

Minutes

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY PARKS COMMISSION

Thursday, March 25, 2021, 4:00 p.m.

Meeting held by Virtual Zoom technology and Live streamed on County Facebook page

Members Present: Judy Hunt, John Hemmer, Tom Erlandson, Bob Franzen, Steve Sandberg, Jacob Bodway

Members Absent: Martha Anderson, Marla Connelly

Others Present: Brad Bentley, Kathy Tampio, Bob Dando, Carrie McCausland

The meeting was called to order by Judy Hunt at 4:07 p.m.

Acknowledgement of Guests and Topics Discussions

Tom Erlandson: Bob, we have two new members here today, Carrie McCausland and Bob Dando.

Bob Franzen: Okay.

John Hemmer: We going to allow our two new members to say Hi and?

Judy Hunt: I guess it just has to wait 30 days, right?

John Hemmer: Yeah, we did do a discussion item in our Public Facilities meeting concerning the Administrative Code and amendments that would include also the amendments for the Parks Commission. What came out of that is several different additions or changes to the draft that they've got that they had going. So, hopefully then that will go back to law and the Law Department will give us a final copy on that or a final draft I guess. I think that's the way I understood it anyway. Brad, is that, I see you're on, is that the way you understood it?

Kathy Tampio: Mr. Hemmer, if I may interject. I have officially received that Code amendment from the County Executive. After the 30 days it will be effective April 23rd. So we would be able to appoint the two members upon this Parks Commission recommendation at the April 28th legislature meeting.

John Hemmer: Okay, that is if we nominate them tonight.

Kathy Tampio: Yes.

John Hemmer: Okay, that sounds good.

Judy Hunt: Carrie and Bob, be assured that your input is welcome whether you are official or not. We take all advice.

John Hemmer: So, it's Carrie McCausland and Robert Dando, right? Those would be the two?

Judy Hunt: Carrie, is there anything you would like to share?

Carrie McCausland: I don't think anything in particular. Thanks for having me and if anybody doesn't know I live in Portland right along the rail trail. I used to be on the board for the Chautauqua County Rails to Trails program. That's probably about it for excitement.

Judy Hunt: We welcome your input.

Tom Erlandson: I want to comment on Carrie's email address which is very clever and very descriptive. Would you tell them what it is Carrie please?

Carrie McCausland: Well it's our farm name which is Ironvine that we have. My husband is a full-time grape farmer so we have vineyards and just some field crop as well. We also do commercial horse boarding stable so the iron is the horseshoe and the vine is for the grapes. His family been farming in the area for multiple generations. We do a lot of outdoor activities and certainly a lot with trail riding and driving the horses around. So, thank you.

John Hemmer: All right. Then Robert, you've been to some of our meetings in the past right? You're I guess a veteran of the parks.

Bob Dando: Yes, I've been to a lot of the meetings for Worker's Memorial and I've found the meetings quite interesting. Back when I was doing something and I saw somebody who was on Dredge Ditch Road I just had to find them. Drive down that road, almost fell into the ditch. I pulled over and I thought I'd get a better view walking on the shoulder. Turns out it's only like 5 feet from the road. If I took another step I would have ... That was interesting listening to some of the background and history of the parks and trails that we update in this county. I've been hiking on a few of the trails. I don't know if we deal the portage trail but you need better markers on that. I got lost with my boy scouts. Fortunately I was familiar with it, so this way. I was going to follow up the creek this way and turns out it goes that way.

Minutes Review and Acceptance

Judy Hunt: Let's have a motion to accept the minutes that Kathy has sent to us please.

Bob Franzen: I presume everyone has got the minutes?

Jacob Bodway: I make a motion we accept the minutes.

Bob Franzen: Any corrections or anything?

Judy Hunt: I'll second it.

Bob Franzen: It's passed. Let's go.

Judy Hunt: Brad, I guess you're on.

Operations

Brad Bentley: Sorry I'm a one man show. I had just gotten back in the door. Everyone else is gone. Yes, we've got a lot of stuff going on.

Staffing – Bart Scheer is still on staff. We're still currently on winter shifts. Going on a couple weeks here. We're planning on hiring 3 seasonals this summer plus one of the road maintainers will come over to work for the parks. We expect to have the planned staffing we had last year but with COVID we didn't have.

