

ONOTA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

7-9-2019

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Bill Dunham at 7:15 pm.

- Present: Bill Dunham, Fred Ivers, Michael Tarr, Martin Dolan, Erin Leahy Putvin, Brian Mahoney
- Absent: Brian Bresette

II. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

A motion was made to adopt the agenda as amended (*added "A. Conditional Use Request" under new business*).

Motion: Brian Mahoney
Support: Martin Dolan
Motion carried: 6-0

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the 6-11-2019 meeting as amended for grammatical errors.

Motion: Martin Dolan
Support: Brian Mahoney
Motion carried: 6-0

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Charlene MacDonnell followed up on her comment from the 6-11-2019 meeting on the *Mining Journal* article. Catherine Kimar has a copy of the article. Erin Leahy Putvin tracked down the article on the web and it is attached to these minutes.

V. REPORTS

A. Zoning Administrator: Mike Tietjen

- One application was approved: Mr. Henricksen's storage site. Zoning administrator took pictures and measurements this evening. Mr. Henricksen's deposit has been made. The zoning of this property is by-right use in town development section. Mr. Tietjen should approve the application this evening.
- Zoning administrator is not sure about the status of the encampment location mentioned in the 6-11-2019 minutes. Legally, this project should be at all stop.
- Mr. Tietjen is recommending that the township make zoning forms and applications available to complete and submit on the Onota Township website. This way, forms can be directly submitted and reviewed without the current delay. He is asking that this item be discussed by the Onota Township Board. Bill Dunham requested that Mr. Tietjen contact Catherine Kimar, Clerk, to have this item added to the next Onota Township Board meeting agenda. Mr. Tietjen agreed to contact Catherine directly. The Planning Commission members agreed that this is a prudent request that will benefit the township and each endorsed the idea.

B. Township Board Representative: absent, no report

VI. CORRESPONDENCE

A. Easement Request

Letter received from First Bank asking for township assistance in accessing land acquired by foreclosure. Lots 19 and 20 in Shelter Bay were acquired and there is no access to lots. The consensus of the Planning Commission was to direct First Bank to the township attorney, Roger Zappa. Erin Leahy Putvin will draft a response letter to the bank as soon as possible and send copies to the attorney, Clerk Catherine Kimar and Supervisor Terry Pihlainen.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Conditional Use Permit

Michael and Barb Anthony submitted a Conditional Use Permit Application for their new rental at 4020 M28 East. Zoning Administrator voiced that the Anthonys are not required to submit this application. Their current zoning is by-right in Town Development. Based on this zoning, a Conditional Use Permit is not needed.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Char MacDonnell mentioned the idea of requiring fees and licenses for rentals as done in Marquette. In response, Mike Tietjen informed that Alger County Inspector Joe Cilc must be notified of all vacation rentals, must inspect for life, health, and safety then allow certificate of occupancy (if inspection is passed) stating ingress, egress, and number of occupants. Certificate of Occupancy should be available for Mr. Tietjen to reference in case of violation of usage. The issues of licensing and fees should be directed to and addressed by the county.

IX. COMMISSION CONCERNS

This was Marty Dolan's last meeting on the Planning Commission. The entire commission would like to thank Marty for his steadfastness and dedication to Onota Township. His work is greatly appreciated.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Bill Dunham asked if there was a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 pm.

Motion: Fred Ivers

Support: Martin Dolan

Motion carried: 6-0

Respectfully Submitted,
Erin Leahy Putvin
Planning Commission Secretary

from *The Mining Journal*

Iron Belle Trail projects awarded grants

June 10, 2019

MARQUETTE — The North Country Trail Association has been awarded \$50,000 for design of the Laughing Whitefish River Bridge in Alger County, one of more than two dozen projects along Michigan's Iron Belle Trail that will share \$1.4 million in public and privately raised funds.

The funds will help build connections along the trail, which stretches over 2,000 miles, and is the longest state-designated trail in the United States. The Iron Belle Trail runs along two separate routes: a hiking segment that mainly follows the North Country National Scenic Trail on the west side and an 800-mile bike trail running between Belle Isle in Detroit to Ironwood. The trail is just over 70 percent completed.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources has awarded \$815,884 in mini-grants, while the private Iron Belle Trail Fund has added another \$650,000 to support multiple projects on the trail. Grants from these sources will leverage a matching \$3 million in Iron Belle Trail projects.

The 25 DNR mini-grants include a \$50,000 grant for construction of the Canyon Falls Boardwalk, also awarded to the NCTA, and \$49,980 to the DNR for construction along the Tahquamenon River Trail at Tahquamenon Falls State Park.

A \$15,000 mini-grant was awarded to Crystal Falls Township for engineering of a Heritage Trail extension, while \$8,000 will go toward signage for the Dickinson County Bike Path.

Kenny Wawczyk, Michigan regional trail coordinator for the NCTA, explained the Laughing Whitefish and Canyon Falls projects in an email.

“The current structures (puncheon and staircases) leading to and from the river crossing are deteriorating and pose a major safety hazard for hikers,” Wawczyk said of the Laughing Whitefish project. *“The bridge over the Laughing Whitefish River is also deteriorating and is nearing the end of life expectancy. This section of trail is in a very remote area and with the number of structures besides the bridge, the proper design and implementation will be challenging.”*

The Canyon Falls Boardwalk project will replace the existing structures found along the route of the North Country National Scenic Trail and Iron Belle Trail leading to the falls, he said. Several short sections will be added to maximize the sustainability of the trail, reduce the ecological damage and improve hikers' safety and overall experience.

He also noted nearly 700 feet of type 3 puncheon — a post — and boardwalk will need to be constructed.

“There is existing puncheon and boardwalk currently built, but the material is decaying and becoming a hazard for the users,” Wawsczyk said. *“The foundations used for the current structures were not pressure treated, and with the ground contact and consistent moisture, these structures have passed their life expectancy.”*

All new material that will be in contact with the ground will be ground-contact pressure treated, he said, and because of the size of the project, a contractor will be needed. Volunteers will be used when able.

Connie Julien, president of the Peter Wolfe Chapter of the NCTA, said via email: “The PWC is very excited that this very popular section of the trail we maintain is getting this new boardwalk, which will improve the safety and enjoyment of this walk to the falls.

“We are also happy that folks can continue upstream from the Canyon Falls trailhead for more hiking along the river on the new NCT trail the PWC constructed last season, going east on the new NCT to old U.S. 41.”

For more information or to learn about the chapter’s monthly local trail hikes on the NCT, go to northcountrytrail.org/pwf or visit its Facebook page at [Facebook.com/ NCT.PWC.Michigan](https://www.facebook.com/NCT.PWC.Michigan).

“Momentum has been building for several years on the Iron Belle Trail, and these grants will ensure that it continues,” said Dakota Hewlett, Iron Belle Trail coordinator, in a news release. *“Several communities have used the mini-grant process to study, engineer and, now, build segments of the trail. It’s exciting to see these plans come together.”*

For more information on the Iron Belle Trail, visit Michigan.gov/IronBelle.

Christie Bleck can be reached at 906-228-2500, ext. 250. Her email address is cbleck@miningjournal.net.

Link to article: <https://www.miningjournal.net/news/front-page-news/2019/06/iron-belle-trail-projects-awarded-grants/>

Link to Iron Belle Interactive Trail Map

https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79133_79206_83634---,00.html