

OH BIKE MINI-NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2022

CONTENTS

Message from the President

News from the Trails - Indian Head Rail Trail Extension Feasibility Study (by Ron Altemus, Trail Ride Coordinator)

Oxon Hill Bike and Trail Club Board Meeting Minutes

Message from the President



Dear OHBTC Members:

I am very excited that we are starting a new cycling season! The rides for the club calendar should be increasing this year as the pandemic winds down. The county network of bike trails will be expanding in the near future due to our increased cycling support.

I also want to thank all of you for your support during my 3 year tenure. It has been a pleasure to serve you then and now.

Until next time, I will see you on and down the road!

Donaro Gardner

News from the Trails - Indian Head Rail Trail Extension Feasibility Study (by Ron Altemus, Trail Ride Coordinator)

Most OHBTC members will concur that we are extremely fortunate to have Charles County's Indian Head Rail Trail located in our prime bicycling riding real estate. This 13-mile trail stretching from Mattingly Street near the Village Green in the town of Indian Head to White Plains near Waldorf is always an enjoyable ride with its scenic beauty, wildlife, and basically flat terrain.

Approximately 13 miles to the east is St. Mary's Three Notch Trail, currently running from the Charles County border at Hughesville down John Baggett Park in Laurel Grove, approximately 11 miles. This trail is still a work-in-progress, and when complete will total 28 miles in length as it travels all the way south to Lexington Park.

Wouldn't it be great if these two trails were connected, forming a 50-plus mile trail through Southern Maryland? Charles County thinks so! With the IHRT, the County has seen the positive benefits that trails provide to residents and visitors alike by offering access to healthy recreation and transportation opportunities. In the spring of 2020, Charles County began a feasibility study to link the IHRT to the 3NT. This study was designed so that it would "consider impacts on adjacent land use, cost and feasibility of construction, ADA accessibility, and identify options to maximize connections to existing pedestrian and

bike facilities, existing and planned nearby retail and residential development, cultural and environmental resources, and other points of interest.”

On January 6, 2022, the study was released to the public for review and comment. A very brief synopsis: Three route alternatives were identified.

- The first (A) has the proposed route using Demars, Billingsley, and Piney Church to LaPlata Road (Route 488) and then MD-5 to the Three Notch Trail. This option would be the most direct, using some existing bike paths while having new side paths developed along the right-of-way for MD-5.
- The second alternative (B) proposes using an existing rail corridor southward to connect with Jaybee Lane near Laurel Springs Regional Park, then cross Rosewick Road, travel a short distance down Radio Station Road, before continuing down Jaybee Lane to a powerline corridor until it reaches LaPlata Road, and then continues along LaPlata until it connects with the alternative A alignment.
- The final alternative (C) proposes following alternative B to LaPlata Rd then follows the utility right of way southward to Route 6/New Market Road. The alignment would then follow Route 6 to where it meets the Three Notch Trail.

For all three alternatives, a bicycle/pedestrian overpass would be constructed over US-301 in White Plains. A & B would also have a bike/ped bridge built over Zekiah Swamp on Route 5. Alternative A is the shortest, at 13 plus miles using side paths along the existing roads. Alternatives B and C lessen the side path trail distances on some of the major roads with increases of distance (approximately 18 miles). Alternative C has long sections of trail through wooded areas making it the most visually appealing with less vehicular traffic. Both B and C alternatives are contingent on Charles County acquiring the appropriate rights-of-way and/or properties for the proposed trail routing.

My short review might have some errors as there is a lot of material to go through. In my perusal of the documents, I couldn't find a timeline for the construction of this trail extension.

The draft plan and its related appendices are available on the Charles County website:

<https://www.charlescountymd.gov/government/planning-and-growth-management/preservation-and-long-range-planning/indian-head-rail-trail-public-comment> This link also allows for comment. One source states, “Residents are encouraged to review the draft report and provide comments on the Charles County Government website before the close of business on Friday, January 28, 2022.” The County page states that identifying information is optional, so all club members are encouraged to offer their comments.

Oxon Hill Bike and Trail Club Board Meeting Minutes

Date/Time	January 10, 2022, 5 PM
Attendance	President Donaro Gardner, VP Janell Saunders, Treasurer Ron Altemus, Secretary Jane Hudnall, Road Captain Barbara Haney, Board members: Leslie Tierstein, Walt Roscello, Joan Oppel, George Martin. Club members: Nancy Avitabile, Michael Saizan, Jackie Schoch, Randy Schoch, Sherwood Byers, Jim Hudnall, Jessica Hirschhorn, Carl Hattery, Diane Harris and Steve Palincsar.

President Donaro Gardner welcomed everyone.

Treasurer's Report – Ron Altemus reported the year-to-date income - \$6825.00 (Membership and Jersey sales) and expenses - \$8254.93 (Affini/PayPal fees, Club picnic, Storage locker, reimbursements). A proposed budget for 2022 was sent to the board and approved at the meeting.

Minutes from the December meeting were approved as presented – Jane Hudnall

Membership Report – Jim Hudnall - The club has 415 members. Last year, 116 new members joined the club.

Old Business:

- Because of Covid, a brief, virtual, annual meeting will be held to elect officers and discuss issues of interest to the membership on a Sunday afternoon in March via Zoom. Janell Saunders will assemble a slate and will check with present officers and board members to see who would like to continue to serve. Anyone interested in serving on the board should contact Janell - nell7285@gmail.com.

New Business:

- All-class rides are being planned. These once-a-month rides will be members only with routes and cue sheets available online. Riders will bring their own food or stop at stores for snacks.
 - April – Start the Season Right Ride - Indian Head
 - May – May Metric – Mechanicsville Elementary School
 - June 11 – Patuxent Rural Legacy Ride - Patuxent River Park - *Nancy Avitabile and Jessica Hirschhorn*
 - July – Watermelon Ride – Indian Head -*Jackie and Randy Schoch*
 - August – Club picnic -
 - September -
- It was proposed that a member be allowed to invite one guest to attend a ride to encourage that person to join the club. A non-member is allowed only one ride with the club to be covered by the club's insurance. At the present time, only members can register for rides. No action was taken on this proposal at this time
- Nice-Middleton Bridge – Thank you to Diana and Dan Donahue and Walt Roscello for testifying on the need for bicycle facilities on the Nice bridge. The US Government might provide funds to use the old bridge for pedestrian and bicycle access. The generating plant at the Maryland end of the bridge is scheduled to be shut down. The right-of-way of the railroad that brings coal to the facility would make a great Rails to Trails link in Southern Maryland. Walt Roscello noted that it would be a while before the rail corridor would be available because the rail line will be used to take away equipment from the power plant.
- Sherwood Byers reported that the Port Tobacco Recreation Center has restrooms available - 10:00 - 2:00 pm.
- Ron Altemus encouraged members to look at the proposed Indian Head Rail Extension Feasibility Study. Go to <https://www.charlescountymd.gov/Home/Components/News/News/3743/400>.
- Barbara Haney announced that Spokes bicycle shops have been bought by TREK and will only sell TREK products.

Next Meeting: The next board meeting will be on Monday, February 14 at 5:00 pm via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,
Jane Hudnall, Secretary