Ongoing Tasks – We've ordered the front mount mower and John Deere tractor since we got the approval for the \$700 cost overruns for the two. Those should be here we're hoping no later than the end of April, hopefully sooner. Those should be coming to Bart to help him keep the maintenance up in the parks. The gatekeeper agreements are in the final stages of being executed so I want to thank Tom and whoever else was instrumental in getting our gatekeeper at Erlandson. That was very helpful because our alternatives were less than desirable I think at that point so those are in the process of being signed. I believe they are out in the mail to each of the individuals if not they will be soon thereafter.

Judy Hunt: You'll be able to check that off your list.

Brad Bentley: Yah, that was becoming more and more concerning the farther we got along. Thanks to everybody that helped getting that person to do it. The bench donation – I believe we finally made some progress on that after not getting the check for a little. We did get the check. The bench has been ordered. Sam didn't give me a delivery date but it might be a little bit late just because it took us a little bit longer to get the check. I'll have an update on that next month on the order status but I do believe it might extend out a little bit. We're still looking at the inventory for the equipment. The updated list, so that's still being worked on. I guess this can kind of be put under the completed tasks because it's on ongoing because it's not done. We did issue the Erlandson Park timber harvest RFP. That was done by Forecon. That went out I think he said earlier this week or late last week. So what's that going to do is harvest part of the park and then also help clearing the view of the Chautauqua Lake on the overlook side there. So Rick Constantino indicated that timber prices have come back on some of the species so he's hopeful that we're going to get some better pricing than we originally thought when we took the tour out in the park in the first place. So I'm expecting some good bids in there. It's not going to be a lot of money but again that money is going to the parks capital. Whatever is left. At Erlandson we have received a request for a sunrise service at Erlandson Park. I believe this was done by a church that pre-COVID had been there a number of times that we did. I've gotten approval from the County Executive and talked to the Department of Health to get their input on the gathering up there. What the requirements are. So at this point it appears they are going to hold the service up there for Sunday service but they have to have a safety plan in place filed with New York Forward. I've received a copy of it. They have to adhere to some very strict

guidelines as far as social distancing and what they adhere to and they are basically taking full responsibility to adhere to those guidelines. So it's a very, it's a strict process that needs to be gone through to have that gathering. I believe they are planning on it but I haven't seen the paperwork that they're absolutely going to do it. I think that's where they're at. Bart will be opening up the park for them for that Sunday and then closing it up on that same Sunday. I received County Executive approval for the overtime that's required for that. Five year capital plan – we're putting that together that's actually the sheets are due today. I might take an extra day reading from the sheets from our department and I think I'll have a better description of that for next month when we're submitted. I think we're looking at trying other plans for improving the trails similar along the lines what Jacob is trying to do. Do the maintenance as Jacob's trying to improve the stuff on the state forest land. Do something similar to our side so it's not just the state forest land, there's other systems so we're trying to put this together, some requests for some money as well as maybe waiting for some grant dollars for the bathroom. Leveraging some of the dollars that we have out there as well. There may be some money out there through the CARES Act stuff. So, we're really trying to put our heads together to find out what we can ask for and try and get as much money where we can for the parks. We're really trying to dig deep into other people's pockets I guess. Bart's continued the maintenance of the equipment in preparation for the summer season so he should be hitting the parks pretty hard. The state guidance seems to be changing daily, weekly, hourly, whatever you want to call it as far as gatherings. I'm paying attention to the City of Jamestown, how they're opening, what they're guidance is. As of right now I don't plan on opening the bathrooms but if we get some words about not having to have daily cleaning of the bathrooms, that's really my biggest concern. Making sure that the CDC guidance says daily cleaning of the bathrooms required, that's a cost that's not in our budget right now. So that's a little bit of an issue. I'm going to try and look for ways to open them, but I do have to watch the guidance and the cost associated with that. I'm sure whatever I've said today will change by the time we get to the parks opening because New York State is probably going to change their guidance. I'll do the best I can to keep it in line with what they are requiring.

