

# **River Council Meeting Notes**

## **October 23, 2007**

**Present:** Jim Arey, Sam Draper, Dave Grier, Jim Hare, Mike Hastrich, Keith Matthews, Debbie Peterson, Lee Younge, Tom Beecher, Tom O'Brien, Jamie Johnson, Paul Rossi, Linda Couchon

### **1) Big Flats Open House**

Went very well. 32 people attended including legislator Chris Friend.  
See feedback summary at end of minutes.

### **2) Other meetings**

**Chamber Board of Directors**-Mike Hastrich, Linda Couchon and Jenn Miller met with Chamber Board on 10-22. There is interest from some downtown business in supporting river development.

**City of Elmira** –Mike Haas will be presenting to the City Council and other invited guests on October 25

**Town of Elmira** is going to do a Town Board presentation in November with Bob Butcher

### **3) White Wagon**

The development of the White Wagon launch site as a community park was one of three priority projects chosen by the River Council.

Jamie Johnson from Southern Tier Economic Growth (STEG) shared concerns related to the planned industrial development site across the road from the launch site/park. Concerns include bike/walking/child safety with potential truck traffic. The White Wagon site could attract/complement industry....and also deter industry who do not want to locate where trucking proposes a safety hazard. River Council does not want work counter to STEG's plans.

Jaime will talk to George Richter, supervisor in the Town of Chemung. He will also look at ways in which the potential site might enhance industrial development versus deter it and report back to us at the November 13 River Council meeting.

### **4) Big Flats priority change**

A trail connecting the Big Flats Community Park to the River (via Minier's launch site) was one of three priority projects chosen by the River Council.

Lee reported that the Town of Big Flats does not want the trail across route 352. They are very interested in pursuing a trail along the riverbank including the Willow Creek Golf Course passage.

Lee will talk to Larry Wagner (Big Flats Commissioner of Public Works) to resolve issues around trail maintenance/costs.

Other issues that need to be resolved to move forward on this project:

Confirmation from Division of Coastal Resources that we can build a trail on property if we have a permanent easement from property owners.

Ability to secure permanent easement from Willow Creek and the other property owners, most likely starting with those between Bottcher's Landing and Minier's launch sites.

### **5) Dam portage pull-out and re-enter trail and river access over wall**

Canoe/kayak portage round the dam was one of three priority projects chosen by the River Council.

Jim Hare wanted to clarify this isn't a walking "trail" but is a walkway to drag boats around the dam. Jim also noted 2008 is the anniversary celebration of the founding of the Water Company in Elmira.

#### **6) Kiosks**

Kiosks design is a "runner-up" if projects listed above are not viable.

#### **7) Project cost estimates**

Mike Haas hopes to get us preliminary costs estimates next week sometime.

#### **8) RAMS meeting**

Reminder to River Council members to speak with municipal leaders and boards.

Tom Santulli will be meeting with them at their monthly "RAMS" meeting to discuss their interest and commitment to River development.

#### **9) Final Master Plan**

Haas is still on schedule to finish up the master plan by December.

The River Council recommended having the final public presentation of the plan by the Haas team be in January instead of during December. Linda will look at dates/location during the first two weeks in January, avoiding town/city council meetings. The River Council prefers the Holiday Inn as a venue.

#### **10) 2007-2008 LWRP application (Due 11/30/07)**

Linda presented a scenerio for sponsoring and writing the next round of LWRP applications. This idea came up due to limited time available for the City to manage the projects in Chemung and Big Flats in addition to the City's portion and other City grants.

City applications

- 1) Construction of portage/access on south side of river by City
- 2) River Council kiosks/interpretive signage design, fabrication, delivery, and installation in designated municipalities.

Big Flats application (supported by River Council staff)

- 1) Community Park to Minier's trail, 2500 ft, \$100,000?

Town of Chemung (supported by River Council staff)

- 1) White Wagon launch/park

Corning (led by Jennifer Fais)

- 1) Visioning and development of master plan

The River Council expressed a strong preference for one Chemung County application based on the strength of a multi-municipal application and the importance of a coordinated and united approach to the development and implementation of the master river plan (a rationale for the current funding that established the River Council)

Linda will meet with Jennifer and consider what options we have.

#### **11. Next meeting: **Tuesday, Nov. 13 from 3-4:00****

**Attachment**

Big Flats Open House (10-18-07) Summary

# Big Flats Open House 10-18-07 Summary

## 3 individuals filled out feedback form

### Chemung resident

*Rating of priority:* 1 Trails, 2 portage, 3 recreation, 4 historical significance, 5 access

*What project is most important to you? Why?* 6 mile trail. Beautiful trail along the river following old DL&W right of way. My hope is that the state will leave enough of the right of way intact for the trail. I use the Catherine Valley Trail often and find it very enjoyable. I ride my bicycle along the right of way now from Elmira (opposite Dunn Field) to Lowman as far as I can.

*What about this plan will attract people to the area?* I go to other areas where there are long trails (Allentown area) to ride my bike on and to explore. This would bring people here.

*Comments - Passions Feedback:* To have a trail to bike or walk on from Big Flats to Waverly would be a wonderful thing (Also to be able to use my boat), I think the White Water park around the dam is a great idea.

### Big Flats Planning Board member

*Ranking of priority:* 1 access, 2 trails, 3 recreation, 4 historical significance, 5 portage, other= private owner cooperation

*What project is most important to you? Why?* Peaceful trails in semi-wilderness, natural settings

*Comments - Passions Feedback* Please don't clutter with commercial interests too close by!

*What about this plan will attract people to the area?* If families are visiting it should be a great change - of - pace from sightseeing - a more peaceful day!

### River Front property owner, Elmira & Big Flats

*Ranking of priorities:* 1 recreation, 2 trails, 3 portage, 4 historical significance, 5 access

*Comments - Passions Feedback* Picnic and playground facilities at Grove Park Boat Launch would be quick to accomplish and modest cash out lay would likely result in immediate positive results.

*What project is most important to you? Why?* Compost toilet at boat launches is a good idea which complements the suggestion below.

*What about this plan will attract people to the area?*

1. ?Parallel to Erie Canal?
2. Booklets for people - maps, info, etc.
3. Blueway Underwater Trails - Pilot Project State D.O.S. Steve Wrestle, Dave Recho. Flupa.org Finger Lakes underwater preserve association

1. ? Additional right of way along 352 for bike/pedestrian trail.
- 2.? River trail through Willow Creek Golf Course-Tree-hedge buffer or netting.
3. Invite world-awesome sites!
4. Focus on segment & do it-too broad/unorganized.
5. Connect with Corning.
6. Abandoned trolley routes-revert to land owner?
7. Easy project first-do it, phase in projects.

## **Flip chart comments**

1. Need better organization.
2. Impact on private landowners-data "after trails done" liability/trash, etc.
3. Trails don't go anywhere-need to connect. Can bike ride from BF to Elmira-go somewhere, family friendly.
4. Community Park/Trail/Miniers-ownership issues?
5. Funds-competing with other trail projects? 6. Safety issues, maintenance, winter use? Who patrols?
7. Any capacity limits on trails?