

Courtland Township Parks and Recreation

Public Forum Meeting on Recreational Trails Agenda

January 16, 2013

- I. Welcome and Introduction of Parks/Recreation Board and Panelists: Called to order
7:05 p.m.
- II. Review of the Agenda
- III. History and Planning to Date – Brent Boncher, Parks and Recreation Committee Chair
 - A. Public Demand and Surveys
 - B. Why we would want trails.
 - a. Safety
 - b. Recreation
 - c. Property Values
 - d. Connectivity
 - C. Trail Basics
 - a. 10 foot wide surface
 - b. Surface undetermined
 - c. 14 foot wide easement or right of way
 - D. Connectivity and areas to serve for trails
 - a. Kent County Parks Dept, Cannon Twp and City of Rockford and our parks and places to connect
 - b. Township population center
 - E. Route Planning
 - a. Road Crossings (curves, sight lines, and intersections)
 - b. Early Route investigations and progression

- c. Current best routing

F. Costs and Fund

- a. Cost
- b. Funding (federal and state grants, private funds/donations, corporate sponsorship and naming rights, township funds).

G. Maintenance and Maintenance Costs

H. Effects on Property Owners

- a. Right of Way
- b. Easements
- c. Trees and other considerations

I. Time Frame

J. Website and Public Input

K. Panelist Statements

1. Jim Scales, Attorney for Courtland Twp.

- Work with property owners
- Adopt township ordinance to regulate use of trails
- 1995 Recreational User's Statute – protect property owners from liability of trail

2. Chad Sosnowski

- Cost estimating
- Looked at different routes. Other routes are expensive due to change in grade
- Has been involved with trail development in Cannon Township
- Experienced with grant applications

- Discussed impact on property and easements. Each property may have a different easement, depending on location. Easement could be 2' to 20' depending on location and how much road easement is available.

3. Dave – White Pine Trail Advocate and Cannon Township Parks Committee

- Very little trespassing
- Litter – periodically is an issue. People do community service hours picking up.
- 'Clean-up' day in Spring. Different organizations sponsor clean up.
- The more people using the trail, the fewer problems there are.
- People use trails for commuting. Studies show crime and litter are negligible.

4. Chuck Porter – Courtland Township Supervisor

- Survey shows township park is not used a lot. People want recreational trails.

5. Wayne, Road Commission

- Involved to help with routing
- Ada Township and Cascade Township – 30 miles of trails
- Ideally cross trail where traffic stops

L. Public Comment/Questions (limited to 1 min per person)

1. Jack, 9753 Myers Lake Ave.

- a. What about connectivity between Luton and Cannon Trail?
2. Tim Johnson, Russell Road
 - a. How does bike lane compare to a bike path? Wayne – Road Commission addressed this question.
3. Phil Robertson, 13 Mile Road – Property value – does it increase value? How does that affect property values which are close to homes? Would to see a study that compares the impact on property values if the trail is on the property vs. nearby the property.
4. Terry - 12 Mile and Myers Lake – What if utilities are in the road right-a-ways? It is expensive to move utility poles.
5. 7515 Hessler – Trail will come within 20' of his window. Resident was upset because he did not receive a notification
 - a. Chuck Porter – letters went to people on primary possible route
 - b. Notification of meeting went out in tax bill
6. General comment from one attendee: She chose to move to country. She disagrees with development of recreational trail as it benefits a very few people.
7. Amber - Myers View Subdivision resident: There are supporters of the trail. It is for families to use for walking. She is a big supporter.
8. Ray Klein – Hessler. At what point does public know the actual route? Would like more information, then decide on if he supports trail or not.
9. Phil Robertson – Will township have obligations down the road? Such as...if someone says we have to provide lighting...does township have to provide lighting? Grants spell out details. They cannot come back later and add requirements to the plan. Conditions of grant would require a maintenance plan.
10. Dan Hansen – Peterson Road, Farmer.
 - a. Leases property on north side of lake. Proposed trail route crosses this property. He will cross this property with equipment.
 - b. Disagrees with lack of liability. If he cuts a rut in trail, or leaves a lump of dirt, he thinks he will be sued if someone wipes out.