Completed Tasks - I think it was you guys that discussed that. I do want to shout out to the legal department, especially Steve Abdella for really putting the pen to paper for the Administrative Code changes, not just for getting the nine members for the Parks Commission but the other outdated information for the DPF that also needed to be rewritten. A big shout out to Steve and thank him for getting that over the finish line there. We did receive the approval, sorry John I'm going to, did you want me to give this or steal your thunder. Well we did get the approval for the increase in the cost of the capital equipment for the mower and the tractor.

2021 Budget – Operating Budget – you can see the figures. No real surprises on any of those. The equipment has been expensed in the capital account. I'm still trying to figure out a plan for the Luesnman bathroom. When do we start that, that's kind of part of what I've asked Justin Rater to do in the engineering department here to take a look at additional dollars if something, some of those dollars are for water, sewer and broadband infrastructure. Certainly the bathroom would qualify under water and sewer so I don't know if we're going to fit within some of those guidelines but it could be an opportunity to increase the amount we have or decrease the amount that comes out of the parks capital. We're really taking a hard look at that to see if the time allocated to pause this, a better way of doing it. That's my report. Any questions? For a Robert and Carrie, I'm the director of Public Facilities. So it's nice to meet you and welcome aboard.

Judy Hunt: Hopefully we can meet in person sometime but who knows when.

Brad Bentley: I think you know, John, I don't know, have they had any talks in the legislature about having in-person meetings again?

John Hemmer: So far, no. As far as I know its Zoom, all Zoom.

Kathy Tampio: Chairman Chagnon informed me yesterday that we are going to do April meetings definitely by Zoom and then we'll have to determine May.

Judy Hunt: Bob and Carrie, we have nice picnic meetings sometimes so hopefully you'll look forward to doing that. Well, what's next on the agenda there Bob?

Legislation

Bob Franzen: John, can we hear a little bit about our legislature. I've heard a little bit about it but let's hear a little bit more we can come up with. I know a fella talked to you about our beaver dam situation up there on Titus Road now. (*Inaudible- cross talk*) and I know he talked to you but ...

John Hemmer: Yes, Mr. Pescatore (?), he said he's a hiker and he's done a lot on the, I think it's on the east side of the overland trail and he was going to do the west side trail and he found that there's an online hiking community I guess that gave him a report that says that there's a beaver dam problem that's flooding partially the trail, at least partially, and so he just asked what was being done about it. Actually volunteered his services. He said, *I can go out there and shoot beavers*. But at any rate I spoke with Mr. Bentley and a trapper has been engaged, hired to do some trapping there and had some success. Is that true Mr. Bentley?

Brad Bentley: Well a bit of an exception. He wasn't actually hired. He just does it out of his, a hobby I guess he has the right permits to go out and trap the beaver. You do have to have the right permits. But he has the right permits to trap. He was out in the woods to trap the beavers and he was trying to get to one of the flooded areas out on the overland trail and he wasn't sure he was in the right place so I got a call over to Keith Carrow to kind of get him over there. I've not heard if he's been successful but even if you trap the beavers if you don't get them all they just come back. We've tried to dismantle but they will rebuild your work in about a couple of hours. So it's really some of a long term solution that Jacob's working on. Rerouting some of those trails that will ultimately be the real long term solution. We at least had someone out there willing to try help us get to the beavers and see if we can get them trapped.

Bob Franzen: When he called me there he told me that he had a volunteer but I said I'd have to have him talk to Keith Carrow first, being something to do with the state and that type thing and that in the meantime we had talked to John. By the time he got back to me it was all over the place so I, we'll wait till today and see what we come up with it.

Brad Bentley: Yah, you have to have the right permits. I mean if you have the right permits I don't think you have to talk to Keith to trap a beaver. Just need the right permits. But

if you want to try and get to where we need them I think Keith would be an excellent resource. Maybe Jacob, you could probably pinpoint them a little bit on some of that because I know that you're familiar with some of those spots as well.

Tom Erlandson: I have a question for Carrie because of her experience with Rails to Trails. Has Rails to Trails ever encountered beaver problems and if so, how have you dealt with it?

Carrie McCausland: That's funny because when he said Titus Road I had a feeling where that was going. Yes, I haven't been on the board for a few years now, but there have been concerns with beaver on a couple different sections of the trail. It was Joe Finch that usually dealt with it. I know it was a similar situation, had to get the permits and usually somebody came in and I don't know if anybody ever successfully got any of the beaver but it was a similar attempt for the Rail Trails.

