



Trails & Open Space Committee

Wednesday, October 2, 2024 4PM

40 McMaster Street, Ballston Spa, NY

Minutes

Present: Chairman Joe Grasso; Committee Members Eric Connolly, Ed Kinowski, Michele Madigan, Matthew Veitch.

Steve Bulger, Ridge Harris, Stephanie Hodgson, Renee Law, Christine Rush, County Administrator; George Conway, Kate Kelly, County Attorney; Jason Kemper, Kimberly Lambert, Planning; Amanda Kinley, Ed Schneider, GPI.

Chairman Grasso called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

On a motion made by Mr. Veitch, seconded by Ms. Madigan, the minutes of the September 4, 2024 meeting were approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Mr. Kinowski, seconded by Mr. Connolly, to an agreement with 3 B Timber Co. Inc. for a timber harvest on County owned property in the Town of Northumberland. Unanimous.

Mr. Kemper gave a brief overview of the bid process. Two bids were received. Mr. Kemper gave an overview of the parcel in question and the harvest process. Completion date is December 2025. Discussion ensued.

Zim Smith Trail Update

A powerpoint presentation and detailed update was given by Amanda Kinley from GPI. A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Grasso distributed a copy of the Planning & Economic Developments Capital Project request form for the Zim Smith Trail.

Mr. Kemper provided an update on Open Space/Farmland Protection projects, pending trail projects, Ag. District annual inclusion, and County Forestland as distributed with the agenda. Saratoga County was presented with a Conservation Hero award from Saratoga PLAN for the County's efforts on the Graphite Range Community Forest.

Mr. Grasso reported that he has asked Jeff Olsen from the Saratoga Trails Alliance to come to the next Trails and Open Space Committee meeting to talk about how Saratoga County fits within the Empire State Trail.

Mr. Connolly provided the Committee with updates on projects in the Town of Ballston.

On a motion made by Mr. Veitch, seconded by Ms. Madigan, the meeting was adjourned unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Therese M. Connolly, Clerk of the Board

Zim Smith Trail Northern Extension

Project Updates

What has happened since last update?

- ▶ Obtained supplemental survey
- ▶ Mailed letters to property owners
- ▶ Held in person and virtual meetings with property owners
- ▶ Met with NYSDOT
- ▶ Met with FHWA
- ▶ Project team continues to meet weekly.

Property Owner Outreach

- ▶ Letters were mailed to all property owners that could be affected by the preferred route
 - ▶ Hand delivered letters to property owners that had not responded to first round of letters
- ▶ Met with property owners that requested meetings
- ▶ Property owners met with other municipalities
 - ▶ Saratoga Springs
 - ▶ Ballston Spa
- ▶ County met with municipalities to discuss property impacts
 - ▶ Ballston
 - ▶ Ballston Spa
 - ▶ Saratoga Springs

Preferred Route Impacts

- ▶ 26 properties impacted
- ▶ Approximately 29 acres of acquisition
- ▶ 23 property owners impacted includes NYS Parks & Town of Malta
- ▶ Potential full property acquisition
 - ▶ Preferred by property owner to partial acquisition
 - ▶ Appraisal performed for programming costs
- ▶ Property acquisitions are facing opposition

NYSDOT/FHWA Meetings

- ▶ Met with NYSDOT on July 15th to discuss project impacts
 - ▶ NYSDOT suggested meeting with FHWA to determine if project qualifies as National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Categorical Exclusion (CATEX)
- ▶ Met with FHWA on July 31st to discuss project impacts
 - ▶ Based on significant property owner controversy, CATEX does not apply.
 - ▶ Environmental Assessment (EA) required
 - ▶ Entire trail must be examined in one document to avoid environmental segmentation
- ▶ Met with NYSDOT on August 19th to discuss the EA effort in further detail

Environmental Assessment (EA)

- ▶ The EA determines if a federal action has the potential to cause significant environmental effects.
- ▶ Generally, the EA includes a brief discussion of:
 - ▶ The purpose and need for the proposed action
 - ▶ Alternatives (as required by section 102(2)(E) of NEPA)
 - ▶ The environmental impacts of the proposed action and alternatives
 - ▶ A listing of agencies and persons consulted.
- ▶ Based on the EA, the following actions can occur:
 - ▶ If the FHWA determines the action will not have significant environmental impacts, the agency will issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).
 - ▶ A FONSI is a document that presents the reasons why the agency has concluded that there are no significant environmental impacts projected to occur upon implementation of the action.
 - ▶ If the EA determines the environmental impacts of a proposed Federal action will be significant, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is prepared.
- ▶ Once EA scope is determined, supplemental agreement will be developed between GPI and Saratoga County

EA Process/Next Steps

- ▶ Meet with FHWA/NYSDOT to discuss next steps and scope
- ▶ GPI develops Pre-Initiation Package (3 to 6 months)
- ▶ Interested/Involved Agency Outreach (1 month)
- ▶ Public Outreach (Varies, 2-3 months)
- ▶ EA (1 year from initiation to determination)
 - ▶ Draft EA
 - ▶ Final EA

Capital Expenditures

- ▶ Current Federal Funding
 - ▶ PIN 1762.43 - \$500,000 (Design Only - All Segments)
 - ▶ PIN 1762.58 - \$1,873,000 (Construction & Inspection - Segments 1 & 2)
- ▶ Current County Allocated Funding
 - ▶ \$1,500,000
 - ▶ Allocated for right-of-way administration, acquisition, design, and construction
 - ▶ \$310,000 Design (Match & Right-of-way)
- ▶ Spent to date
 - ▶ \$342,000 (as of August 2024)
- ▶ Estimated total cost \$14,454,800
 - ▶ Funding shortfall \$10,221,880

Capital Expenditures

► Submitted Capital Expenditures

<u>Project/Equipment</u>	<u>Total Estimated County Cost</u>			
	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026</u>	<u>2027</u>	<u>2028</u>
Zim Smith Trail Northern Extension				
<i>Segment 1 & 2 Construction</i>		-\$927,000.00		
<i>Segment 3 Construction</i>			-\$2,973,600.00	
<i>Segment 4 Construction</i>				-\$4,635,680.00
<i>Segment 5 Construction</i>				-\$873,600.00
<i>Design & Property Acquisition Process Funds</i>	-\$300,000.00	-\$300,000.00	-\$37,000.00	-\$40,000.00
<i>Property Acquisition Costs (sans Betor)</i>	-\$50,000.00		-\$125,000.00	-\$575,000.00
<i>Betor Full Acquisition and Relocation</i>	-\$935,000.00			
<i>Saratoga County Capital Outlay</i>	\$935,000.00	\$615,000.00		
Total Funds Expended	\$2,220,000.00	\$1,842,000.00	\$3,135,600.00	\$6,124,280.00
Shortfall	-\$350,000.00	-\$612,000.00	-\$3,135,600.00	-\$6,124,280.00