

Thousand Islands Parkway Multi-Use Recreational Trail Committee

Meeting Notes Arising from Public Meetings of June 2 and 3, 2021

Overall

- Both meetings were held on the dates advertised
- Both meetings also involved the Chair of the SLPC, the Hon. Bob Runciman and Hollee Kew, GM & CEO
- Both meetings also involved representation from the Townships including Mayor Haley from Front of Yonge Township for the June 2 and 3 meetings, and Mayor Smith-Gatcke from the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands for the June 3 meeting
- Both meetings completed a discussion as per the circulated agenda

Notes arising from the discussion

Introductions:

The meeting provided a forum for Townships, community members along with SLPC staff including Bob Runciman, Chair; Hollee Kew, GM/CEO; Greg Faaren, Manager, Environmental Sustainability; and Jennifer Tarini, Director, Parks and Recreation to introduce themselves. SLPC staff along with the Ontario Trails Commission provided the reasoning for the meeting and concerns the SLPC is hoping to resolve through the process of creating a collaborative, community led Thousand Islands Parkway (TIP) Multi-Use Recreational Trail (MURT) Committee.

In both meetings the participants made it clear that the community values the TIP, values the work and leadership of the SLPC, as well as their hosting of this type of community outreach and the development of a Thousand Islands Parkway Multi-Use Recreational Trail Committee.

Participants:

Over the two meetings there was participation from local trail enthusiasts representing:

- *Land Management* - SLPC staff, Parks Canada management, municipalities of the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands and, Front of Yonge Township; as well as the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Network (FABN).
- *Represented Recreation Groups* – Cyclists, Runners, Paddlers, Snowshoers, Cross Country Skiers, Hikers and Walkers, ATVers, and Snowmobilers.
- *Residents* - although no formal organization was represented, a number of residents that live along the TIP, who are users of the TIP through trail-based activity attended and spoke.
- *Environmental/Maintenance* - residents noted such concerns as dead trees, vegetation encroachment, winter trail maintenance and impacts to turtle nesting.

Feedback Regional Trail Committee Presentation

- There was general enthusiasm for the idea of creating a Thousand Islands Parkway Multi-Use Recreational Trail Committee.
- There were recommendations regarding committee structure that will be forwarded to the SLPC and Townships for discussion in future meetings.
- There was discussion about issues that RTCs tackle, including funding in support of trail operation and development, as well as offers of support for maintenance by activity groups along the TIP in support of a safe and well-maintained trail environment.

Concerns Raised During Discussion

- **Parking** - there was a discussion about the SLPC working with Parks Canada on the seasonal opening of parking space that is now closed in the winter.
- **Maintenance** - there are two maintenance issues:
 - **Trees and brush** - there is a desire to better maintain the north trail, there was an offer from the local ATV club who are not a current user of the trail to lend equipment and manpower to remove overgrown brush from the trail. Further spot identification of problem areas is needed to identify where this work should be done.
 - **Plowing** - winter plowing and residential performance of this, and a path forward in each Township needs to be affirmed such that:
 - All areas of the TIP are maintained in a safe and uniform manner.
 - Plowing responsibilities are defined.
- The 3-tier nature of the TIP should be studied further so that there is harmonious use of the road, the paved trail and the north lane.
- **Signage** - applicable signage for parking, trailheads, seasonal use, seasonal maintenance, branding should be studied, signage should be applied as appropriate.

- Note: SLPC staff noted in the first meeting that ATV use is not permitted on the Thousand Island Parkway Multi-Use Recreational Trail as per SLPC current park regulations.
- During the development of the committee the focus is on current users and uses and on short-term priorities, the most pressing of which is finding a solution for the winter plowing concerns that emerged last year.

Other

- Questions arose regarding the reason for the meeting, and these were answered in meeting.
- Questions arose regarding whether an RTC involves paddling - it does, but the nature of the work of the committee as it goes forward should define the linkages to water trails.
- Questions arose regarding Active Transportation (AT) and these questions were answered in meeting and post meeting. AT and Trails are very compatible and much of the trail use is probably devoted to this type of utility.
- Composition and Structure of Committee - defined in circulated documents, there was a recommendation that there be an Executive Committee and a membership process for the community.

Committee Leadership Group

SLPC Chair Bob Runciman and Mayors Smith-Gatcke and Haley expressed strong support for the TIP Multi-Use Recreational Trail Committee. Several community members also expressed their desire to lead as the group evolves.

NEXT STEPS

- Provide meeting summary notes to meeting attendees.
- Define a mission, vision, mandates, operating structure, roles and responsibilities with key project(s) to be undertaken.
- Circulate any reports back to attendees.
- Circulate a community engagement survey.
- Schedule next meetings with advance circulation of draft mission, vision, mandates and key project(s) for community understanding and participation.