

# SOUTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN RAIL TRANSIT COMMISSION

719 Pioneer Tower • 1 University Plaza • Platteville, Wisconsin 53818  
 Harvey Kubly, Chair • Commission Office Phone 608.342.1636 • Fax 608.342.1220  
 MEMBER COUNTIES: DANE • GREEN

## ADOPTED MINUTES

**Wednesday Oct. 28th, 2009, 2:00pm, Fitchburg DNR Facilities, 3911 Fish Hatchery Road, Fitchburg, WI**

- 1) Harvey Kubly, Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm.
- 2) Roll Call / Establishment of Quorum:

Commission members present for all or part of the meeting:			
Dane	Jim Haefs-Flemming		
	Judy Olson	Secretary	X @ 2:15
	Paul Ziehli	Vice Chair	X
Green	Harvey Kubly	Chair	X
	Oscar Olson	Treasurer	X
	Ron Wolter		X

Others present for all or part of the meeting:	
Amy Seeboth	PRTC Administrator
Peter Bradley	WisDOT
Ken Lucht	WSOR
Brad Bates	Wisconsin DNR
Steve Ehlbeck	Jane Addams Trail Commission & Freeport Park District

- 3) **Certification of Public Notice** – Seeboth, PRTC Administrator
- 4) **Motion approving the Agenda, prepared by Seeboth:** Approval of the Agenda: *Ziehli / Wolter – Passed Unanimously*. Amended to add “Review 2008 SCWRTC Audit for Acceptance” to item 8. – *O. Olson / Wolter / Passed Unanimously*
- 5) **Motion approving the draft July Minutes** - *Wolter / O.Olson / Passed Unanimously*
- 6) **Public Comment** – None
- 7) **Correspondence & Communications** – Kubly updated the Commission that a memorial to Bob Hoesly had been held after the July PRTC Meeting- Bob’s Children were in attendance.

## REPORTS & COMMISSION BUSINESS

- 8) **SCWRTC Financial Report** – Oscar Olson, SCWRTC Treasurer, distributed copies of the Treasurer’s Report and provided an overview. Seeboth explained that her office paid several Illinois Property Tax Bills (approximately \$1500) on behalf of the RTC and these appear in the expenses for SWWRPC’s third quarter billing. Draft versions of the Audit were handed out to all present.
  - **Motion approving Treasurer’s Report** - *Wolter /Ziehli - Passed Unanimously*
  - **Motion approving payment of Bills (SWWRPC Staff Services)** – *Ziehli / Wolter - Passed Unanimously*
  - **Motion to accept receipt of the Audit** – *O. Olson / Wolter – Passed Unanimously*
- 9) **SCWRTC Administrator’s Report**- Seeboth updated the Commission on the happenings of PRTC regarding their Rails-to-Trails Agreement, and Ken Lucht (from WSOR) added information about the engineering of the potential rail extension from Monroe west 4.5 miles (see October PRTC minutes for more information- available at [www.swwrpc.org/transportation/prtc.php](http://www.swwrpc.org/transportation/prtc.php))
- 10) **WisDOT** – Peter Bradley, from WisDOT was present, but had no report.
- 11) **DNR Report** – Brad Bates, Wisconsin DNR Ranger Assistant Manager Green County Work Unit (Dana White-Quam was unable to attend). White-Quam provided the Commissioners in advance with a handout detailing the Schedule for construction on the northern segment of the Badger Trail- from PD to the City of Madison. The design phase is almost completed, it will still need to be reviewed by DOT. The DNR will bid the project in January of 2010. This will allow for construction as soon as possible in the spring.

**12) Badger Trail Use** – Bates reported on White-Quam’s notes that the attendance on the southern segment of the Badger Trail is increasing every year (currently it is approximately 85,000 users per year). Once the northern segment is completed the attendance numbers will double or triple. White-Quam didn’t have good numbers for the Jane Addams Trail segment, she reports, however, they are at approximately 65,000 per year. Both trails are growing in popularity because of groups like the Friends of the Badger Trail promoting the trail and holding special events on the trail.

