

STAR Center Public Meeting
Wednesday, September 15, 2010
Ellsworth City Hall Council Chambers

Attending

- Michele Gagnon, City of Ellsworth
- Tom Testa, Downeast Heritage Rail
- Jef Fitzgerald, City of Ellsworth
- Micki Sumpter, Greater Ellsworth Chamber of Commerce
- Michelle Beal, City of Ellsworth
- Bob Merrill, Merrill Furniture
- Sam Coplon, Coplon Associates
- Jim Fisher, Hancock County Planning Commission
- Leslie Harlow, The Maine Grind
- Robert Gordon, 150 high, LLC
- Charlie Corliss, Maine Department of Conservation
- Bill Ceckler, Sunrise Trail Coalition
- Sally Jacobs, Sunrise Trail Coalition
- Jennifer Osborn, Ellsworth American

Overview – Michele Gagnon

Michele provided a background on reasons the City is pursuing the STAR concept

- City was approached by Tom Testa for an excursion rail project
- City was also approached by Sally and Bill about building the Sunrise Trail

MaineDOT and others assembled funding for a feasibility analysis

Recent Accomplishments

- Recent Trail Opening

Project Implementation – Jim Fisher

- (See power point presentation)
- Jim summarized the STAR Center Goals
- A table was presented indicating the STAR Center participants
- Study Methodology includes
 - Demand estimation
 - Site identification and assessment



- Systems Planning
- Preliminary conceptual design work

Site Analysis – Sam Coplton

- Conceptual layout of STAR facility on Merrill Furniture / Blue Seal Feed site
- Sam described how users would circulate through the facility

Questions

- Sally: How big is the bike parking area
 - Scalable
- Leslie: Do the leasers and owners know about this proposal
 - Yes
 - The lot is 2 acres
 - The adjacent lot is owned by the Merrill Family Trust
 - Michele noted that federal funds require a careful relocation process
- Leslie: What about the land across the tracks?
 - Michele: land across the tracks is difficult to access
 - Beal Avenue does not have sufficient space for an entrance
 - Great concept – good presentation
- Sally
 - Trails
 - ATV round about
 - Walking Trail
 - Want to separate uses, avoid conflicts with people
 - Need to provide access to fuel for ATV and Snowmobiles
 - Charlie
 - Riders plan their fuel stops – will buy gasoline in Franklin
 - Riders will carry spare fuel tanks
- Other users
 - Walkers and runners outnumber other users in the towns
- Leslie - Building Use
 - If the Chamber uses the building, would rental or commercial areas be considered
 - Bike, Ski rental and services
 - Bar Harbor Bike would have stayed if they had more bike rental business
 - Sale of water, snacks, etc.
 - Putting private businesses in the building would help with sustainability
- Bob Merrill – private sector will find a way
- Sam – we need to show a strong connection to High Street in this concept
- Sally
 - Cruise ship businesses are looking at busing people from Bar Harbor to this trail to ride ATVs

- New MaineDOT Bicycle book was released today
- Micki – this center can make a major difference for the community
 - People are already using some of these services
 - The train is very popular
 - Ellsworth will be a great center and a destination
- Tom
 - this is a nice configuration
 - still concerned about visibility of the site
- Micki – this is not a done deal, there can be more work on design, etc.
- Sam
 - Need to build awareness before you get to High Street – dropping bread crumbs ahead of arriving
 - Web site
- LL Bean
 - Right now there is a big LL Bean Sign
 - They will be interested in seeing this succeed
 - There is more room around LLBean
 - There have been vacancies there as well. New demand may be accommodated.
- Leslie
 - Need a bridge across Union River to continue trail to the west.
 - Ellsworth is exploring opportunities to build a pedestrian bridge at the site of a previous bridge off of Riverside Drive.

Next Steps

Business Plan

Much work remains on the business plan for this facility. We need to identify key factors such as:

- Funds for site acquisition and construction
- Ownership and Management
- Operating funds / Potential revenue streams

Traffic Analysis

– will be carried out by Sebago Technics

Transit Planning

- Under contract with Tom Crikelair Associates

Design

- Work being completed by Sam Coplon Associates

- Additional site work, specifically to resolve concerns about visibility of this facility and the impact on visitation
- Visual preference feedback

Next Committee Meeting: TBA

Next Public Meeting: TBA