

**ForeverGreen Trails Board Meeting
Tacoma Nature Center
Minutes for March 14, 2018**

In Attendance: Andrew Austin, Bryan Bowden, Mary Dodsworth, Buzz Grant, Jane Moore (Executive Director), Bob Myrick, Heather Rawley (Project and Communications Coordinator), Terry Reid (Vice President), George Walk (Treasurer)

Excused: Chris Beale (President), Alan Carter Mortimer (Secretary), Shawn Phelps

Guests: Roxanne Miles, Pierce County Parks, Liz Kaster, Puyallup Watershed Initiative Active Transportation Community of Interest; Kristina Walker, Downtown On the Go

Vice President Terry Reid called the meeting to order at 12:05 pm.

Terry discussed a message from President Chris Beale. At the April meeting, we will discuss the case statement analysis of ForeverGreen Trails produced by the University of Puget Sound business students. The students have been asked to interview the remaining board members and update their case statement based on results. On April 2, there will be a joint function for ForeverGreen Trails and Foothills Coalition board members. The 3 board members from each organization that met to discuss the organizations will report on those meetings. Refreshments will be provided. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

Review and Approve Minutes - Bryan moved to approve the December minutes, George seconded. Motion was approved unanimously. Bryan moved to approve the January minutes, George seconded. Motion was approved unanimously. There was no quorum in February so there are no minutes to approve.

Financial Update Executive Director Jane Moore reviewed the written report. Current balance (all funds) is \$19,351.36.

Tacoma to Puyallup Trail Connection Presentation, Liz Kaster, Puyallup Watershed Initiative Active Transportation Community of Interest Manager. The goal of the AT COI is to increase access to safe, healthy, low-cost opportunities for active transportation in the Puyallup watershed from Mt. Rainier to Puget Sound. Their first big project was the Health & Economic Benefits of Trails report released in 2016. This report has been used successfully in support of grant applications allowing the City of Tacoma to receive funding to complete the Pipeline Trail to the city limits by the end of 2019.

The AT COI is now building on the work already done by ForeverGreen Trails to complete a connection between Tacoma and Puyallup along the Puyallup River. Funding is available for a Tacoma to Puyallup Connection Master Class with Scan Design in Copenhagen. The goal is to build political will for the project not to pick a route or design a trail. Planning will begin here; there will be a visit to Copenhagen in August to see infrastructure that works for all ages and abilities. Liz & Kristina Walker will lead the project. Chris Beale will represent ForeverGreen Trails. Others in the group include Roger Millar, Secretary of Transportation for State of Washington; Mayors of Tacoma, Fife, and Puyallup; 2 tribal council members and the planning director for the Puyallup Tribe of Indians. They are still working to get a representative from Pierce County.

Liz presented a handout – Policy & Planning Overview – listing existing policy support for a Tacoma to Puyallup trail connection. If anyone is aware of other existing policies, they should let Liz know. The Pierce County Flood Control Plan and the 1970 Corps of Engineers Plan were mentioned as well as PSRC Regional plan and plans for the cross-state trail – Fred Wetz, Rails-to-Trails consultant is working on cross-state trail. Liz will conduct stakeholder interviews with relevant staff from each jurisdiction involved. She will create a summary of major projects and how those will affect the connection.

On return from trip to Copenhagen, a Technical Committee will be formed to put together plans. There will be additional public engagement to include leaders who could not attend and a free community gathering to report results. A final document with shared priorities will be created.

Relevant Projects on or near the Tacoma to Puyallup Connection: SR 167, Canyon Road extension, Pierce County Flood Control levee work (Tony Fortino), Corps of Engineers Flood Control study with planned setback levees; Sound Transit Light Rail through Fife and Tacoma, Tacoma's Puyallup Avenue project; Eels Street bridge on Pacific Highway between Fife and Tacoma – connections on & off of bridge; Pierce County Parks in discussions with Surface Water Management (Melissa McFadden) about co-management of property to support public use; consider connections with Riverwalk and Foothills Trail, City of Puyallup.

