Leelanau Scenic Heritage Route Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday, November 25, 2013 12:00 noon
Leelanau County Government and Community Center, Suttons Bay MI

Members Present
Charles Godbout, Leelanau County Planning Commission
Lois Bahle, Suttons Bay Chamber of Commerce
Tom Nixon, Suttons Bay Township
Chris Barber, Omena Village Preservation Association
Leonard Marszalek, Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes

Staff
Paul Bussey, Northwest Michigan Council of Governments

I. Welcome and Introductions
Charles Godbout called the meeting to order at 12:20 pm. Meeting location changed from the Leelanau Peninsula Chamber of Commerce to the Leelanau County Government and Community Center.

II. Review Proposed Agenda
Charlie stated that there is no quorum requirement included in the bylaws. No changes or modifications to proposed agenda. Agenda approved by consensus.

III. Review Previous Meeting’s Minutes (June 24, 2013)
Motion made by Tom Nixon, support by Lois Bahle, to approve the minutes from October 28, 2013. Motion passed.

IV. New Business
a. Promote the byway
Charlie stated this item was added with hopes of speaking with representatives from the Chambers of Commerce. This was one reason for holding the meeting at the Leelanau Peninsula Chamber of Commerce for this month’s meeting. Lois suggested using the Suttons Bay visitor center as a way to educate the public on the byway, especially through educating the volunteers at the visitor center. Tom mentioned that there are a few opportunities to do this at annual gatherings. He mentioned area schools, a traveling show or PowerPoint presentation, and pamphlets as ideas to promote the byway. He added that area libraries could also serve in this. Chris mentioned print ads such as Michigan Blue magazine and Traverse Magazine.

Lois asked about the affiliation with Pure Michigan. Charlie responded that this would be a new funding source for the byway, and that there will be a name change for the program. Leonard mentioned a potential duplication with Experience 231. Lois offered Rotary as a source to encourage collaboration with Experience 231.

Charlie stated that being at events and creating a traveling display could promote the byway. Lois suggested getting information on events from the County chamber’s list of events. Paul will pull chamber information from the chambers as a starting point to bring back to the group. The committee will decide at which events to commit to in promoting the byway. Charlie mentioned the Anchor, Asparagus and Art festivals specifically and brought back the idea of a traveling display. He also suggested attending township and village meetings.

Tom suggested brainstorming on signage and restarting conversations with the M22 store. Invite them as guests, talk about promotion since we can’t market. Leonard suggested that the M22 store could carry our wayfinding guide at their store. Charlie said that the Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail has a bumper
sticker. The committee could create bumper stickers from the logo. Take the stickers on the traveling show to hand out. The guides have a $2.00 suggested donation price on them.

V. Project Updates
a. Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail Update
Leonard Marszalek gave an update on the SBHTrail. Next segment [Dune Climb to Bar Lake] has been contracted through MDOT with Elmer’s due to start in March 2014 and complete by end June 2014. Wayfinding / signage for this segment has been obligated with the National Scenic Byways grant and signs are on order. All sign installation will be by volunteers of the Friends.

A new trailhead is being established near the Dune Climb, known as the Sleeping Bear Heritage Trailhead which will contain an info kiosk, bike racks, donor recognition and other interpretive information. The Friends will be holding the contract for this work and collaborate with the SLBE during the construction process. Additionally the Friends will be contracting for a spur trail link from the main SBHT to the trailhead at Pierce-Stocking Drive. All of this work is targeted to be completed simultaneously with the new trail segment opening at the end of June 2014. The new trailhead at Bar Lake will be constructed by SLBE and be completed in the same timeframe.

MDOT has committed to continue with the design / engineering on the next segments of the trail [Glen Arbor to Port Oneida and Port Oneida to Bohemian Road]. They have the background and experience which is a great asset. Additionally, they will maintain the prime design engineer to continue with the project.

SBHT cross country ski season opens on Dec 1st; new ski etiquette signs were prepared and have been installed. XC grooming will start once the snow starts to arrive. Stay tuned for ski reports.

Glen Arbor is waiting to install trail signs through the township until the next segment from Glen Arbor to Port Oneida is in place. GATWp has related that they will be preparing and installing additional signage to direct users into the GA business area safely.

A section of trail between Forest Haven at M22 and Lakewood is being reviewed to possibly be redesigned as an off-road trail connector rather than utilizing the existing shoulders of M22. More info later.

Leonard met with several business interests in Empire who are interested in providing some added signage to promote facilities and businesses in the Village of Empire. Paul Skinner and Chris Frey are engaged in this effort from Empire.

