
MEETING MINUTES: RPA-1 Transportation Enhancements Committee

Thursday, May 30, 2018, 9:00 a.m. – Upper Explorerland RPC, Postville

Committee members in attendance: Rod Marlatt, Fayette County Conservation; Jenna Pollock, Clayton County Conservation; Barbara Schroeder, Winneshiek County Conservation; Elaine Govern, Howard County; Sheryl Struthers, Fayette County; Darla Kelchen, Clayton County Development Group; Joshua Johnson, City of Oelwein; James Janett, Allamakee County Conservation; Mallory Hanson, NEI RC&D; Craig Fencil, Howard County Conservation; and Bruce Palmborg, Allamakee County.

Others in attendance: Michelle Barness, UERPC; Aaron Detter, UERPC; Dylan Mulfinger, City of Oelwein; Krista Rostad, Iowa DOT; Jan McGovern, Howard County.

1. Meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Marlatt.
2. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Palmborg, seconded by Struthers, and approved unanimously.
3. A motion to approve the March 29, 2018 meeting minutes was made by Schroeder, seconded by Pollock, and approved unanimously.
4. Detter discussed the transportation survey for the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). He briefly discussed the goal of the survey to identify priorities in the region and stated he will send a draft survey to transportation committee representatives for feedback.

Detter went on to share some initial feedback on the existing Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), which touched on safety, walkability/bikability improvements (and overall active transportation), funding as a challenge, connectivity, mobility, need for continued maintenance of the system, impacts of housing and uncontrolled development outside of cities, need for better connectivity of regional trails and to regional destinations, concern for impacts of Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), the need for the plan to provide more maps for active transportation and more detail by locality, and so on.

There was discussion by the committee of the need to involve diverse stakeholders in the planning process, and how the transportation planner will follow up with stakeholders to get them involved. Detter described that the plan will update demographic information and existing conditions. Committee members had a discussion of maps and encouraged recorded planned or existing conditions versus proposed projects. Aaron discussed community input and how it will be gathered include through a community transportation survey. Members made suggestions for distribution of the survey.

5. Barness reviewed logistics for implementing the first steps of the Backbone Trail Study. Members discussed a trail count and survey for the study, including addressing survey distribution, coordination of counts, differences between current county counts and the economic impact assessment, how to reach visitors from outside the region, incentives to encourage people to complete the survey, how to engage local businesses, discussion of local entities to connect with for distribution of the survey,

implementation of the long-term trail counts, potential future purchase of a trail counter system for region, and generally what information the economic impact assessment survey would collect and how that information would be used in the study.

Members went on to discuss the benefit of the study and who is able to be involved, and what work would be completed for the study in 2018. Most agreed that the final study would assist trail advocates in attempting to generate funding for needed trail improvements. Schroeder described that the Winneshiek County study assisted with buy-in for their trail system.

Barness discussed funding for the study and how that relates to the study's timeframe, with a general goal of finishing the study into the summer of 2019. Barness asked which members were considering being in the study and discussed follow-up by them, including providing specific information for the surveys to be created for each trail.

6. Barness summarized other transportation planning work, including finalizing and getting approval of the Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
7. County Updates:
 - Johnson shared that Oelwein had received an \$87,000 grant from the Wellmark Foundation for improvements to the Oelwein city trail system.
 - Schroeder shared that Calmar put in a trail section to connect the Prairie Farmer Trail to the Dollar General and PIVO Brewery. PIVO did a fundraiser for the trail.
 - Marlatt shared that cement is completed on the TRRC trail bridge near Elgin.
 - Detter shared that the DOT's alternatives for the Blackhawk Bridge in Lansing is available for review online.
 - Fencil shared that the grand opening for the Wapsi Great Western Trail southern branch occurred in May and shared some of the details of that. Members discussed attending the event and some of the opportunities adjacent to the trail.
 - Pollock shared that the pre-engineering for the Motor Mill Trail is underway and that they are hoping for a December letting.
 - Janett shared information on the visitor center. They got a CAT grant and DOT Scenic Byways grant closed-out for the center. They are working on a boat landing near the center. The center has been rated well for tourism since opening.
8. Transportation planners will follow up with the committee to discuss future meetings dates.
9. A motion to adjourn was made by Marlatt, seconded by Schroeder, and approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.