

**Rails to Trails of the Withlacoochee Citizen Support Organization**  
**Board of Directors Meeting, November 10, 2016**  
**4:30 PM, Ft. Cooper Pavilion, Inverness, FL**

The Board of Directors of the Citizen Support Organization of the Rails to Trails of the Withlacoochee was called to order by President Sherry Bechtel at 4:33 PM at the Ft. Cooper Pavilion. Present were Rich Roussel, Vice-president, Kerry Smith, Treasurer, Pam Atkinson, Secretary and Directors Steve Diez, Jim McLean, Dennis Reiland, Linda Reiland, Ken Spilios, and Don Zutaut. In addition, Al Cairns, Merchandise Chairman and Jeanna Smith attended. Dianne Drye, Park Services Specialist introduced Chris Raby, newly appointed Park Manager of Ft. Cooper State Park and the Withlacoochee State Trail.

Sherry confirmed the **meeting dates** for the organization for 2017 as follows:

**Board of Directors Meeting:** 4:30 PM, at Ft. Cooper State Park, Thursday, February 9, April 13, September 14, November 9. **Membership Meeting:** 5:00 PM, Lakes Region Library, Inverness, Thursday, February 16, , April 20, September 21, and November 16.

**Treasurer's Report:** Kerry reported a Total Asset Balance of \$113,732.33 with year to date expenses of \$21,641.99. He recommended the establishment of a Finance Committee to oversee the organization's finances (Refer to Account Balances Per Statements Report for October, 2016.)

Following discussion, Pam moved to form a Finance Committee, seconded by Linda, passed unanimously. The members of the Finance Committee are Kerry Smith, Al Cairns, Rich Roussel, and Ken Spilios. The Committee plans to report back to the Board in February. Additional areas for consideration by this Committee include merchandise sales and overhead costs, the Amazon Smile Program, and Park Service restrictions on types of merchandise sold, if any. Kerry will update signature cards on the Bank of America account and give a check book to Sherry to use for expenses that require a check. As the meeting progressed, the following titles were also proposed as budget categories: Tree Fund, Bike Racks, Equipment, Equipment Rental, Website Maintenance

**Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws Review:** Steve Diez as well as Kerry and Jeanna Smith had previously agreed to complete this review, as both documents are out of date. Rich has offered to assist as did Chris. As previously noted, Julianna Tabonne, Coordinator of District 4 CSO Programs, should review document changes prior to any finalization. The Board had previously approved this review unanimously. Steve will forward edited by-law materials to committee members. The Committee will report back to the Board in February, 2017.

**Trees for the Trail:** There was discussion on donations of trees or funds to buy trees to plant along the Trail. If adding trees, a plan is needed for planting and watering new trees. The Board agreed to add to the website a button for the "Donate to the Tree Fund" to purchase additional trees for the Trail.

**Bike Racks:** As new bike racks are needed at the FC Gazebo, the Board discussed replacing and/or adding uniform bike rack styles on the Trail. Both "D" ring and lollipop style were suggested. Sherry will provide bike rack style examples and costs to the Finance Committee.

**Floral City Parking Area:** The new Floral City parking lot is open. As it was built by Citrus County on county property, replacement of dead trees is the county's responsibility. Chris will contact them to advise them that some of the trees are dead.

**Directional Signage on Trail:** Rich mentioned that the "painted on the Trail" directional signs were fading. With Trail traffic increasing, this is a needed maintenance item. Heather and Dave Nagy had previously painted these signs directly on the pavement using stencils. Rich will contact the Nagys about the stencils

**Marking Trail Imperfections:** On a recent trail ride in Pinellas County, Sherry had noted that hazards were marked with bright paint which was helpful to users. Park personnel commented that this would have to be done in a standardized way and that marking blemishes makes the state liable. The suggestion is noted, but no action taken.

**Old Ice Maker:** This broken and unrepairable equipment is on the Park property register and must be surveyed. Chris will bring it back to the Ft. Cooper shop (it's currently in Bushnell), inspect it, and inventory it as surplus.

**Trail Equipment:** Don Z. reported that the idea of purchasing a bucket truck is on hold. He has investigated the rental of an electric lift truck from Taylor Rental when needed and recommended using this for tree maintenance/removal on a trial basis. Don further reported he has located a used, low mileage 2015 Ford Transit van priced at \$28,500. The CSO previously approved an amount not to exceed \$40,000. for replacement vehicles used to move volunteers and equipment. Once purchased, the vehicle will be the property of the state. Chris is to clarify procedures for purchase and usage requirements of said vehicle with the District Office. Don, Kerry, and Chris will further explore the vehicle purchase as funds are allocated and available.

**ATV's on the Trail:** Dianne recommended calling the Citrus County Sheriff's Department to report ATV's on the trail and "get the word out" that this is not permitted.

**Inspection of the Trail for Repairs:** A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) needs to be in place to work with Citrus County on selecting areas for Trail repair. Dianne, along with Jim, Rich, and Don plan to begin identifying priority areas for repair/repaving in the near future with the initial approved allocation of \$10,000. They will be working with Jeff Rogers, Director of Public Works and Larry Brock, Assistant Director. The plan and MOU will also need to be reviewed by the District Office.

**Diamond Storage Center:** As this facility has been sold, the RTW CSO needs to relocate what is currently stored there (paper goods, archives, the caboose stove, T-Shirts). Board consensus was to continue use the storage area until September, 2017, if possible, as the space is air conditioned. Linda will contact Al Harnage who may be able to facilitate this temporary arrangement. Denny will check on space at Gobbler Drive and US 41 for costs and availability in the future.

**CSO Annual Program Plan:** Chris needs to update this plan by December 15<sup>th</sup> for the year 2017. Carryover items are: Support ADA access and improvements; Replace and upgrade benches in covered area; Tool repair and replacement; Conduct Annual Fund Raiser. Added for 2017: Trim and plant trees; Remove uprights at intersections; Improve safety at Citrus Trail Head; Patch the Trail; Add and/or replace bike racks.

**Bike Ride:** There were numerous suggestion for improving the Bike Ride for next year. A list of these will be included in the planning for the 2017 ride. Sherry strongly recommended that the wearing of helmets be required. She also volunteered to chair the ride event **WITH** a co-chairman. Rich volunteered to do Ride Registration. The importance of starting to plan **NOW** for next October was emphasized.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS;** 1. Sherry will attend the CSO Presidents Meeting on December 2 and 3, 2016.

2. Sherry recently attended the Bicycle Tourism Conference in St. Petersburg. She called the Conference stimulating and established network contacts. Board Members requested she present a program on the conference at the April, 2017 Membership Meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Pam Atkinson, RTW CSO Secretary

Membership Meeting scheduled for Thursday, November 17, 2016 at the Lakes Region Library.

