



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)

Meeting Minutes February 9, 2023

Lamplighter Restaurant, Delmont

Meeting Attendees:

- Board: (11) Karen Rose Cercone, Rob Cronauer, Wendy Davis, Chad Emahizer, Rick Fisher, Mike Ley, Geri Lombardo, William O'Hara, Chris Panichella, Malcolm Sias, Ann Wade,
- Absent Board: (10) Alyssa Davis, Paul Estok, Elizabeth Ferri, Dale Hollabaugh, Kerry Jobe, Monica Meehan, Pat Norton, Stan Rudge, Vicki Rudge, AnnaMarie Stackiewicz
- Guests (10): Sarah Colligan, Barb Coulter, Jim Coulter, Steve Ising, Eric Kana, Joe Lapcevic, Tim Leriotis, Jack Maher, Dee O'Hara, Jennifer Reitz

1. Vice President Rob Cronauer led the recitation of "The Pledge of Allegiance" and then called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.
2. Presidents' Comment – No report.
3. Public Input/Introductions – No report.
4. Approval of Minutes
 - a. A motion to approve the January minutes was made by Sias, seconded by Wade. The motion carried and the minutes were approved.
5. Treasurer's Report – Chris Panichella
 - a. As of January 31, 2023, we have \$53,835.07 in the Money Market account, \$53,630.08 in the checking account, and \$53,586.48 invested for a total of \$161,051.63 in current assets. We have \$18,971.02 in fixed assets, making our total assets \$180,022.65.
 - b. A motion was made to approve the January 2023 Treasurer's Report was made by O'Hara, seconded by Sias. The motion carried, and the Treasurer's Report was approved.

6. ITEMS FOR ACTION AND/OR INFORMATION

- a. Official Correspondence – Karen Rose Cercone
 - 19 thank-you letters were sent out to donors in January
 - Leslie Pierce sent a letter of thanks to WHT which was read to the membership
- b. Upcoming Events
 - Comedy Night – February 11, 2023 (Colton Hall, Claridge) – Fund-raising chair Rob Cronauer reported that Comedy Night should top out at 280 attendees if the last tickets are sold by Saturday. Auction baskets are coming in at a good clip. Trail volunteers are asked to park in outlying areas of the lot so that elderly guests can use the closer parking spaces. Early ticket sellers should be on site by 5:30 PM. Doors will open by 5:45.
 - March for Parks – March 25, 2023 (Twin Lakes Park) – the fund-raising event will be held at just one location this year to keep resources focused, but benefits will still be shared by the county's trails and parks. Volunteer signup sheets will be available at the March WHT meeting for those who can help out.

- Megan Nelson and the East Suburban Trailblazers have requested two trail events:
 - Dustin Norris Memorial Race on April 22, 2023 (8 AM-noon, Export to Cozy Inn)
 - Halloween Hot Foot Race on October 14, 2023 (7-11 AM Export to Cozy Inn) Motion to approve was made by Sias, 2nd by Emahizer, motion carried.
- WHT Trail Town Festival – A date of June 3, 2023 was proposed for a fund-raising event to be held at the Trafford B-Y Park (details to follow after further committee work). A motion to reserve the date was made by Wade, 2nd by Panichella, motion carried.

7. OLD BUSINESS

- a. WHT officers recommend the board approve the purchase of a John Deere Gator Utility Vehicle. An updated quote was received from West Central with our requested vehicle options for a total price of \$12,750.42. A grant from the RTC will cover \$10,000 of the cost, with the remaining balance of funds to be taken from the WHT general account. A motion to approve the purchase was made by Fisher, seconded by Emahizer. The motion carried. Sias noted that the RTC grant funds will be delivered by check next Wednesday.
- b. Google Drive – Emahizer reported that many files are now available for download by officers and board members. Files stored inside folders can be viewed and downloaded.

8. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Chris Panichella requested a motion be made to approve the yearly licensing fee for Quicken Books. A motion to pay the yearly fee of \$624.00 was made by Emahizer, and seconded by Wade. The motion carried.

9. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. **Real Estate, Planning, Engineering and Construction** – Jeff Richards (report by Chris Panichella)
 - White Valley Athletic and Social Club – A Cooperation Agreement draft prepared by the County is now being reviewed by the Club and their counsel, Adam and/or Wes Long. The agreement would give parties a framework for defining the permanent WHT Trail Easement on Club land. Jeff is currently collecting quotes for an appraisal of the envisioned Trail Easement.
 - Kacin Land Donation – The Kacin donation of land for WHT east of State Route 66 is still delayed by PennDOT review of the Dollar General development project next to the envisioned WHT tunnel under SR 66 location.
 - The grant application to DCNR's special Fall 2022 Round was unsuccessful. Our ask was 1.2 million. Jeff plans to try again in the April 2023 Round of grant funding.
 - The work party on Saturday January 21 initiated by Darrin Miller was a success. The workers cleared brush along the former railroad berm from Spring View Court to White Valley Athletic and Social Club property. This stretch of future trail, located across the road from Pedora Park, can now actually be walked. To improve this further, additional pruning is needed along the edges, to make the path conducive for a cross-country run to be held in late 2023 or mid-2024. Volunteers will be recruited to assist with Zone 3
 - A proposed bridge is moving forward slowly for the Monroeville Valley Park across the Turtle Creek to provide access to the WHT. The DEP and Army Corps of Engineers need to review it before any construction can begin, which can take as long as 2-3 years.

b. **Public Relations** – Vicki Rudge (report by Wendy Davis)

- The WHT’s Facebook Followers now stand at 3253 with our Twitter followers at 161. As suggested by other trails at the recent RTC retreat, the PR Committee will create a new Instagram account to assist with social media outreach.
- As noted earlier, the 2023 Trail Town Festival is in the works. Additional information will be shared at the March board meeting.

c. **Membership** – Wendy Davis

- WHT currently has 353 active members. Eleven members used PayPal in February to renew or join and are eligible for the Spring Membership Drive prize drawing. An additional seven members renewed in late January immediately after the Spring Membership announcement went out. The Board recommended that the Membership Committee allow those entries to also be entered into the drawing. Board members unanimously agreed that they did not wish to be entered into the drawing even if they renewed membership during February.
- A pro-rated conversion formula was proposed which would allow 10-year members to convert to lifetime members midway through their membership period. Details of the new conversion fees are shown below:

Proposed Revision for Converting 10-year Memberships to Lifetime Memberships

Background Information:

- The current fee for a 10-year WHT Membership is \$150 for individuals and \$250 for a family. In comparison, the current fee for a Lifetime WHT Membership is \$200 for individuals and \$300 for a family.
- The proposed revision will allow 10-year members to convert to lifetime members at the following rate, scaled depending on how many years of the 10-year membership have elapsed. For both single and family memberships, the proposed costs are:
 - Year 1 – an additional \$60 to convert from 10-year to lifetime membership
 - Year 2 – an additional \$70 to convert from 10-year to lifetime membership
 - Year 3 - an additional \$80 to convert from 10-year to lifetime membership
 - Year 4 - an additional \$90 to convert from 10-year to lifetime membership
 - Year 5 and beyond - an additional \$100 to convert from 10-year to lifetime

- The motion to approve the new conversion formula was made by Wendy Davis, seconded by Chris Panichella. After some discussion, the motion carried.

d. **Maintenance** – Rick Fisher and Chad Emahizer

- Several volunteers have been cutting dead trees before they can fall on the trail.
- Signs and decorations are still being found on the trail. The secretary will create a more noticeable graphic explaining the RTC graffiti policy and disseminate it to kiosk maintainers.

e. **Trail Ambassadors** – Stan Rudge (report by Rob Cronauer)

- Our Trail Ambassadors served 978 hours and travelled almost 9000 miles in 2022. Ambassadors are asked to begin logging their hours for 2023.
- A training for new trail ambassadors will be held on Tuesday, April 25 at 6 PM at the Conservations District Building. Contact Stan Rudge if interested.

f. **Fundraising** – Rob Cronauer

- See details noted earlier under Events.

g. **Municipal Representatives** – various

- Trafford Borough has appointed Mike Ley as their new trail liaison to replace Brandon Lacina. Mike attended the meeting to introduce himself and notified us that there will be an Easter Egg Hunt in Trafford on April 21 at Westmoreland Park. Mike also reported that the Penn Trafford Area Recreation Committee (PTARC) is looking for volunteers to assist with their summer parks program. Anyone interested can contact PTARC Director Linda Bires.

h. **Regional Trail Corporation/Trans-Allegheny Trails** – Stan Rudge (report by Rob Cronauer)

- An RTC retreat was held on January 28, 2023 at the Westmoreland Conservation District Barn. A lot of good information and ideas were shared for trail fund-raising and outreach. A similar retreat is already planned for next year at the same location.

10. Next month's WHT Board meeting will take place on March 9 at the Lamplighter Restaurant.

11. On a motion by O'Hara, seconded by Cronauer, the meeting was adjourned at 7:44 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Rose Cercone, Secretary