



www.M119TunnelofTrees.org

M-119 TUNNEL OF TREES SCENIC HERITAGE ROUTE COMMITTEE

DRAFT Minutes
Tuesday, May 14th, 2024

West Traverse Township Hall
8001 M-119 Harbor Springs, MI 49740

Present

Dale Scott, Friendship Township (Chair)
Naomi Singer, Cross Village Township
Sue Rentrop, Cross Village / Emmet County Lakeshore Association
James Fisher, Friendship Township
Jim Anderson, Friendship Township
Jerry Root, Readmond Township
Don Schaplowsky, Readmond Township
Joey Arbaugh, West Traverse Township
Carolyn Sandford, West Traverse Township
Garon Gopigian, West Traverse Township
Hillary Taylor, Emmet County
Stephanie Marchbanks, Networks Northwest
Laurelynn Harris, Cross Village Township

Committee Members Absent

Franz Neubrecht, Emmet County Lakeshore Association
Larry Wallen, Readmond Township
Joe Tomlinson, Readmond Township

I. Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 by Chair Dale Scott. Stephanie Marchbanks led Committee roll call. Dale requested to add a fifth item (f.) to the agenda under section "III. Partner Reports".

II. Review and Adoption of Minutes from April 9, 2024

Motion by Dale Scott, supported by Joey Arbaugh, to approve the meeting minutes for April 9th as presented. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Partner Reports

- a. **Emmet County Planning and Zoning (ECPZ)** – Hillary Taylor stated that a homeowner along M-119 reported to ECPZ recent tree removal activity on the lake side of the road, near Birchwood Farms. Tree topping is allowed in this area for viewshed clearing purposes, but only diseased or damaged trees are allowed to be completely removed within the 73' road right-of-way per the County's 'Scenic Resource' Zoning Ordinance. Tammy Doernenburg with ECPZ has agreed to do more education/outreach with the tree company representatives about these regulations on behalf of the Committee.

- b. **LTBBOI** – no representative present. James Fisher offered to mention to the Tribe (he has a meeting with them later today) that they are welcome to attend all TOT Committee meetings.
- c. **LTC** – no representative present.
- d. **MDOT** – no representative present.
- e. **Networks Northwest (NN)** – Stephanie Marchbanks gave an update on behalf of Isha Pithwa. Isha asked Heather Bowden with MDOT if it is mandatory to put the Pure Michigan Byways logo on future brochures. Heather said that it is not required, but she was hoping that some kind of visual reference to the Byways program could be added. If the Committee wants to add the logo she could provide a high resolution image of it.

Naomi Singer said that she wouldn't mind having it on the brochure as long as it's small – everyone was in agreement. The logo should also fit within the brochure layout and be placed anywhere but the front page. Only the logo should be placed, not the website address for MDOT Heritage Routes, to avoid confusion. The committee wants people to access the M-119 Heritage Route website for information.

- f. Dale Scott said that the Committee members should be looking for someone to provide a testimonial quote to add to the year-end final report.

Dale said that Isha has updated www.m119tunneloftrees.org with the current meeting dates and locations, but he isn't able to access the meeting minutes from the website, only from the web links she emailed him. Stephanie will follow up with Isha regarding this. Perhaps the site just needs another tab on the top of the page for "meeting minutes"?

IV. Ongoing and Unfinished Business

- a. **Adopt-A-Highway Program** – Carolyn Sutherland has had several people volunteer for the recent spring cleanup. She handles Robinson Rd. to Lower Shore Dr. Jerry Root and Sue Rentrop handled the cleanup from S. Lamkin to Robinson Rd. Volunteers Jane Newberry and her daughter volunteered to clean up from Stutzman to S. Lamkin Rd. Overall very little trash was found and Carolyn has submitted her report for the event to MDOT. The next cleanup is from July 13-21, 2024. They can always use more volunteers – contact Carolyn.

It was noted that there are no signs along the route indicating that the Committee has "Adopted the Road" for the program; this is deliberate as the Committee wants to reduce un-necessary signage along the route.

- b. **Zoo-De-Mack Bike Event** – Saturday May 18. Signs have been placed along the roadway already notifying people of the event to come. However the sign in Cross Village is not easy to read due to the printing on sheer fabric. A new, for-profit company is running the event - contact person is Regina? Dale will contact the event organizer regarding signage concerns and email out his findings to the group. Discussion regarding impact on traffic flow from the event. In the past the Committee has met with the County Sheriff's Office and Michigan State Police to review how the event went, what went well and what could be improved upon next time. Another thought is to have the Zoo-De-Mack representatives meet with the M-119 committee via Facetime or Zoom in the future.
- c. **The FY 2024 budget funds** left to be used by Sept. 30, 2024. \$360 for website; rest (\$640) goes to NN staff for their time. \$1000 for printing. \$1,000 for other needs such as signage, events,

services, etc. It appears that in 2023, \$1,000 was used to pay for printing of materials (brochures). Laurelynne Harris indicated that printing costs have recently gone up.

