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Meeting Minutes October 13, 2022
Lamplighter Restaurant, Delmont, PA

Meeting Attendees:

- a. Board: (14) Rob Cronauer, Rick Fisher, Brandon Lacina, Pat Norton, Bill O'Hara, Stan Rudge, Vicki Rudge, Malcolm Sias, Ann Wade, Liz Ferri, Jack Maher, Monica Meehan, Chris Panichella, and Annamarie Stackiewicz
 - b. Absent Board: (6) Alyssa Davis, Wendy Davis, Chad Emahizer, Paul Estok, Kerry Jobe and Geri Lombardo
 - c. Guests: (34++) Dee O'Hara, Mark Begeman, Ron Marvos, Bill Breeger, Louise Fisher, Dale Hollabaugh, Brandon Simpson, Megan Pilkington, Tom Marcin, Jeff Richards, Karen Rose Cercone, Darren Miller, Dave Silvis, Stephen Opsitnick, Jr., Colin Tressler, Dan Sigg, Maria DePasquale, Craig Tateo, Melanie Litz, Michael Mance, Tom Petrus, Chris Leo, Tim Leriotes, Christopher Begeman, Eric Kana, Margaret Ryan, Jerry Detar, Bob Coulter, Jim Coulter, Michael Bertonaschi, Harold Lester, Bob Stackiewicz, Erin Majeran and Brian Majeran
1. President Stan Rudge led the recitation of "The Pledge of Allegiance" and then called the meeting to order at 7:01pm.
 2. Presidents' Comment – President Rudge shared the announcement of the marriage this past Saturday of two of our board members, Wendy Davis and Chad Emahizer. A wedding congratulations card was circulated for all in attendance to sign. Also a card from the Rey Peduzzi family shared acknowledging the funeral flowers sent by the WHT.
 3. Public Input/Introductions – Visitor Dave Silvis, Fire Chief Export VFD introduced himself and is asking support of the WHT in purchasing additional equipment to be added to the VFD inventory. This being equipment to carry water and a stretcher device to the trail in case of an emergency on the trail in the vicinity of Export/Murrysville. The idea was tabled by President Rudge with a committee formed of Ferri, Wade and Meehan for further review to present to the board.
 4. Approval of Minutes –
 - a. Since the September board meeting was held honoring the WHT volunteers last month, a motion was made to approve the August 11th minutes by Rob Cronauer, 2nd by Norton, motion carried, minutes approved. The evening was focused on the volunteers.
 5. Treasurer's Report – Chris Panichella
 - a. To date checking account is \$45,994.49; S&T money market and other reserves \$53,740.65; building fund \$26,700.00 and current WHT assets is \$173,817.00 A meeting is scheduled with Wealth Management for October 19th at 10am at the West Newton Train Station to discuss the lack of communication with the company with WHT, Five Star and RTC. The meeting is open if interested in attending.
 - b. A motion was made to approve the October treasurer's report by O'Hara, 2nd by Sias, motion carried, reports approved.
 6. Closing the Middle Gap – Brandon Simpson, Director of Westmoreland County Parks and Recreation
Guest Speaker Brandon Simpson, was introduced by President Rudge to provide an update on the Middle Gap expansion. The shared plans are to re-excavate an old railroad tunnel and run the trail under the state owned Rt. 66 with an estimated cost of \$2.5 million. A \$1 million grant from federal highway has been awarded along with a \$200,000 matching contribution from the county. That will go toward design work and construction at properties where we already have

agreements. At this point, we're in talks to acquire 3 of the 4 miles of the gap. Also approached was the state department of Conservation and Natural Resources to see if they are willing to match the \$1.2 million. He says we can show DCNR and PennDOT that we are acquiring land on both sides of Rt. 66. The challenge is how to get from the western side of the gap, in Export, to an area near the White Valley Athletic and Social Club on Delaware Street. This will provide the access across from Wilson Road where eventually a parking lot with about 30 spaces would help with additional parking from Export's location. Springview Court has developed a walking and biking path in the plan. Brandon also announced the resurfacing of 8.7 miles Delmont to Saltsburg in mid end of 2023 using a \$250,000 DCNR grant.

7. Turtle Creek Connector – Jeff Richards
 - i. Carrie Furnace up to TC to Trafford – Mackin Engineering is doing a study on Carrie Furnace up to Turtle Creek / Trafford.
 - ii. Hot Metal Street Bridge – Allegheny County is pushing along with Friends of the Riverfront to connect up the valley to Trafford.
8. Board at large position – Only nomination was Karen Cercone asking if she could nominate herself. Motion by Maher, 2nd by Norton, approved. Nominations will remain open next month and voting will take place at next month's meeting.
9. Mission Statements – Rob Cronauer

