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Town of Chester Townwide Recreation Plan Project Advisory Committee Meeting Notes - February 26, 2014

In Attendance: Fred Monroe, Edna Wells, Craig Leggett, Barbara Thomas, Curtis Austin, , Don Butler, Mike McClure, Wayne LaMothe, Tracey Clothier, Jackie Hakes.

1. Introductions

2. Review of Overall Project Description

Wayne LaMothe from Warren County Planning Department explained that the grant for this project was obtained from NYSDOS through Warren County's First Wilderness Heritage Corridor program. Since this is a 50/50 match program, the Town will contribute additional funds for a total project cost of \$50,000. Volunteer time will be utilized as part of the match.

The project is described as the preparation of a town recreation plan that includes the following elements:

- Analyze population trends and assess the need for future recreational facilities;
- Inventory existing recreational facilities;
- Propose enhancements and areas suitable for future development of new recreational facilities;
- Provide concept plans and alternative designs; and
- Provide implementation strategies for proposed site improvements and facilities.

The Work Program with specific tasks and schedule are attached.

The project will First Wilderness Heritage Corridor is a regional plan that ties the Hudson River communities of Corinth, Hadley, Stony Creek, Thurman, Chester, Warrensburg, and Johnsbury together to celebrate their shared Adirondack riverfront history.

3. Discussion of Work Plan and Meetings

There are a total of 4 committee meetings scheduled plus 3 meetings involving the public. The group recommended inviting Bernie McCann from the school and Don Butler from the Tri-Lakes Business Alliance and Mindy Convey from the Town's Recreation Department to be members of the committee. Representatives from the hunting, fishing, and boating community should also be on the committee.

A discussion of how to best involve the public in the process ensued. It was decided that only 2 meetings would be necessary for working with the public and that the first meeting involving the



This project is funded through the New York State Department of State with funds provided under Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund.

public would be better scheduled after the inventory and proposed projects was completed to the draft stage. This task in the NYSDOS Work Program would be substituted for focused interviews with community partners to identify resources and priority projects. Potentially, a survey would be developed to assist in information gathering. DOS will be contacted to see if the Work Program could be revised to accommodate this task.

Keeping the public informed and involved is of prime importance to the committee. Strategies will include utilizing the town website, developing short newsletters about the project, and placing maps at the town hall and chamber for people to mark up and provides comments. To build interest in the community, social media will be utilized to the greatest extent possible. Press releases will be utilized to announce the project and public meetings. Other team member, Mary Jean Packer will assist with the design of communication methods and signage recommendations.

4. Inventory and Assessment of Recreational Resources

The Committee reviewed the townwide map and identified recreational resources including snowmobile and ATV trails utilizing a handout indicating known recreation areas and a common set of information for each (handout attached). The following remarks outline the group's findings:

General Remarks

- Recreation in Chester adds to the quality of life and both retains and attracts residents
- Consider connections to new route of North Country Scenic Trail (Montana to Crown Point)
- Will trail to Tahawus also be an opportunity?
- Gore Mountain-more mountain bike trails under development
- How could this plan coordinate with Scenic Train?
- School kids must cross Route 8 and use Dynamite Hill trails for cross-country
- Look at Northeast Kingdom bike destination in Vermont
- Look at Stewart State Mountain Bike Trails in Newburg
- Research how to utilize snowmobile club trails; could town be a partner and use MOU agreement?
- Show local and regional connector trails and recreation points outside Chester boundaries
- Private recreation points/areas should be identified on map. Some are semi-public and may want to be partners

Identification and Assessment of Recreation Points on Map

- Add existing canoe access South Horicon Bridge at Schroon River
- Add Town-owned 45 acres behind Town Hall; review potential for trails and potential issue with nearby gun range
- Review status and potential of Finch parcel south of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) parcel between the Hudson River and Lake George Wild Forest parcel; Ice meadows on both sides of Hudson River owned by TNC



- Check Draft Lake George Wild Forest Unit Management Plan for recommendations for NYS parcels in Chester
- Add snowmobile trails to map
- Identify where there are Warren County trails on Finch lands
- Identify North Country Trail from Indiana Lake to Minerva and Newcomb; new version of National Scenic Trails Map show it coming into Chester
- Keep Steve Ovitt in the loop as to what Johnstown is doing with trail development
- Review potential for Rails To Trails funding since Warren County owns 200 feet of ROW and Iowa Pacific is amenable
- Identify parcel and uses on Loon Lake Town Park; car top boat launch?
- Identify Pack Forest connections
- Identify Whitewater Derby resources along Hudson (Class 11, 111 rapids); Site of state whitewater championships
- Identify uses in the 3 sections in Chester that make up Vanderwacker Mountain Wild Forest
- Review Scaroon Manor Unit Management Plan for permitted uses
- Indicate Private campgrounds
- Identify horseback riding areas
 - Dude ranch near Friends Lake
 - Chester Farm (thoroughbred) west of Friends Lake
 - Circle B
 - Loon Lake Park-horseback riding-(Andy Beadnell/owns place in Horicon)
 - Scaroon Manor
- Provide trail connection to Pottersville; would need stream crossing permit and need bridge to connect; TNC interested in a boardwalk through this area
- Show playground and basketball court and town-owned lands in Pottersville
- Starbuckville Dam Park is a good fishing spot
- Schroon River used for tubing
- Identify private zip line and adventure course (Adirondack Extreme-Bolton Landing)
- Show all bike loops identified by Warren County Safe Quality Bicycling Organization particularly around Brant and Friends Lake
- Identify all single-track mountain bike trails at Dynamite Hill; there is room for expansion
- Could a section of Dynamite Hill be allocated for mountain biking as well?
- Show designated ATV routes on Igerna and Perry roads (private land); could there be a designated trail area for ATVs; potentially within Northway corridor due to noise issues
- Friends Lake has no public access; put in plan to continually seek town access should property come up for sale



- Peckham's has a mine reclamation plan; does it involve trails; Look at potential for "Qualified Abandoned Town Road" use from Friends Lake through Peckham to Rt. 9)
- Ferris Road continues into Sullivan Pond which is now for sale; is there potential for the town to purchase
- Identify Trout Brook beach and canoe launch in Pottersville)
- Identify Gambles Road Park known as "Gambles Beach"
- Identify hunting resources and hunting Leases for landowners-mix of private/public
- Identify DEC Conservation Easements
- Identify recreational resources at Word of Life
- Identify site for new playground
 - Put south of cemetery
 - Town Hall
 - Do we need 2 playgrounds? Needs to be visible
- Consider concentrating fields, etc. where other destination are (school, Dynamite Hill, Town Hall)
- Shortage of baseball Little League field
- Fishing opportunities are plentiful
- ADA compliant trails are needed
- Consider fitness trail at some location
- Identify trails at Natural Stone Bridge Caves and Friends Lake Inn
- Indicate rail on west side of Hudson River and depot location

Next Steps

Tracey will communicate with individuals representing interested and involved parties.

Meeting Date for Next Committee to follow

Inventory and Analysis Map to be completed