John Hemmer: So it sounds like it's pretty much an ongoing problem. No easy solution even if you get the beavers trapped, getting the dam out of the way is a whole other problem so I don't know. Jacob, do any of your plans address the Titus Road area and that beaver dams situation or is a ...?

Jacob Bodway: It won't be till next year due to the grants because it will be the second phase. I know the area pretty well and there's not really good B routes. So my guess is building a bridge. Right now you have some two by fours there about this far off the water that kind of went across the pond but the beaver dams completely flooded it this far, two feet. So we built a raised up ridge that might help a little bit. That might be, I don't know how much a bridge will cost, maybe \$25,000-\$30,000. So that could be part of the phase II grant money. We could look for a reroute but it's inside of a bowl and there's no real good way to reroute it around that bowl. But, I'll keep my eyes open when we go down there this summer.

Brad Bentley: When I talked to Keith, John, if you just try and go in there and clean out part of the dam you're not going to be very successful because we've got all the beavers. If you trap all the beavers and you really take all the dam away and really you might stop them from doing it but you've got to get them all and really go in there with machine. I asked him if they allowed dynamite on there and I guess not. Liability and permits are a challenge.

John Hemmer: Too bad we can't build the trail over the top of the beaver dam. As long as its going to be there and they're happy to add to it. Can we use that as part of the trail? The top of the beaver dam or is that not possible?

Bob Franzen: The reason the trail went right beside it there is its part of the dyke. I haven't been up there recently but as years passed that was how they went across.

John Hemmer: Does that damming up that area cause problems or I don't know, farmers? Does it cause problems for any of our county roads or any state roads or anything like that? Is it just far enough away from the roads and bridges and stuff so that it doesn't make any difference to anything but the trails? Okay, well, maybe that's, maybe it's just going to be there and go around it I guess. Wait until the dry season...

Brad Bentley: I think Jacob might have a plan for that. We'll see where the grants come in on that. If not, then we'll have ongoing efforts to trap the beavers. If it gets dry enough eventually a machine might be able to get in there to start taking out the (inaudible) so it's an ongoing issue. I'm going to have it as a maintenance issue. It's part of just having a trail I guess.

John Hemmer: It sure sounds like it. As Mr. Bentley did say we did consider the additional money for the mower and the tractor and went through very easily and the Administrative Code is in the works. I guess that's about it for my report. Mr. Bentley, have you determined, is there going to be a scheduled opening date for the parks or is that going to be just waiting for the New York State most recent regulations?

Brad Bentley: Yes, so I think I may have mentioned this last time but I'll finalize it for this one. Our opening date looks to be May 8. That's that Saturday. We'll tell the gatekeepers to open on a daily basis. They'll just be opening up the gates in the morning, closing at dusk. As of the plan right now the bathrooms will remain closed. Probably a good reminder, Kathy, maybe I need to talk to you about updating the legislative pages. I might even put out a press release to kind of update the guidance based on what we know. I might give it another week or two just to see what changes come out of New York so I don't have to keep putting out new information. As of right now we still are not taking reservations for the parks. I think I'll need to talk that over maybe with the Department of Health and the County Executive to see if we want to start taking on some, generally the wedding groups, the wedding receptions or ceremonies. Whether we want to start accepting some or down the road given the progress of the vaccine. I guess I don't want to commit to anything yet for the reservations but I certainly want to enable as much as I can as soon as I can.

Bob Franzen: Did we decide then that Workers Day is going to be postponed until September? Or are we going to go at it the first week here of May?

Brad Bentley: Last I heard it was going to be postponed.

Bob Franzen: Okay, right.

Bob Dando: We are aiming for the 25th of September.

Bob Franzen: Okay, good.

Bob Dando: Because we have no idea if they are going to drop regulations before May at all and I doubt they will. I'm hoping by September, really.

Brad Bentley: Just to give you an example of the sunrise service stuff. Only families can be together otherwise you have to have adequate spacing. There's no shared materials, there's no food service. There's a lot of restrictions being put on that Sunday service. So the Workman's Day, that would probably restrict a lot of things that would happen on that day.

Tom Erlandson: Brad, just so you know the 2019 reservation list is still posted behind the glass on the pavilion up at Erlandson. So next time somebody's up there there's a key to that little box then maybe they could pull those old outdated reservations.