All board members received three options for WHT mission statement. Ballots were distributed to all board members present this evening to vote. Results will be announced at end of the meeting.
10. Upcoming Events
 - i. Murrysville Parks and Recreation will hold their Halloween Trick or Treat on October 29th 11am-3pm along the trail in Murrysville. Ann Wade, Tom Marcin and Tom and Suzanne Dittman will man the WHT table. It was noted by Ferri that congestion occurs around the Roberts Parcel Trailhead and suggested signage of this event be placed on trail by Murrysville Parks and Rec warning others using the WHT that day. President Rudge will reach out to the Parks and Rec with that recommendation. A motion was made to approve by Sias, 2nd by Maher, motion carried, event approved.
 - ii. Witches Broom October 15th 1pm-3:30pm from Export to Cozy Run. Motion was made to approve by Wade, 2nd O'Hara, motion carried, event approved.
 - iii. Dedicated Nurses Association October 29th 10:30am-noon from Ginny's to Penn Murray. Same day as Trick or Treat but different location on the WHT. A motion was made by Maher, 2nd by Norton, motion carried, event approved.
11. Bench Painting / Grafitti
 - i. This topic became a discussion at an RTC Board Meeting seeking recommendations and if there are current policies in place regarding whether benches can be painted out of the "norm" of what WHT maintenance provides. President Rudge read the policy adopted by the RTC in May, 2022 and WHT in June, 2022. Some benches are now becoming creatively decorated and discussion was how this needs to be handled by the WHT Board. A motion was made by Norton, 2nd by Maher to allow Maria DePasquale to paint her bench which she had done prior to this discussion and where can this lead to for the future benches. A letter from her describing why it was important to her was shared by President Rudge. Then many questions were asked as to how does the board review each and every request as they occur, who is going to maintain, who actually owns the benches (WHT does), adding more responsibilities onto the volunteers, etc. After a lengthy discussion this motion did not pass 3 yes – 12 no. President Rudge announced he would reach out to Ms. DePasquale but she announced she was present to hear the outcome. A committee has been formed of S. Rudge, Wade and Fisher to review a new bench policy, revising forms and notifications for future benches. Also discussed was all the memorabilia that is being placed at benches as well. The WHT policy in place includes this topic as well as painting the benches as "graffiti" and does have a policy in place. This policy will be placed in WHT kiosks, website, and social media along with a notification of when items need to be removed.

- 12 Old Business
 - i. Numerous attempts have been made to speak with the owner of APR who first reached out to have his employees volunteer for any project assignment on the trail. As of this meeting still no communication from them.
 - ii. United Way Day of Caring was held September 15th working with MSA painting kiosks at Roberts Parcel, MAWC along with six or 7 benches that were stained. United Way shared the costs of the event as well as costs of breakfast and lunch from Ianni's. They have become a great partnership.
 12. Committee Reports -
 - a. Fundraising –Rob Cronauer
 - i. Annual fundraiser of Comedy Night will be held February 11th at Colton Hall in Claridge. Tickets will become available in December to begin selling. Malcolm Sias also shared Comedy Night on behalf of the Coal and Coke Trail will be held November 5th and has tickets available for those interested in attending.
 13. Public Relations – Vicki Rudge
 - i. Face book has grown to 3,189 followers
 - ii. Twitter account now 164 followers
 - iii. WHT clothing apparel being sold this evening at reduced costs in order to deplete inventory and make room for a new design in 2023. Support the trail by purchasing t-shirts for \$8 and collared shirts \$15. Also being sold at regular price is hats \$15 and backpack bags \$3. There is t-shirts from the second annual Ted Hayes event for only \$10.
 14. Membership – Stan Rudge shared on behalf of Wendy Davis and Justina Lattimer members for 2022 have reached 423.
 15. Trail Ambassadors – Stan Rudge
 - i. August and September hours total 323 hours.
 - ii. A big thank you to Tim Leriottis who makes certain WHT maps are stocked at the trailheads.
 - g. Trail Maintenance – Rick Fisher
 - i. Grass cutting and blowing of leaves currently in progress. Zone 5 did receive a 30 lb. bar for digging.
 - h. Delmont Visionary Committee – AnnaMarie Stackiewicz
 - i. Reminder of the CX Race at Shields Farm on October 15th. So far 28 racers are registered.
 - ii. A grant was rewarded in the amount of \$20,000 from the PA Department of Health Walk Works Program and Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to hire consultants and develop a plan which will lay out goals to develop safe, accessible active routes connecting everyday destinations within Delmont. The plan will lay out transportation logistics if a trail spur comes into town including suggestions to improve crosswalks, off street parking, bike racks and other possible amenities.
 - i. Municipal Representatives - None
15. New Business
 - i. Mission Statement –

Nominated by Board members this evening is the following Missions Statement “The mission of the Westmoreland Heritage Trail is to manage and maintain the trail from Saltsburg to Trafford, in partnership with like-minded groups, Westmoreland County Parks, and the associated municipalities the trail passes through. The trail will be promoted for walking and biking activities and to provide for recreation, education, volunteerism, tourism, and historic and environmental conservation.” Following is outcome of the vote: Option #1 (3) votes, Option #2 (7) votes and Option #3 (4) votes.
16. The next meeting will be on November 10, 2022 at the Lamplighter (Lounge Area), Delmont, PA at 7pm. On a motion by Norton, 2nd by Cronauer, the meeting was adjourned at 8:16pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Vicki Rudge