

River Area Council of Governments
February 17, 2021

Members present: J. Der, B. Ferguson, R. Grunert, W. McIlroy,
R. Schell, P. Smith, S. Storms, K. Vogt, and J. Zando

Others: M. Cervini, M. Dietrich, S. Docteur, K. Ewald (B&L), C. Fowler, J. Harvill,
J. Peck, K. Reff (DOT), B. Steria, and J. Waterbury

Chairman McIlroy called the virtual Zoom meeting to order at 5:58pm.

Motion by P. Smith, seconded by S. Storms to approve the minutes of January 20, 2021 as presented. Ayes-9, Nays-0. Motion carried.

M. Dietrich introduced K. Reff, NYSDOT, and K. Ewald, Barton & Louguidice, to present and discuss information regarding the Black River Trail.

K. Reff presented maps/drawings for the existing and proposed trail system. K. Ewald stated that the proposed connections being studied may someday connect Dexter to Carthage. The current priority is to connect the existing trail to Fort Drum along the Black River wherever possible. He invited RACOG to share any maps or studies for trails in the RACOG area for future consideration.

W. McIlroy supported a connection to Fort Drum but advocated the use of abandoned railroad beds from Felts Mills toward Carthage citing potential safety concerns if NYS Route 3 is utilized. J. Peck, Jefferson County Legislator, voiced concerns about build out near the railroad beds.

R. Schell asked if T/Lowville can be included in the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) corridor to leverage grant funds. W. McIlroy stated that the railroad bed could connect Carthage to Castorland and Lowville. J. Peck stated the MPO receives federal funds and the boundaries are limited to urban areas identified by the census.

Circuit Rider

M. Dietrich distributed his report via email and summarized it for those in attendance.

New Business

Motion by P. Smith, seconded by J. Zando to approve an update to the IMA to include the V/Lowville. Ayes-9, Nays-0. Motion carried.

Members discussed changes to the RACOG By-laws including the number of members to establish a quorum and votes per municipality. Motion by R. Schell, seconded by P. Smith to make the following changes:

- Section 6: Meeting quorum
“...when representatives from a minimum of six (6) member town and villages are present.”
- Section 6: Voting
“At all meetings, the highest-ranking representative properly appointed shall be entitled to cast a vote for their municipality unless herein otherwise provided.”
If the vote is tied, the proposed action shall be considered denied.

M. Dietrich discussed adding an associate circuit rider to attend meetings as necessary. Motion by R. Schell, seconded by P. Smith to table the matter. Ayes-9, Ayes-0. Motion carried.

Future Presenters

J. Zando suggested inviting a representative from US Border Security to present at the next meeting. M. Dietrich will advise if arrangements can be made.

Referencing the earlier discussion, P. Smith questioned why the MPO has not presented a plan to provide bus service between Carthage/West Carthage and Watertown. J. Peck explained that the public transit would fall outside the defined MPO boundaries but, with assistance from the County Mobility Manager, the plan is under consideration including spurs to lake and river communities.

Motion by R. Schell, seconded by P. Smith to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:12pm.

Christina Vargulick
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RACOG Secretary