

STAR
01/25/07
Minutes

Attending:

Gary Briggs: mainewine2@aol.com
Stephanie Clement: mgagnon@cityofellsworthme.org
Sally Jacobs: sjacobs@maine.edu
Jim Fisher: jfisher@hcpcme.org
Jef Fitzgerald: jfitzgerald@cityofellsworthme.org
Jennifer Boothroyd: jboothroyd@hcpcme.org
Mickie Sumpter: eaccmarketing@midmaine.com
Chris Hall: chrishall@tidewater.net
Bill Ceckler: ceckler@acadia.net

Prior Meeting Minutes - do not have copies available.

For next meeting, Jim will send out minutes to this group which will be forwarded to others.

Planning Grant Update

- Feasibility study - cost changes
- \$64,000 with a requires a \$16,000 match
 - City has petitioned for \$5,000 funds
 - DEST submitted a grant proposal for \$5,000 to MCF (March)
 - Rail Heritage Trust has a share
 - Chamber of Commerce is discussing funding too. They have an immediate need to fund an expansion. This will increase their display space. (March or April)
- Discussion revolved around who can contribute more or less.
- MaineDOT is likely to have their budget in April

Memorandum of Understanding

The group read through the draft MOU between Ellsworth, Chamber, Rail and Trail
Changes include:

- Commitment is to investigate the feasibility - not construction
- Life style center - reworded to Enhancing Ellsworth as a life style center
- New bullet - Establish an intermodal transit, park and ride facility
- Add a dissolution clause - Stephanie will provide details
- Discussed inclusion of MaineDOT as a signer of of the MOU. Maine DOT will be offered an opportunity to read and comment.

Progress report from stakeholders

- Rail
 - not much news now

- having a planning session in the last week of February
- inviting potential donors
- planning for maintenance activities in the spring
- Looking at a hand full of potential properties

- Trails
 - Funding
 - Trails for a Healthy Maine
 - Transportation Bond
 - RFP - for rail salvage
 - Trail manager position is under discussion - hoping to create this position soon
 - MaineDOT will provide funding to MaineDOC
 - No news on the segment between High Street and Washington Junction
 - Ellsworth Bicycle Pedestrian Planning Process has Started
 - Meeting on February 5th with the committee. Also meeting with Dan Steward

Land Purchase Options Strategies – Nine Lessons Learned from Stephanie Clement and Friends of Acadia

1. Be cautious about how your plans are affected by funding stipulations
 - Using Federal Funds - adds requirements and takes longer

2. Three year option is not sufficient - needed to extend this
 - cost of options are expensive
 - can schedule costs to start low and climb each year
 - some of the option fee may be applied to the purchase price

3. Be sure about wetlands - land may have more environmental issues than you expect.
 - DEP can walk the property - give you some idea of the conditions
 - Property will eventually require a full wetland delineation

4. Land Trusts can provide useful assistance - technical assistance, help with securing environmentally sensitive areas, creation of nature trails

5. Bargain Sales and other financial devices can reduce property acquisition costs, but entail additional legal cautions.

6. Don't announce just the land price to supporters. Be sure to include management costs.

7. Find good legal advice. Local lawyers with experience include:
 - Karen Marchetti-Ponte
 - Fred Stocking
 - Andy Hamilton

8. Engaging Federal Funds

- Increases expenses including environmental assessment, prevailing wages, permitting, alternatives analysis, NEPA process, etc.
 - An important source of funding
 - Better to avoid creating a project that is not eligible for federal funding.
 - The feasibility study will partly fulfill Federal requirements
9. NEPA process requires looking at alternatives
- Looking at alternatives means dealing with multiple property owners
 - Some of the alternatives may involve aggregating land from multiple owners – which is even more complicated
 - MaineDOT can condemn properties in order to clear titles. Hostile takings are generally only supported for public facilities that confer significant public benefits, such as a safer road.

Next meeting: March 22nd 3:00 PM