



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. (www.westmorelandheritagetrail.com)

WHT February Board Meeting Minutes

February 12, 2026 via Zoom

Meeting Attendees:

- Board (15): Michael Bertonaschi, Karen Rose Cercone, Rob Cronauer, Wendy Davis, Jerry Detar, Chad Emahizer, Rick Fisher, Steve Ising, Chris Panichella, Stan Rudge, Vicki Rudge, Brooke Russick, Malcolm Sias, Annamarie Stackiewicz, Ann Wade
- Absent Board (6): Mike Banda, Liz Ferri, Tom Marcin, Monica Meehan, Darren Miller, Pat Norton
- Guests and Members (6): Jeff Richards, Barb Coulter, Tim Dunn, Bob Stackiewicz, Lena Varuolo, Emily Vogt

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

1. READING OF WHT MISSION STATEMENT

2. PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS – Stan thanked everyone who participated in the RTC Retreat and the PEC T.R.A.I.L.S meeting.

3. PUBLIC INPUT/INTRODUCTIONS – none.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the January 8, 2026 meeting were approved on a motion by Jerry Detar, seconded by Malcolm Sias. The motion passed.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT

As of January 31, 2025, we have \$15,145 in our Money Market accounts (S&T Bank), \$49,555 in our checking account (S&T Bank), \$14,228 in one Certificate of Deposit (S&T Bank), \$50,000 in a second Certificate of Deposit (S&T Bank) and \$76,071 invested with Fidelity (Wealth Enhancement Advisors), making our total assets \$204,998. We received \$29,765 in revenue in January and had expenses of \$3389. A motion was made by Karen Rose Cercone, seconded by Annamarie Stackiewicz, to approve the December treasurer's report. The motion passed.

6. ITEMS FOR ACTION AND/OR INFORMATION

- a) The following events were approved on a motion by Jerry Detar, seconded by Chad Emahizer.
- GCXC Racing Murrysville Monster - Sunday, July 12th (Carson to Duff Park)
 - GCXC Racing Trick or Trot 5k - Saturday, October 31st (Carson to School Rd)

7. OLD BUSINESS

- a) WHT 2026 strategic plan – Stan Rudge mentioned that our current year priorities are to restore the trail to its pre-flood conditions, and to continue working to close the trail's middle gap. We would also like to hold a Joyriders Event once we have the equipment being donated by Five Star Trail and have been trained on it.

- b) Pittsburgh Foundation – Stan Rudge submitted a grant to the Pittsburgh Foundation for \$3976 which was approved for funding. Rick Fisher will use the funds to purchase a new pressure washer for bench and kiosk maintenance, a chain saw, and some additional hand tools.
- c) WHT 2026 budget – Stan Rudge and Chad Emahizer presented a budget to adhere to PEC standards. Michael Bertonaschi made a motion to approve the proposed budget, seconded by Jerry Detar. The motion was approved.
- d) Comedy Night – Rob Cronauer reports that we have only sold half (200) tickets for the March 7 (Saturday) Comedy Night which is our main fundraiser. He asked board members to assist by buying tickets, selling tickets, or donating baskets to the basket raffle.
- e) Property at Route 66 and Industrial Drive – Malcolm Sias reported that a second meeting was held for planning development at the Route 66 Trailhead (formerly known as the Kacin Property), with all ten participants present and participating. GAI consultants prepared three schematic drawings, each with 120 parking spaces, a maintenance building, restrooms, and a memorial garden. Entrances and exits onto both Route 66 and Industrial Drive were present in all three drawings. The committee determined that a lower priority option was to create a second exit onto Industrial Drive. The meeting resulted in moving some of the features around, but before a new schematic is prepared, the committee plans to meet with Murrysville about a potential zoning change and determine their requirements for development at the site.
- f) First aid and CPR training – Rick Fisher reported that 16 people have signed up for first aid and CPR training. Three sets of first aid equipment are being donated by PT Ambulance, but the trail needs to purchase appropriate containers and tourniquets to complete the kits. Chain saw safety training will be provided through YouTube video links and a video review at the April WHT Board Meeting at the Lamplighter.
- g) The PEC grant project (T.R.A.I.L.S. - Training Regional Advocates Investing in Long-term Sustainability) – Stan Rudge reported that the PEC training was completed and a final celebratory meeting was held at Wye Beer Company. At the completion of training, WHT received a \$15,000 stipend from PEC, which will be used to purchase new gates and signs for the trail. A plaque was presented to WHT which will be helpful for future grant submissions and WHT presented the PEC trainers with thank-you t-shirts in return. PEC will be giving a presentation about the project at our April in-person meeting.