Brad Bentley: Sure, I expect that to be part of Bart's readiness campaign for each of the parks between now and May 8. I will make a note and make sure he gets that done.

John Hemmer. Okay, sounds good. I guess that's my report. We can move on.

Trail Development

Bob Franzen: Trail development. Are we out looking at anything new come up on through Sinclairville by way of Cockaign? That still hanging or is that something we are going to try and do?

Brad Bentley: Yes, we are still trying to do it and we went through a lot of fits and starts as you are well aware. Some of it to do with the Cockaign management. I believe we now have a new representative that we can talk to through Cockaign. Jamie Reynolds in our engineering office has met with some folks. The Bethany camp is still okay with us putting the trail through there. They want to make sure there's some separation of some of the trail from some of their housing units that are back there. But I don't know that we've made a lot of progress over the last month on ... some of it has to do with Cockaign, we've gone through some fits and starts as far as who's in charge over there and who's making the calls. Jacob, do you have any interaction with them as far as some of the trails over there?

Jacob Bodway: I spoke with them a little bit. I spoke with (?) a little bit but there hasn't been too much progress. They're trying to pick a lane, Cockaign, just haven't really figured out what they want to do with the property yet. I'm not sure if overlands are top on their agenda right now since it's not going to be a money generating endeavor for them. I think there's a good possibility by next year we should see something happen. I believe Justin was talking to them as well.

Brad Bentley: We're trying to find a way through there that helps us get off the road and up and behind it. We're trying to make some progress but like Jacob said they're trying to figure out how they are going to make their business, save their business. The trails are not high (*inaudible*), their critical component. We'll keep trying though Bob.

Bob Franzen: Very good. I got another little thing maybe we could include that in it are the Wegmans. They're set now with everything on the Wegmans trail? We got stuff markings and everything is all set we can go by way of?

Brad Bentley: The press release went out, the books are out. We gave a bunch to Bart to stash around. I think we're trying to set them up at tourist sites. All the markers are in posts are out in the trails. They are basically at the trail heads so you don't have to go hiking halfway through the woods to get them. You can actually just go visit the trail heads, but I didn't tell you that. They're pretty obvious. We didn't want to make it too hard for folks, but certainly

encourage them to get out. That way if a section of trail is closed in between you kind of at least get the ends and be able to get to fill the books.

Jacob Bodway: I have a couple of updates I can share if that's alright. I did meet on Monday with the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation about the \$15,000 grant to take the overland off the Whalen Memorial Forest road and move that into the woods. That was a really good meeting. I felt very positive when I got off the Zoom call with them so that's a good sign. They said my enthusiasm was contagious so hopefully that translates to money for the trails. I'm positive about that. They should have a decision pretty soon actually. This Friday we have a meeting with the Chautauqua Region Economic Development Corporation with Mark Geise. He is the main guy there. We have a meeting with a lot of stakeholders such as Brad will be there, Keith will be there, Matt Bourke will be there, Jim Fincher from the Rails to Trails, Missy Wittington from the Equestrians, the Cross Country Skier president, people from Trail Construction Associates and myself and I think a few other people. The Sheldon Foundation has some new grants that allow this different 501(c)3s coalesce under one umbrella organization and it would make things a lot easier for applying for grants. If we just worked kind of under one foundation or one organization instead of working in our own silos and applying for a grant separately. We're keeping updated on how we're working through some of the things in the Greenway Plan. So the grant from the Sheldon Foundation will help us hire attorneys, hire facilitators and consultants to kind of figure out ways that we can work as one unit. So that's something we will be discussing on Friday. Also I have questions about the waterway trails. Who owns them?

Bob Franzen: Well, it's probably all state waterways I would think.

Tom Erlandson: Are you talking about the actual waterway trail or are you talking about the launch points or both?

Jacob Bodway: The (*inaudible*) Cobb Waterway Trail.

Bob Franzen: I would think all water is under state. Getting to it would be property owners or county or wherever the launch sites are. So I would imagine waterways, because I used to know we would dig and cut. Sometimes we could not throw anything up off the waterway onto the bank because it was not considered the way to do it. It was a private land and it was in the water, let it float. By the time it got down to New Orleans don't worry about it.