Finally, SLBE has an RFP out for proposal and interests in developing the Sleeping Bear Inn at Glen Haven. There were two walk throughs and several interested groups. More to come. A couple of the interested parties commented that the trail provided a significant benefit for the Inn development potential.

b. Protect Viewsheds and Corridors
Charlie noted that the Clay Cliffs acquisition closed in November.

c. Stories/ Historical Sites Work Group
Tom stated that the Suttons Bay visitor center is going to be upgraded. 24 historical photos will be added with the help of Bahle’s. Lois asked if the lease agreement on the center was confirmed for next year. Tom stated that is sounds like it is done. He added that no historical artifacts will be added, only photos. Charlie suggested collaborating with area museums and historical societies. He added that Empire is a great resource and that they may be expanding to add a new building.

d. Educational and Interpretive
Item was tabled.

e. Wayfinding
Charlie stated that the committee needs to determine the quantity of guides needed for 2014. In communications with Tom Doyle, MDOT, Charlie was reminded to not include commercial information. Stick to public and quasi-public sources. Paul will contact LIAA as the web host to work out printing wayfinding guides from assets on website. Charlie added that there are Conservancy properties on the website. Many are not up yet including preserves, trails and the Clay Cliffs. These are all quasi-public spaces.

f. Website
Paul updated the committee on progress with the website. He added information from the area chambers of commerce to complete with “Eat, Shop, Sleep” and “Farms and Wineries” collections. Links are now up to bring visitors to the chambers’ sites for hotels, farms, shopping, restaurants, wineries, etc. for areas covered by information on each chamber’s page.

Leonard restated his concern for duplication with Experience231.org which covers the area with the 231 area code. Paul will contact someone at the site. Lois stated that a reciprocating site is always good.

Charlie asked for volunteers to add descriptions for parks and water access sites. Paul mentioned his work on the Lake Michigan Water Trail. If a volunteer is identified, the information could inform both projects. Leonard mentioned that the University of Michigan students will be doing their Masters presentations in April with the Bay to Bay Hiking and Water Trail from Platte bay to Good Harbor bay. This is a big project for the Friends. Park Service identifies nearly 2,000 acres between Echo Valley Rd and the lake for recreation and bike trails. Cherry Republic is supportive of the idea. Burnham Rd. is included in this. Recreational opportunities are expanding at the park.

VI. Old Business
a. Craftworks project. Paul updated the committee on this talks with Tom Doyle, MDOT regarding funding for website development. Tom wants to see a written report outlining the scope of work to better understand what this would involve. Charlie stated that the committee has only had volunteers do this before. The committee has not paid anyone for their work on the website, and worried that this would set a precedent. The scope of work could be limited to remain in the bounds of asking for this to remain a volunteer effort. Tom Nixon stated that, alternatively, the Craftworks project could re-examine the existing data, authenticate the data and locations and potentially add more data. Charlie added that once this information is uploaded then gears shift to maintenance of the information. Tom stated that he envisioned a redoing of the Craftworks project as a study of existing cultural assets along the byway. Paul will work on a report to send to Tom Doyle and report back to the committee before submitting.

b. MDOT work plan and performance evaluation. The committee reviewed the revised performance evaluation. Lois made a motion to approve the document with support from Tom Nixon. Motion carried. The committee then reviewed the revised work plan and held a brief discussion on the new version. Changes were suggested to the budget section reflecting a change in quantity of brochures to be printed and the discussion on the Craftworks project. Tom made a motion to approve the document with revisions, with support from Leonard. Motion carried.

VII. Correspondence
None

VIII. Committee Member Comments
Chris: Omena has slowed down lately.
Tom: Visitor center remodel and historical photos. TART trail north to Dumas Rd. Landscaping installed along with split cedar fencing.
Lois: slopes along trail are ADA compliant. Curbing has been replaced by Bayview.
Leonard: Use survey of Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail. Gathered data on user age groups, helmets, etc. Also attended an MDOT seminar, “Training Wheels”, in May. Planning and designing on-road bicycle facilities. 5 have been done statewide this year. Charlie stated we will put this on a future agenda. Lois- Leelanau trail voted among top 10 trails by Rails to Trails. Drove US-23 from Tawas City to Cheboygan.

IX. Public Comment
none

X. Next meeting
Scheduled on Monday, January 27th, 2014 at noon.
Leelanau County Chamber of Commerce, Lake Leelanau.

XI. Adjourn
The meeting was adjourned at 1:45pm