

MINUTES OF RAMARA TRAILS COMMITTEE FUNDRAISING MEETING –January 19, 2021 1:00 PM via ZOOM

ATTENDANCE

Larry Barton	Chair
Bob Masching	Vice Chair
Paul Grunsten	
Annalynn Faulkner	
Janet Masching	Secretary
Stefanie Moy-Shuster	
Jennifer Fisher	Councillor
Sarah Karabin	Ramara Works Department

REGRETS

Steve Weinberg	
David Snutch	Councillor

1. **Updates** Larry Bob & Janet met with John Pinsent and Nathan McLachlan of Talisker to discuss a permanent agreement re the land on which the proposed boardwalk trail is to be built. There appears to be no problem. Nathan will work with John to get this done. The present lease runs out in 2023.

Re a future trail from the “T” to 47, not included in the present lease, this will be more complicated. Larry noted the Lagoon City trail is well used now, there are sometimes 10 cars parked at the trail entrance.

Bob acted as chair for this meeting on fundraising for the proposed trail. Bob showed everyone an unofficial map from Brendan Matheson of Cycle Simcoe showing the cycling trail all around Lake Simcoe which very clearly shows the “missing link” where the trail follows Highway 12.

2. **Timeline** Bob reviewed the proposed timeline to get the boardwalk trail done. . We have done Step 1, the meeting with Talisker, will be complete once land agreement is done. The next step is to get Ramara’s formal commitment to the boardwalk and to future funding. Zach Drinkwalter advised via Sarah we will need to present a fundraising plan to Council. He will send an outline of the requirements. Issues to determine: Can we solicit donations from businesses with contracts with the township; can naming rights be given to a bank or other major donor in exchange for a substantial donation?
3. **Offer to Rail bed owner.** Stefanie raised the question that the substantial fundraising required will be more difficult if we do not have anything on paper, showing that the Township made a reasonable offer for the rail bed which was refused by the landowner.
A **motion** was made by Janet, seconded by Stefanie and carried unanimously: The Committee requests that the township make a formal written offer to the landowner, giving a limited time

to respond, for the purchase of the land or of a right of way over the land which is the rail bed between the Talisker land and Side Road 15.

4. **Potential Donors** Bob based the list on Chamber of Commerce and other information. He asked that everyone review the list, add the names of other businesses, and let him or Janet know which ones they have a personal connection with, or could take on. We will decide later, which to approach in person and which by mail.
 Re foundations: Bob will contact the Trillium Foundation, which asks that a personal contact be made before any application is made. He doesn't know about Ducks Unlimited. CN and CP do not look promising. Canada Post has a foundation. He asks that if any of us is aware of a foundation, to do some research as to what they fund, deadlines, and let him know.
 Banks: We will approach appropriate banks. Naming rights to be addressed with township.

5. **Supporter levels** We will need to consider if we need them and what is appropriate. A fundraiser's advice: to give names associated with nature(or railways). Orillia Hospital calls \$1-5000 a Friend, 5-10,000 Builder, 10-25,000 Colleague and 25-50,000 a Companion. Bruce Trails uses: supporter up to \$200, friend 200-499 trail blazer 500-999, trail keeper 100-2499, partner 2500-4999, trustee \$5000-\$9999, leader \$10,000-19,999. Then Conservator 20-49999, Guardian of the Biosphere Reserve, Protector of the B.R., Steward of The B.R. Patron of the B. R., Benefactor...,Champion.., Visionary and Heritage Club Member(for a planned gift). Lots of ideas.

6. **Website for Fund Raising & Payment** Sarah said Ramara's Finance department can set up a website, which will set out the relevant information on the boardwalk trail project and facilitate payment. Also a link to CanadaHelps.org which many people use for charitable donations would make it easy to donate. A monthly giving option is suggested.

7. **Income Tax Receipts** Zach will look after issuing receipts. A minimum amount should be specified, e.g. a \$20 donation for a receipt to be provided.

8. **Donor Recognition** This can be done on the website, if the donor consents. To consider: plaques to recognize donations. Donors could contribute x amount for a section of trail, based on labour & material costs. Naming rights for a very large donor to be determined. A fundraiser recommended a large sign be reserved for a large/naming donor.

9. **Proposal /Budget** A firm budget is essential to drafting funding/donor proposals and promotional material. We will approach local suppliers to see if lumber can be supplied at cost. Re labour, we could approach contractors to ask that they do the labour for x number of sections(170 sections is number estimated at 10 feet each). The big unknown is the cost of helical piles. Larry and Paul will contact a couple of companies who will drill test holes and provide estimates. Larry will let us know when this is happening so we can be there and learn more about helical piles.

Stefanie: one approach to widen the field of donors is to emphasize the trail “completes the circle around Lake Simcoe.” This approach was used by Trans-Canada trail: you buy a yard to build a trail across Canada.

We need to decide who will work on the proposal/promotion materials.

For a big donor, fundraiser’s advice is: start with a personal connection if possible, make an informal approach, followed up right away with a formal 1-2 page formal PDF document. It should be custom tailored to the big donor, and include a solid budget. For smaller donors, have a one-page flyer that will resonate with members of the public. Use visuals, include a photo of a similar boardwalk in wetlands.

10. **Silent Auction** This would not happen until the fall of this year. Depending on Covid, could be virtual or in person. Virtual: has the advantage of a longer time period for bidding, resulting in higher prices for bigger items such as art. Being more spread out, there is less pressure on the organizers. In person: one advantage is the after-work is less, as bidders pick up the goods right away.

Ideas for items to auction: goods that tie into the trail/nature such as sporting goods or that tie into the rail origins eg a round-trip train ticket from Via Rail. Goods that give a sense of where the money will be going ex.: a section of boardwalk value \$1000. Art & entertainment are popular: Orillia Opera House gift certificates or Casino Rama entertainment.

We will need a team to organize a silent auction, if we decide to do that.

Janet will ask the fundraiser re the best way to stage virtual auction, all at once, a few a week?

11. **Timing** Fund-raising will likely start in late spring. The effect of Covid must be considered in approaching businesses: those in the hospitality industry have been badly affected. An in-kind donation to a silent auction, rather than cash might be appropriate. Marinas, big box stores, hardware, grocery stores have done better.

Individual fund-raising: individuals, especially seniors who have not spent money on travel, restaurants etc. may have funds available to donate.

Discussion re this was a full meeting of the Trails Committee to discuss fund raising, not an ad hoc committee on fundraising.

The meeting adjourned at 2:20. We agreed to set a date for another fundraising meeting at our next committee meeting January 28. Larry will confirm the time once he has canvassed the new members/potential members.