Jacob Bodway: That's something else I want raise at the meeting tomorrow is trying to figure out a way to maybe hire a seasonal person to come through the waterway trail every year to remove the blow downs because part of the Sheldon grant would be a public-private partnership which means we could combine 501(c)3s doing the equestrians for the Rails to Trails with the Chautauqua County Public Facilities. And then we could all kind of work together to clean up the waterway trail since it's been neglected since 2007 from what I understand. There hasn't been a real concerted effort to do much clean-up for almost 15 years. So there's probably a lot of blow downs on there, especially with all the wind storms we've been having in the last few years. I'm sure it's pretty bad. So I'm trying to get some money to maybe hire a seasonal to go down there every other year and just clear out the waterways. And Brad has kind of been on board with that. Keith is on board with that too. It's just about finding the money right now. I

think I can probably do that. Also I had a call from Linda at the Sheldon Foundation and unfortunately I had to lower my grant request for the kiosks from \$55,000 to \$20,000. They though \$55,000 was a little high just because they are a mid-level foundation. I'm going to try to see how many kiosks that can get built for \$20,000 which will probably be a good bit. Then we will reapply next year for the final section of kiosks. I'll focus on installing kiosks at the major trail heads such as 474, the one on 430 right on the west side, the east side of the overland trail which is a major trail head over there. We also have developed a new Facebook page (*shared screen on Zoom*) called Chautauqua County Trails. It's got 154 members but once we kind of start to work a little bit more with the trail construction, we'll be posting some pictures, but I have some ideas about Hike Chautauqua, Path Chautauqua, Bike Chautauqua contests. People can post pictures, I just posted a bunch of maps. There's Harris Hill maps, there's the Cassadaga-Conawango Creek maps that you see on the west side overland. So I want to get the snowmobile maps up. I want to get the Equestrian maps up. Just to give people kind of an idea of all the resources we have. So this is kind of a new endeavor. It started a couple of weeks ago I'm working with some of the Rails to Trails people. I would like to publicize this a little bit more in the future when we get it up and running a little bit better. We also would like to work with the Google maps and try to get all the parking areas mapped out to the overland trails. Try to get the actual trail on the Google map and also have potential trail closures posted on a Google map. So those would be new kind of developments.

Brad Bentley: Jacob, go back to your waterway question. You and I have talked so this is my interpretation of waterways. I think it aligns a lot with what Bob said. The state owns the waterway because it's considered a navigable water. So even if the landowner, the creek is fully in the landowners property, since it's a navigable waterway, the water itself is considered state because no one can prevent someone from a canoe ride up and down the creek. However, once you go to the embankment, if a tree is fallen over and it's in the water, it's kind of like a branch over someone's neighbor's property, probably cut it at the trunk but you can't touch the shore which is also in alignment with what the DEC wants. They would like the trims to be left on the bank to provide for erosion control, habitat for wild life and fish. So the fact that if it's laying in the water we can cut it up, float it down the river. If someone wants it I guess we could work with the landowner if not, we can take it (*inaudible*) spot. Kind of what I was thinking along the same lines, since it's state owned, it's not county owned there's no volunteer agreement that has to be set up with the county. Anybody can go out there and do that as long as they have the permission of the DEC or at least coordinated with the DEC which is reaching out to Keith. Keith has reached out to some of his counterparts and he's trying to get some guidance on what you should and shouldn't do out there. We want to make sure someone is trained with a chainsaw on a boat. We want to make sure they some good skill sets. Otherwise you are going to lose a lot of equipment in the water. You also don't want someone getting hurt out there. But from a liability standpoint since it's not county property I'm kind of out of the mix. It's maybe a good thing from a volunteer effort, but I was thinking whether it was large log jams or something like that (*inaudible*). Jacob could take care of some of the small stuff that might afford some time to go after the big stuff and we could put forth an effort to really make a difference out there with the access to the waterway trail. I want to work with Jacob and the money and volunteers he gets to get the waterways much needed attention.