Other issues: remember tribal concerns around protection of fishing rights; has been basis for past resistance to trail; increasing knowledge of health benefits of trails seems to be moving the pendulum. Mary will send notes from a meeting with JBLM on cultural differences.

Fund Development Presentation, Kristina Walker, Executive Director, Downtown On the Go. This is a presentation given about 1 ½ years ago at AT COI; updated as they have learned a lot since then. Downtown On the Go (DOTG) is a 501c4 organization that developed from the Tacoma Pierce County Chamber of Commerce, a 501c6 organization. A 501c4 group may engage in unlimited advocacy, including campaigns and individuals, and can tell people how to vote. DOTG activities include walking, biking, and transit events; Friday Forum discussions; Park(ing) Day; Bike Month; advocacy; and Commute Trip Reduction work in Olympia. Most of DOTG original funding came from government grants. In 2015 using funding from AT COI, they hired a consultant and developed a plan. Originally, they divided funding into 3 buckets: grants, fund raisers, and sponsors. They later added a fourth – fee-for-service work. Kristina presents a monthly report to the board as a spreadsheet with an overview of activities and a tab for each area with more detail.

They developed a 5-year projection plan with high level income numbers but no expenses. Goal was to balance revenue sources (illustrated with pie charts) and diversify so not as reliant on a single source of funding. They re-do the 5-year plan each year.

Sponsors: starting with the walk events, they set a goal of \$25,000 in sponsors. First, they identified potential sources for about twice that amount; then they figured out who would make the ask and how to get in the door. Board members provide introductions; ED and 2 full-time staff members do asking. They are careful not to promise exclusivity unless there is a primary sponsor with a large gift for a particular event. They can also set up a sponsorship package when that makes sense. They create nice materials to use when approaching potential sponsors. They hit from multiple angles and levels as a team effort. They start very early; it may take a full year to get to a sponsorship agreement.

Grants: there are never-ending possibilities; may take multiple applications to the same organization, so be prepared for failure. Think logically about where work fits in; may need to adjust goals if grant amount is lower than requested. They have submitted 14 applications and received funding from 7. There are many grant opportunities, but writing applications takes a lot of time.

Donations/Individual Giving/Fund Raising: be cautious of big, gala events – they take a lot of time and expense and there is lots of competition. Getting people to an event is key. Event does not necessarily need to connect with programs. House Party events have been successful. A board member invites people to their home to wine & dine; then asks for donation to organization. Important to keep a good list of donors from fund-raisers; thank them multiple times. Call with updates; don't always ask for money. Donor retention is important; average donation has increased from less than \$50 to greater than \$70 over time. They don't currently seek individual donors outside of events.

Fund Raising Planning: reviewed FGT Fundraising Draft Plan – 2018 handout. Mary noted that chasing money creates more work; we need to be sure to focus on what we are doing.

Kristina noted that the DOTG board members create their own goals at the start of each year. They pledge an amount (no set minimum) and give throughout the year including at events. Each person pledges an amount that is meaningful to them. She tracks donations from board members at each event; if donations are only from board members, the event is not needed.

Discussed spending more time on the trails conference: recruit more sponsors, add vendors, charge a higher

registration fee (many are paid by agencies), package sponsorships with tickets to event. Bob mentioned TrailNet (Missouri trails organization) as an example. He also noted that the Nisqually Land Trust has 2 events per year: a dinner-auction in spring with tickets \$80-100 and a less expensive salmon feed on the river in the fall. He thinks they are very successful at raising money. He also suggested hosting events every 1-2 months, geographically spread, at places easy to bike or walk to. We should focus our resources to get the best return on investment. Need to know if we benefit from every activity. We should focus our time and energy on a few activities.

2018-2020 Budget: handout provided and reviewed. Bob moved to approve the budget; Andrew seconded; passed unanimously.

Terry adjourned the meeting at 2:30 pm.