Commissioners were curious to learn more about how these numbers are derived. Bates explained that they are created a number of ways – first, through State Trail Passes sold (Trail Passes can be purchased and used throughout the State- they are system-wide passes, not trail specific), and also through electronic counting devices placed along the trail. After numbers are counted, through both methods, the State DNR then has a number of ways to extrapolate those numbers into fairly accurate use estimates.

Commissioners were also curious about the economic impacts of the trail on the local economies. Seeboth explained that these numbers are not simple to derive, but offered to bring an explanation from the Wisconsin Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) that can help show the economic benefits of the trail.

**13) Red Oak, IL Parcel Purchase Request** – Seeboth explained that earlier, two months ago, she received a number of phone calls from residents of Red Oak, IL, who were concerned about a building that is going up on rail corridor, where the corridor is double-wide for siding, in that community. The building in question is a trail maintenance building going up next to the trail, not on it, and the Jane Addams Trail Commission is the group planning the construction. Bonnie Leverington, who lives along this parcel in question, said she and her neighbors have been clearing and tending to this rail corridor for a number of years, and rather than have a building go up, she would like to purchase the land from PRTC.

Vicky Schaefer from WisDOT, has said that the Commission might consider selling the land if it is wider than is normally needed for a rail corridor in this area. Brownlee, the legal counsel for PRTC, provided her opinion in advance on this issue also, saying that, “ If there is surplus width, it is probably OK to sell it (as long as DOT consents and WSOR has no problem with it). My concern is always that, if rail were to be resumed, the extra width is sometimes useful for sidings, storage, etc where we have the extra width and the Commission's perspective should always be focused on what, if any, future impact this might have on rail operations if rail is restored.”

- **A motion was made to not sell this land** – Ziehli / O.Olson – *Passed Unanimously*

Judy Olson suggested that the Commission move onto the next agenda item before further discussing agenda item 13.

**14) Red Oak, IL Parcel Building Request** – Steve Ehlbeck, the superintendent of Parks for Freeport Park District and the Chair of the Jane Addams Trail Commission explained that the Jane Addams Trail group would like to build a storage/maintenance building on the parcel in question. They have funding for this building from the State and have checked with the County on the necessary building permitting. Brownlee also provided her opinion on a building within the trail corridor, recommending against it unless it is a structure that is simple and thus easily removable with 6 months notice should rail ever be reinstated. The Commissioners discussed how a leasing arrangement might be used on this land for either Leverington’s request or the building request; they asked that Seeboth communicate with Brownlee to look into how this land may be leased and whether that would be in conflict with the existing lease with the IL DNR; Kubly also brought up the facts that allowing a building on the Commission land would possibly set an undesirable precedence, and that a building may further confuse the taxing problems that the Commission already has with the State of Illinois and Stephenson County.

- **A motion was made to table this discussion until the next meeting, and in the meanwhile, Seeboth will discuss with Brownlee to learn more about how a leasing structure may be established, if at all.** Ziehli / Wolter – *Passed Unanimously.*

**15) IL Tax Issue** – Seeboth updated the Commission on her communications with Illinois regarding the taxing problem between that State and the SCWRTC. She provided each Commissioner with a packet of all correspondences held between these parties since June 2009, and highlighted the key points: After first writing the IL Governor, Chair of Stephenson County, and Director of the IL DNR, Seeboth received two replies. The letters explained that these groups are meeting to discuss and resolve this issue and promised that the Commission will receive no more tax bills until the issue is resolved. Seeboth said that the Commission has indeed no received any tax bills since receiving the letters. She wrote these individuals again, including the IL DNR’s Attorney, to say that the Commission would like to be included in any meetings held. She has not heard back since. Seeboth and Kubly had decided during this time, to not move ahead with writing any local government officials as it seemed that the other groups were moving ahead with some action.

- **A motion was made to write all local officials in IL and Wisconsin, including the Senators, District Representatives, and County Executives, whose regions touch the Jane Addams Trail, to keep them abreast of this situation.** *O. Olson / Wolter – Passed Unanimously.*

**16) 3:53 pm Adjournment** – *Ziehli / Wolter - Passed Unanimously*