Jacob Bodway: Keith shot me an email. He's looking to try to find grant money for chainsaw certification. The Game of Logging does that every 3 or 4 years. They come through

and I like to try to get as many people certified through the Game of Logging, whether it's on the Rails to Trails, just volunteers who might be interested in helping on the overland trails. The waterway might be another potential source because for DEC land you would have to have the Game of Logging certification in order to use a saw on any DEC land. That might be a potential thing. I can get out there a little bit this summer but I think if I get the grants I'll be on the overland trails. Very much of all my free time I'm volunteering to help out with the Trail Construction Associates. I just don't really trust myself in the water yet with the chainsaw. I do have certification but I'm still trying to figure out on land. The water might be a little bit trickier.

Bob Franzen: I think up until just a year ago Bart and somebody went up and down through there every year and back when we first started in the 80's we had myself and a crew and we did that every summer. One end of the creek to the other. We started at south Stockton and we ended up all the way down to state line. We jumped off on the Conawango but we had a crew to do it. And that's what we did every year. I think up until probably a year ago Bart has been on the creek someplace every summer. But I don't think there's anything when he said that it's been years and years, they had been on the creek, yes.

Jacob Bodway: I don't know if Bart is able to do that this summer. I'd be willing to help out. I don't think one person should be in charge of all that. I was out there two summers ago. I put in a, I can't remember, it's by Stockton, it's over by Sinclairville, I'm sorry.

Bob Franzen: Red Bird Corners.

Jacob Bodway: Yeah, and it was bad. I had to get out of my canoe constantly to dodge around trees and ...

Bob Franzen: It's that way all the down through, from there on in that long stretch. Where you get down to 380 where the lean-tos are. Bad stretch, been that way for years and years and years. I don't know how to put it any other way. Winds around down, cuts back and kicks in the butt coming back again. It's such a turn around there that, that that's what happens there.

Judy Hunt: Bob, didn't you post part of that as non-navigable a couple of years ago?

Bob Franzen: Yes, part of it was, yes.

Jacob Bodway: That's all I have over on this end on the trails.

Tom Erlandson: In fact, we were discussing this a few years ago on the commission and there was some discussion, I don't recall any action, but there was certainly discussion about eliminating the Cassadaga, or at least much of it from our waterway trail system. Certainly not publicizing for the reasons that Bob...

Bob Franzen: There again you'd have to have somebody to start trying to take a boat down through if you go all the way down from launch point to launch point and see. Maybe it

was cleaned out enough where you could get all the way down through. But now I don't know how it is.

Brad Bentley: I don't know if the spring run-off has changed anything. We've had some strong storms and then the run-off. That always changes things and move down to this point. Maybe with Jacob's help he could get some money and certainly we could try and work with them as best we could with whatever budget we have. The Parks budget is pretty lean and mean.

Bob Franzen: It's been such a thing over the years that I've been on that before when we started (*inaudible*) cornfield when water runs over you don't even know where you are because of the back waters there.

John Hemmer: Is that all still on our internet as being all part of the waterway trail? Do we have anything on there saying that it's at least partly, if not impassable, hard to, tough to use the waterway trail or do we put any disclaimers on there I guess that's what I'm asking?

Brad Bentley: We have the old maps but I don't know if there is any disclaimers on it. I think as anything when you go hike and walk in the woods there's a default, you're on there on your own risk. We make no warranties as to conditions out there because they are constantly changing. You could have a bad storm and you could wash out a bridge, wash out a whatever, it could be obstructions. You can go out and clean up the creek one day and the next day it storms and it can go right back in. It's one of those things that's hard to do a constant condition assessment because we don't have the capabilities to monitor all the areas. So I don't know if there are any asterisks on the map.

Jacob Bodway: This Red Bird section right here, south is where you are talking about, right Bob? It's kind of winding.

Bob Franzen: Out in back, there's no way to get in there through it. You have to start at Red Bird and really go south.

Jacob Bodway: All the way to Kimble Stand?

Bob Franzen: Well, Miller Road where we used to get off but there's a spot by route 60.

Jacob Bodway: I could try doing this section this summer. My wife could come with me in case I chop off my arm. My wife can at least come with me. I could maybe talk to Keith and getting a volunteer stewardship agreement for the waterway here, but I'm an avid kayaker and I would love to get out and be able to kayak this and not have to portage around trees constantly. If I have some time this summer I think this might be a fun little project to maybe do. It's 7 and a half miles, or 5 miles so it's quite a long stretch.

