
GITCHI-GAMI TRAIL ASSOCIATION

January 10, 2018, 10:00am
Minnesota DNR Parks & Trails Offices – Conference Room
1568 County Hwy 2, Two Harbors, MN 55616



*meeting notes and documents will be posted at: www.ardc.org/ggta

WELCOME

1. Welcome & Introductions

In attendance were: Bruce Martinson (Vice President), Chad Pierson (Treasurer, by conference phone line), Dan Cruikshank (Board Member), Rod Garver (Board Member), Ginny Storlie (Cook Co. Commissioner), Michelle Pierson (GGTA and ARDC), Kevin Johnson (MnDNR), Ward Wallin (MnDNR), Terry Hukriede

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

1. President's/Vice President's report

- Agenda and 11-1-2018 Meeting Summary were approved

2. MnDNR Report

- **Specialist position update:** Kevin Johnson and Ward Wallin mentioned that the GGTA letter of support to encourage the DNR to fill Mark Rudningen's former position was beneficial and resulted in posting a position opening in December. 94 applicants submitted applications. MnDNR HR narrowed down applications based on the required and preferred qualifications and sent 25 applications to the Two Harbors DNR staff to review for interviews. Nine candidates will be interviewed on February 1, 2019.
- **Ski Hill Road/Hwy 61 property acquisition:** Before Mark Rudningen left his post, he began, with GGTA support, to fill out the necessary proposal forms for the state to look into purchasing a 6 acre parcel from Scott Harrison. The proposal has left the Two Harbors office for state level review. Kevin Johnson said he'd check in with Kent Skaar regarding the status of this application. It was mentioned that this particular property resonated with Erika Rivers and Phil Leversedge when they were on the North Shore for the Beaver Bay ribbon cutting and they encouraged the MnDNR Two Harbors office to seek property acquisition. More about design projects in Lutsen will be discussed in the Exec. Director report.
- **Grand Marais to Cut Face update:** MnDNR has hired Red Stone Construction for installation of the bridge portion of the Grand Marais to Cut Face segment of trail. The trail project itself will go out for bids in late January, with the intent to award by March. A small tree removal contract may go out separately for preparation during the timeframe permissible to remove the trees between 4 and 6 inch diameter as required for the northern long-eared bat protections.
- **Tofte South update:** The MnDNR is currently finalizing the Requested for Proposals (RFP) for the Design and construction administration of the remainder of the gap in the trail in Tofte, connecting the two termini. It is presently anticipated that a consultant contract should be executed in the next two months.

3. Executive Director's Report

- **Registration with Secretary of State:** Michelle Pierson submitted our online form to remain in good standing as a nonprofit with the State of Minnesota in December.
- **Lutsen Design Project, MLSCP STAR Grant:**

A meeting will be set soon for as a kick off for the Lutsen design projects. Project facilitator, Justin Otsea (ARDC) has set the kickoff meeting 6pm on February 6th. If you are interested in attending, please let Michelle Pierson know and she can get your contact info added to meeting notices communications.

As this process includes three components (1. Designing a wayside/trailhead at Ski Hill Road/Hwy 61, 2. Predesign of the GGST from current terminus at Ski Hill Road into the Town center of Lutsen, and 3. Town conceptual designs), we are looking for GGTA participation to provide input about the potential trailhead and trail predesign.

Some updates:

There is a group of four workforce housing units that are going up near Arrowhead Electric that will be important to tie to the trail. Mary Somnis will be attending design meetings. Find a link to the Four Directions Dwellings schematics here:

<https://www.1roofhousing.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Lutsen-Housing-Dev.-Civil-Signed-Plan-03232013.pdf>

LCCMR solicitation is open, with pre-submittal for staff review due by March 15, final applications due April 15. LCCMR does permit property acquisition, so this could be a way to fund acquisition at the Lutsen/Ski Hill Road/Hwy 61. Kevin Johnson mentioned this is on MnDNR's radar. We will look for an update about this from Kevin soon.

Find the LCCMR application and requirements here:

https://www.lccmr.leg.mn/proposals/2020/2020_lccmr_rfp.pdf

As part of discussion, Michelle Pierson brought printouts of segment 23 (find a copy attached) of the GGTA's 2016 Scoping document to review trail corridor alignment possibilities with the board ahead of the Lutsen design meetings to follow.