8. NEW BUSINESS

- a) Creation of a board designated fund for the Route 66 Trailhead – Stan Rudge requested that the board designate our current building fund for the development of the Route 66 Trailhead in Delmont (including preliminary utility line installation as well as actual building costs). Malcolm Sias made a motion, seconded by Ann Wade, to designate the funds for that purpose in addition to using it to fund the actual maintenance building fund. The motion carried.
- b) Honorary trail memberships for county commissioners and state reps – Stan Rudge suggested that we make our three county commissioners, state representatives and federal officials honorary members while they are in office. Jerry Detar made a motion, seconded by Vicki Rudge, to create this honorary category of membership. The motion carried.

9. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a) Real Estate / Acquisitions & Engineering/Construction – Jeff Richards reported that several trail members are working on setting up meetings with DuraBond, Export, and other stakeholders. The PennDOT reimbursement agreement from Morosini to Rangos is continuing to work its way through the series of approvals needed from Harrisburg. A Feb 20 meeting has been set up with

Murrysville's Chief Administrator and Development Director to explore how to change the zoning of the Route 66 Trailhead to make a trail head / public use site permissible.

At the western end of the trail, in Trafford, the land parcel adjacent to the Veterans Memorial Bridge has been purchased by the All-American Baseball Center and they are planning to do a major development there of baseball fields plus parking. This could potentially block a future connection between the Westmoreland Heritage Trail and the Turtle Creek Connector Trail. On the 24th of February at 1 PM Friends of the Riverfront and PEC will be meeting with All-American Baseball at the Trafford Borough Building.

- b) Public Relations – Vicki Rudge reported that WHT now has 4004 Facebook followers, 204 on Instagram and 164 on X. Our website received 1208 views in January, with 660 unique visitors. Planning continues for the Poker Run Festival on June 6, 2026. T-shirts and a thank-you letter were delivered to Roy Shaw and Mary Weil to acknowledge their continuing support of the trail. We now have copies of Roy and Mary's trail guidebook available for purchase at the price of \$20. The PR Committee will be selling WHT merchandise at Comedy Night. Volunteers should show up to Comedy Night at 5:30 PM to help out.
 - c) Membership – Wendy Davis reports that our current membership stands at 578 active members. Our annual February membership drive is in full swing, with 15 new and renewing memberships received so far.
 - d) Maintenance – Michael Bertonaschi reported that the RTC retreat had some sobering information about how dangerous it could be to use chain saws, even when wearing protective helmets and other equipment. The maintenance crews will be given both training and additional equipment. Rick Fisher reported that four WHT volunteers were trained on herbicide use this past week and will be able to treat sections of the trail.
 - e) Fundraising – Stan reported that we are up to five Corporate Members, one of which was a signature donation from CNX Corporation. CNX would also like to donate a Day of Service, which could be used to paint the bridges at Getty Creek and/or Loyalhanna Creek. Chris Panichella noted that this coming Monday there will be a Charity Bingo at the Casino from 7 to 10 PM which will benefit the RTC and the Westmoreland Heritage Trail.
 - f) Trail Ambassadors – Steve reported that a total of 1318 hours of trail ambassador hours were contributed in 2025. Trail Ambassador Training and Refresher Course will be held at the WCD Barn on Monday March 16.
 - g) Regional Trail Corporation / Trans-Allegheny Trail – Stan noted that the RTC helped fund our GAI site design at the Route 66 Trailhead. RTC is getting close to hiring a new Operations Manager. Leslie Pierce will stay as the former administrator for a while to help with the transition.
 - h) Municipal Representatives: no reports.
- 10.** Next month's WHT Meeting will be held remotely via a Zoom link on March 12, 2026 at 7 PM.
- 11.** On a motion by Chris Panichella, seconded by Chad Emahizer, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Karen Rose Cercone, Secretary

Westmoreland Heritage Trail 2026 Event Calendar

Month	Date	Time	Event	Location
JAN	8	7 PM	WHT Board Meeting	Zoom
FEB	12	7 PM	WHT Board Meeting	Zoom
MAR	7	6 - 9 PM	WHT Comedy Night at LIVE Casino	Greensburg
	12	7 PM	WHT Board Meeting	Zoom
APR				
	9	7 PM	WHT Board Meeting	Lamplighter
MAY				
	14	7 PM	WHT Board Meeting	Lamplighter
JUN	6	9 AM – 2 PM	Poker Run Festival	Trafford B-Y
	11	7 PM	WHT Board Meeting	Pedora Park
JUL				
	9	7 PM	WHT Board Meeting	Pedora Park
AUG				
	13	7 PM	WHT Board Meeting	Pedora Park
SEP				
	10	7 PM	WHT Board Meeting	Pedora Park
OCT				
	8	7 PM	WHT Board Meeting	Lamplighter
NOV				
	12	7 PM	WHT Board Meeting	Lamplighter
DEC				
	10	6 PM	WHT Volunteer Appreciation Night	WCD