Tom Erlandson: Some of you remember that when Tom Dawes was on our commission two years ago, he and Martha Anderson flew the waterway in Cassadaga and I believe the Conawango and took pictures. Back when Google Earth still enabled you to pick the season, I don't think it does that anymore, but I was able to cruise the Cassadaga on Google Earth in the winter and fall when the leaves were not on the trees. It's a very very difficult stretch, it's

always been a difficult stretch. If you go back to the early days of Chautauqua County, became a county in 1811, people would dry to boat from Cassadaga all the way down to Warren and beyond and the Cassadaga was horrendous then and it's horrendous now. I really believe that we as a commission should consider, or reconsider, because we did a few years ago, eliminating the Cassadaga or at least the upper part from our waterway trails.

Bob Franzen: Well Jacob, you want to get together on that? We can get an idea on the spots where we used to go in and out which is on private land and that type. We always had a good working relationship with the farms. People were there so we could get to the back side of the Cassadaga where it was like a mile from the road and we'd still be down in there, but we had to have a good working relationship with the people we were working with there.

Jacob Bodway: I'd be happy to do that. A July and August project when the waters are kind of low so we can at least get our waders on and not have to get soaked at the same time. Yeah, I'd be happy to do something like that this summer. I think it can be a fun project and it also we could revisit it next year if we get out there this year and clear it out and then next year and it's the same as it was then we should probably close down that trail. I'd like to give it one shot and see if we can clear it out but that's just me.

Tom Erlandson: There was a few years when a man, I can't recall his name Bob, maybe you do, I think he was retired from the DPW from the Town of Ellicott, he would get a bulldozer..

Bob Franzen: Ed Joes (?).

Tom Erlandson: Right, he would get a bulldozer and get landowner permission and take that dozer down to the creek, and with a winch snag out some of those real big problems. Did that pretty much every summer for a few years.

Bob Franzen: Got to be ended because of insurance purposes and labor involved with it between the union so they kind of hung it up.

Jacob Bodway: I have a couple friends who are pretty good with saws and who also, my buddy Fran is really good with a saw and he's also like a competitive kayaker enthusiast. So he could maybe help us out too. I could poke around and see if we could find a few people, maybe come out with us this summer and maybe make a, get it done in a few hours so it doesn't take too much time. I'm thinking it's probably going to take all day.

Judy Hunt: Better pack a lunch.

Kathy Tampio: I would like it if you would all check out the Chautauqua County Trails section of the county website. I just added a link to the Chautauqua County Visitors Bureau, their maps and guides page which lists all the hiking and biking trail maps in addition to the county maps and so on. I think that would help also. If you look at it and see what updates are needed, especially on the trail system.

Jacob Bodway: Could you send that link in the chat real quick?

Kathy Tampio: You want to the visitors bureau or to our county website?

Brad Bentley: County website.

Kathy Tampio: For instance, I just clicked on waterways and there's really like some old brochure on there. Okay, so check that out and click on all those links and see what needs to be redone, maybe even new photos

Jacob Bodway: This is good. I'll look this over and I might link this to that Facebook page.

Kathy Tampio: Yeah, but if you go down below that picture of Luensman you'll see Chautauqua County Visitors Bureau maps & trail links, you click on that and it will take you right to them with all their maps. Plus there's all those other existing links, I haven't tested them. And don't forget for the meeting today to approve your minutes from last months and to pass a motion to recommend the new member to the legislature so we can create the resolution

Judy Hunt: So moved. That's the easy way. We did the minutes.

Kathy Tampio: Okay.

John Hemmer: For the new members then, Judy, we're going to call that a motion by Judy to add the new members and then all we need is a second and then a vote.

Jacob Bodway: I'll second it.

Judy Hunt: All in favor?

(All responded aye) – Motion carried by unanimous vote.

John Hemmer: All right. That's done then. Thank you everyone.

Old Business

Judy Hunt: I think the old business items that I put on the agenda have been covered. Ready for new business?

New Business

Bob Franzen: Ready for new business. Anything on new business?

Brad Bentley: I don't have anything.

Bob Franzen: Okay

Judy Hunt: So we are adjourned

Next Meeting: April 22, 2021, 4:00 pm

The meeting adjourned at 5:14 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Tampio
Clerk, Chautauqua County Legislature

Approved 4/22/2021