Looking a topographic map, alignment on the inland dotted line possibility could prove difficult to meet ADA standards of under 5% grade without switchbacks. Looking at the lakeside option could mean two highway crossings, which would add expense, though there is MnDOT property between the highway and Cty Rd 35. The solid yellow line on the map may represent the most practical and cost effective corridor. Some questions arose during the discussion:

- 1) How much right of way is in this corridor? It is often 50 or 75 feet on the inland side. Michelle consulted with Charlie Moore at ARDC who found a map of the Hwy 61 corridor. Pierson is also checking in with Bryan Anderson from MnDOT D1.
- 2) Parcels/Land Ownership. Charlie Moore does have access to the land ownership maps. And will help us develop a table of land owner names, and addresses. Please find a simplified parcel map attached (may have to zoom in to read the ownership

labels). There was a question about who owns the parcel to the east of Ski Hill Road north of Hwy 61 (opposite the current gravel lot) and that is owned by Lutsen Corporation (further investigation by Charlie Moore notices that the Lutsen Corporation may currently be owned by the descendants of George "Bub" Nelson.

3) From Zoning map, it looks like this parcel is 21 acres. It may be necessary to pursue a land split approval

3) A Question arose regarding the zoning of the potential trailhead/wayside location. Zoning map was found by Charlie Moore, and that parcel is zoned Resort-Commercial/Residential. As for allowable uses, this was found:

Sec. 4.17 RC/R Resort Commercial/Residential District

The principal purpose of the Resort Commercial/Residential (RC/R) District is to provide for the specific commercial activity of resorts, lodges, and outfitters. Residential uses and limited service oriented commercial uses are also allowed.

A. Permitted Uses:

1. Single family dwelling/manufactured home.
2. Hotels, motels, resorts, resident camps, bed and breakfast homes, boarding and lodging homes, tourist homes and similar accommodations for short term rental.
3. Canoe and trail outfitters.
4. Grocery, restaurants, laundromats, general stores, gasoline sales, gift shops, marine sales and service, bait sales (where part of an established resort or lodging facility).
5. Accessory uses.
6. **Public and private parks, playgrounds and recreational areas.**
7. Bed and breakfast homes.
8. Vacation Rental Home.

- Outreach and communications updates
 - Newsletter was successful, many donations came in
 - We will need to reorder envelopes with our next printing
 - USBRS contacted us about someone's USBR41 trip
 - May like to include a piece about volunteer opportunities in our Spring Newsletter- in a discussion about signage, it was noted that MnDNR has a large quantity (maybe up to 300?) of the plastic green wayfinding trail marker signs in their possession. It was noted that many of the signs are faded. Replacing all the faded the signs could be a great volunteer project.
 - The IRRRB's Culture and Tourism grant application period is coming up. Events are mostly not eligible, but we could look at a general marketing campaign to look at wider audiences (covers: tourism and recreational activities, hospitality and customer service training, marketing and promotion to new audiences and improvements to quality of life.) —See lists of eligible and ineligible projects here:
https://mn.gov/irrb/assets/FY19%20Culture%20and%20Tourism_tcm1047-348387.pdf

- Spokengear Yard Sale: Save the Date – May 18th, 2019
- BikeMN Advocacy Day: Thursday, February 28, 2019 – this year Michelle Pierson has a meeting conflict and cannot attend. Can others attend?
<http://www.bikemn.org/events/event/714>
- Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota - the GGTA is a Friends group under the P&TC. They are looking at doing 4 regional training sessions this year—have not yet learned if they still plan a spring advocacy day at the Capitol.
- MnDOT planners were unable to attend this meeting, but asked to pass along that MnDOT District 1 recently hired another planner. Maren Webb will be serving in that capacity. Maren has experience with the Gitchi-Gami from her previous post working for Cook County Moving Matters and via the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership out of the Sawtooth Mountain Clinic in Grand Marais. Maren has a lot of experience with active transportation.

4. Treasurer's Report

- Please see attached
- Questions? Please check in with Chad at pierson.chad@gmail.com

5. ARDC Report

- Paved Trail Study – a project that was partially funded by a MLSCP Coastal grant has been published. Copies of an infographic with key study findings was distributed (see attached). Learn more and view the document here.
<https://ardc.org/pavedtrailstudy/>

The Cook County News Herald did publish a short piece based on findings from the report which you can view here: <https://www.cookcountynews-herald.com/articles/paved-trail-economic-impact-assessment-released/>

- Two Harbors Transportation Plan – updates --
<https://ardc.org/twoharbortransportationplan/> - Meeting on 1/07, 30+ in attendance, draft presented
<http://ardc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Hwy-61-Meeting-2-Presentation-01072019-red.pdf>

6. Other Business

- Bruce Martinson called to the attention of the group that new tax savings were to be experienced in 2019 for resorts with a 1c or 4-C and 4-C1 designation could experience significant tax savings per year if the property abuts a state trail administered by the Minnesota Department of Natural resources. This may be an important tool for the assistance in acquiring right of way or easements:

<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/273.13>

NEXT MEETING: Date: Thursday, March 14, 2019 Location: TBD