Discussion regarding signage: There are currently four signs, one in each township, as well as a few others that are not formal heritage route signs. They need to be evaluated for condition/maintenance needs. Naomi and Sue will evaluate signage in Cross Village; Don Schaplowsky will evaluate signage in Readmond Township; Jim Anderson and Dale Scott will evaluate signage in Friendship Township; Joey Arbaugh will evaluate signage in West Traverse Township. Signage evaluation findings are due to Dale by the next meeting.

Garon Gopigian suggested that maybe there could be some type of signage along the route, especially at areas where people park along the road, reminding the public that they are adjoining a residential area and to be courteous regarding speed, noise, trash, dog waste, etc. Group agrees; maybe look at similar signage along the Little Traverse Wheelway where it adjoins condo associations, etc.? Should ask Tammy D. at ECPZ for her suggestions on this type of signage.

The draft FY 2025 budget is due to MDOT by July 1, 2024. Dale asked if MDOT or the Committee finalizes the budget. Stephanie will ask Isha.

Also consider having another public meeting like the Symposium that was held in Fall of 2022.

Budget for another tree assessment? Last was done in 2022. MDOT staff completed it/paid for it. Would be good to have another one done in 2026/2027. Also consider the potential future impact of the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) on Eastern hemlock trees. Not yet detected in Emmet County. Can the committee put some information on the website for the public awareness of it? Joey will ask the LTC for info. Stephanie indicated that CAKE-CISMA (Charlevoix, Antrim, Kalkaska, & Emmet Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area) is an organization that surveys/treats invasive species in the region, including HWA.

d. Clarification of Chair Rotation in Oct 2024 and appointment of Co-Chair

Committee is still in search of a Vice Chair – they should be from Readmond Township. Dale suggested that rotation of the Chair position should be every two years instead of every one year, to provide for better continuity of knowledge in the position. *Motion by Dale Scott to adjust the term limits of the Committee Chairperson from one to two years. Support by Joey Arbaugh and James Fisher. All in favor. Motion passes unanimously.*

V. New Business

a. Review and Discuss Suggested Edits on Educational Materials

i. Guidebook

- p. 8 – all agree to add Scotch pine to list of non-native trees
- p. 9 – indicate that the 2022 Tree Health Assessment report is provided in the Corridor Management Plan on the project website (provide link).
- p. 23 – add the word “please” in front of “ride single file”
- p. 24 – LTBBOI Tribe info should replace “Harbor Inc.” under additional resources

Compare to what version is on the website – make sure information is consistent. Naomi will compare her Guidebook to Jerry’s and return at June meeting with changes.

ii. and iii. Share the Road Trifold Brochure and Management Plan Brochure

All agree that it is a 20 mile route, not a 13 mile route. Some member’s brochures indicate 20

miles, while other indicate 13 miles. Some have the copies with the print date indicated of 4/2023; some do not. Confusion about what is current – printed brochures also differ from what is on the website.

Group agrees that the information on the “Share the Road” brochure and the “Management Plan (Preservation Plan?)” brochure need to be combined into one brochure. Dale recommends a two-person committee to work on these changes. Goran and Joey volunteer to do this. Stephanie to ask Isha to send Goran and Joey an electronic copy of these documents so they can work on the edits. Goran and Joey will present new suggested changes with the group at the June meeting.

Group agreed that all exclamation points under the “please do” and “please don’t” lists on the Share the Road brochure should be removed from the statements and replaced with periods.

Tammy with ECPZ should also review the brochures to make sure contact information of partners is correct.

Requested that Isha recycle any old/outdated printed materials that NN may have so that they are not distributed.

Members will be sure to remove any old/outdated printed materials from trailheads, Twp. Halls, Chamber of Commerce, and other distribution points once new versions ones are printed.

b. Budget Planning for 2025 (suggested draft budget submission due July 1, 2024)

As discussed previously, the Committee may have to do more printing in the fall if there is not enough in the FY2024 budget for new brochure. Printed 50 copies of the Management Plan; should be enough for a while unless more are needed for new members. Printing costs have gone up. Possibility of paying for another public meeting in the fall; another tree assessment; two new signs, possibly one at each end of the corridor. \$1000 will be reserved for website maintenance and payment of NN staff.

VI. Comments from the public and the board.

No public comment.

Garon Gopigian asked about status of M-119 road repair at washout area above the bluff in town. No progress yet – anticipated they will start fixing it this summer. Garon also noticed that his last name was spelled incorrectly in the previous meeting minutes – it should be Gopigian, not Gopigan.

VII. Adjourn

Motion by Dale Scott to adjourn the meeting at 10:56 am. Supported by Carolyn Sandford. Motion passes.