



**Friends of SMARTrails
Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 10, 2025
Kaleva Community Center
6:00 PM**

Board Members Present: Rob Carson, President; Zachary Pawlowski, Vice President; Linda Cudney, Secretary; Bonnie Brown, Dave Myers, Claire Richard, Mark Coe.

Board Members Absent: Jacque Erdman, Elaine Gibbs.

Guests: Sara Herberger, Brian Allen, Aime' Merizon (Community Outreach Specialist SEEDS)

- I. **Call to Order** Meeting called to order by Rob Carson, president at 6:00 PM. Introductions were made for Board members and guests.
- II. **Consent Agenda** It was motioned and supported to accept the consent agenda after adding Sara Herberger under New Business. AIF. Motion carried.
 1. **February 10, 2025 Board Minutes**
Motioned by Zach, supported by Claire to accept the minutes from the February 10, 2025 meeting. AIF. Motion Carried.
 2. **Treasurers Report and Payment of Bills:** Jacque sent copies of the Treasurers report in her absence. Total money in the account is \$9,822.25, with MCCF money \$4,130.18, FCU Share Account \$18.60 and Filer Credit Union Account \$5,673.47. Rob will have to sign off on Pro Web. No bills at this time. Treasurers report was accepted.
- III. **New Business :**
 1. **Present idea of Trail from Casino to Chief to County Rec Commission**
Lots of discussion on this to possibly present to County Recreation Commission. Also, the MDOT US-31 corridor was discussed. There is also the Betsie Valley Trail to Kaleva, plus the trail from Thompsonville to Interlochen. Need to get community engagement events, where all the players that are involved to get together. Networks Northwest is working on a joint master plan for Colfax Township and the Village of Thompsonville.
 2. **Fundraising Ideas**
Tabled until a future meeting.
 3. **Sara Herberger shared information about a "Walkability Action Institute",** where the goal of the project is to create a trained group of people who understand and

promote programs to enhance biking, walking and other transportation in rural areas, and building proposals for TAP (Transportation Alternatives Program) grant support. An Interdisciplinary Program will be formed and would like a SMART member as part of the team. There will be a conference in April for anyone interested in attending from SMART. Linda asked if there was a chance for a virtual attendance via zoom and Sara will check into it and will pass it on. The conference will be down state and the SMART group was wondering if someone from the group attended if we could reimburse them for mileage, etc. This would be a question to ask the Treasurer.

IV. Old Business

1. EDA Update

Rob stated the EDA is waiting on the DNR and Title Certification, and working with a new person (John Owens). The group is wondering if the funding is frozen with all the changes going on. The bridge construction over Bear Creek is a concern, as the estimate will be much higher because of being steel and the tariffs. If there is added cost for the steel bridge, where will the extra funding come from? Rob will continue to contact all involved.

2. Trail Flip Chart of Manistee County Trails

Tabled until a meeting with Sammy Lukaskiewicz from the Manistee County Tourism Authority (formerly Manistee County Visitors Bureau). Mark will try and schedule some time with them.

3. Reports from other Trail Entities

Shoreline Cycling Club: Claire stated it was a good year and they received a large donation to purchase a snowmobile to groom trails at Big M for fat tire bikes. Skiing also was good at Big M.

Benzie Manistee Snowbirds: Mark reported snowmobile season is winding down, being blessed with a successful season and no major mishaps. End of the season gathering will be April 26, 2025 at the clubhouse, to show appreciation to all who made it a successful season. Regular meetings are the first Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Snowbirds clubhouse.

Dirtbirds: Mark also reported that Tim Knoper of the Dirtbirds has moved up to Kaleva. The Dirtbirds are appreciative of "Letters of Support" from the Townships and Villages for support of the Dirtbirds. Ideas of pursuing a county-wide ORV Ordinance.

V. Other Business

1. Recreation Commission Update

- a. Linda thanked Claire and Mark for attending the County Recreation Commission, as she was out of town. Clair gave an update on SMART.
- b. Mark gave an update on the Snowbirds.
- c. Mr Knoper gave an update on the Dirtbirds.
- d. Dave Jarvi completed the grant application for the Lifejacket grant.
- e. Ms Trisch gave the board a copy of the plans and drawings for the Dickson Township bathroom facility, for Recreation Commission members to look at on ideas for the Kaleva Trailhead and Bathroom Facility.
- f. Wayne Beldo is seeing Letters of Support for funding for the Kaleva Trailhead from John Roth & John Moolenaar, our State reps.
- g. Katie Gruenberg and Mr Stoneman explained a collaborative plan (still in initial phases of discussion) allowing MAPS and City of Manistee to optimize lands that align with the needs of the schools and community, i.e. Jefferson School property to the county land bank, which should have 6-10 buildable lots) and MAPS will take ownership of Sands Park.

h. Paul Petrovich is the new County Road Commission member of the County Recreation Commission.

2. Social Media

This is a work in progress. Claire will have more information at the next meeting.

3. Summit Goal

Tabled but keeping it on the agenda

VI. Board Members Comments/Correspondence

1. Tent, etc is ready to be picked up per Zach. Rob will pick it up.
2. Website is fixed. Now using Microsoft 365 Non Profit.
3. Linda will be attending the TARP (Thompsonville Area Revitalization Project in April) in April.

VII. Adjourn. Motioned and supported to adjourn at 7:30 PM.

Next meeting on Monday, April 14, 2025 in Kaleva at the Community Center.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by:

**Linda Cudney, Secretary
Friends of SMARTrails**