- c. Live out there 42 years. Likes the country. Does not want a trail in front of his house. Wants privacy. Trail does not go in front of his house.
 - d. Math on 66' right-a-way. Will need an additional easement outside of road easement require owner's permission?
 - i. Not all roads are built in center of easement. Road commission addressed this question.
 - ii. Jim Scales – township would ask for voluntary easement. There has not been talk of just taking the property.
11. Fred Watters –does not want trail.
12. Jack Hansen – Myers Lake, Will ditches be filled for trail?
13. Sue Hartmann, Myers Lake, How many surveys went out? Will taxes go up if property value goes up?
14. Mr. Grant, Myers Lake Road – people don't use trails. Concerned about federal deficit.
15. Keith Scott – 11 Mile – has mixed feelings. He has small children. You take your life in your own hands on 11 Mile Road. Interested in finding out more before he decides if he agrees or disagrees.
16. Barbara Berry, 11 Mile Road, Trail goes through her front yard. Fully supports trail. It is dangerous to walk on 11 Mile.
17. Teresa Broekstra – Myers Lake Road – between 10 and 11
- a. Supports the trail
 - b. Likes living in country
 - c. Small children – would like the trail to be closer
 - d. There are benefit to trail
 - e. Asked others to be open to the idea
 - f. This is not bringing the city to us. This is a non-motorized trail. This will not be like a highway.
18. Steve, Shaner and 11 Mile. Had a question on proposed route.

19. Sid Gordon – Hessler Drive – Does not support trail.
20. Sue Hansen – Peterson – Does not live on proposed route. Concerned about crime. Wants Courtland Township to remain farming community. People who moved here know it is a farming community.
21. Scott Fitzpatrick – Peninsula Drive – Fully supports trail development. He gave up a house on White Pine Trail to live in Rockford Schools. It is not safe to run on 11 Mile.
22. Gary Ebertson – Myers Lake Road – Did county price out making paved trails? Wants something less costly.
23. Myers Lake, Heidi DeGroot – Her back yard is where her kids play and her back yard also backs up to a green space. Concerned about safety. Also interested in what percentage of people sent survey back.
24. Male Attendee: Can restrictions be put on when trail is used? He is an avid biker and would enjoy using trail. He does not want someone on trail at 10:00 at night.
25. Roberta Keech, 9820 Myers Lake Ave. What is right-of-way from Hessler Drive to the park. She does not support the recreational trail.
26. Mike, 777 10 Mile, not on the route. Wife walks trails. Does not want eminent domain.
27. Linda White – 11 Mile. What happens to trail when Myers Lake Road gets widened someday?
28. Teresa Broekstra, Myers Lake Road. Some people are for and some are against. Who makes final decision. Is there a vote? Township board makes final decision. Teresa thanks parks committee for inviting the people who are directly affected by the route. She believes there would be more support if the entire township was sent letter.
29. Bob Post, Shaner. Has a problem with spending money on trails in this economic climate. Where does grant money come from? Does not see people using trail. Thinks less than .5% use trails.
30. Carol R. Peterson – surface discussion. Who will maintain ruts. Did you go to everybody's house on the route?
31. Karen Watters, 9303 Shaner. How many people on Shaner between 11 and 12 mile did committee speak with. Answer: 2 or 3.

32. Attendee: Myers Lake and 11 Mile. This person has used Ada and Cascade trails. She does not pose a threat to people who live on the trail. A Bike trail is not a threat. People drive into her neighborhood to park and use trail.
33. Steven Lang, 9313 Crest Circle- There is a land conversancy south of his property and there is benefit to connecting county parks to public lands. Can committee talk to neighborhood board about using their public space?
34. Pete Eggenberger – Russet Vista – Thanks for all the work that has been done.
35. Show of hands: 32 opposed, 18 for it, 1 neutral
36. How many have used township park facilities? 5
