congealed and was difficult to grade
 - may have toxic leaching
- Concern about the impact of snowmobile studs on some trail surfaces
 - o Paving
 - o Wood decking
 - o ATVs don’t do well on asphalt

- Grooming equipment
 - o BP&L tries for 10' width
 - Schoodic bog is closer to 8' wide at the top
 - o Less than 8' makes passing very difficult
 - o Southern Maine has a 6' wide boardwalk – has to be for short sections
 - o Acadia ATV's groomer is 6.5' wide
 - o Have to be careful about weight on the boardwalks
- Will there be a meeting with merchants?
 - o Nothing has been scheduled yet
 - o Michele will help to promote meetings
- Cooperation with the Sunrise Trail Coalition
 - o STC has worked with BP&L on picnic tables
 - o Bill Ceckler - Sally Jacobs – was very concerned about privies and outhouses
 - We have some funds for amenities
 - We also helped to pay for the extension to Perry
 - o Ian – interested in creating permanent privies
 - o Acadia ATV wants to have some permanent privy facilities
 - o Jim – conducting user survey to measure economic impacts
 - Run website and are happy to promote public participation in the planning process
- Narraguagus ATV- see many economic benefits of the trail
- Haze Martin – opened an ATV rental facility across from the tracks
- Ellsworth has been proactive to complete the trail
- Seasonal closing
 - o Mud season - when the trail is closed – it is closed except to walkers
 - o Sunrise Trail website keeps people informed
- What about completing the trail to Calais?
 - o When this section is completed, there will be more interest in reaching Calais
 - o Dan – MaineDOT is always concerned about removing tracks
 - Keeping the tracks to serve Eastport
 - Recognized there is support in the towns for the trail
 - o Leslie – Maine Office of Tourism is working on a “Two Nation Vacation” www.two-nation-vacation.com/ concept
 - The connection to Canada would be improved with trail extension
- General expressions of support for this extension
- Carol Cuddy – used to travel to Europe to bicycle
 - o Connections to Ellsworth and Calais will generate more use
- Request to consider extending trail to Brewer
 - o Dan – will not remove active tracks or tracks that have feasible future use.
 - o Another audience – people north of Ellsworth do hope there will someday be a trail connection to Ellsworth
 - o There are no tracks into Brewer – the tracks have been torn up at Green Point Auto

- Length of Scenic Rail Lease? 25 years
- Relative cost of rail to trail and rail with trail
 - o Rail to Trail \$55,000 per mile
 - o Rail with trail \$700,000 per mile
- Greenville and Rangeley
 - o Opened up Main Street to ATVs
 - o BP&L was very concerned, but it has worked very well
 - o There are grants for Ellsworth for purchasing off road police equipment

- **Meeting ended at 7:30**