

Acadia All American Road Corridor Meeting
Bar Harbor Town Office
Wednesday, November 8, 2017
11:00 am – 1:00 pm

MINUTES

Attending: Angela Chamberlain, John Kelly, Fred Michaud, Pete Lazas, Jim Fisher, Martha Searchfield, Bill Haefele

Byway Status: Jim Fisher

- [2000 Corridor Plan](#) and [2008 Trenton Plan](#)
- Objectives accomplished
- Remaining objectives
- Current resources
- Bluffs Turnout
 - Being replaced with a narrow paved shoulder, probably too narrow and potentially dangerous.
 - Will need to monitor safety and decide whether this will be an attractive nuisance
- King's Creek
 - Eagle Scout proposal to make a stairway – was not built
 - Good site for fall foliage – dangerous as people run across the road
- Thompson Island – parcadia – People take pictures of the sunset at the causeway across Majestic Point.
- Jackson Lab
 - Want to build an pedestrian overpass over Route 3
- Bar Harbor History
 - Museum in the Streets – Phase I completed, planning for Phase II
 - The hub – Main Streets – has been less active
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 - Wayfinding – signage complete
 - Acadia Byway contributed
 - Will consider extending signage on the path
 - Interpretation for walkers is possible here.
- Safety
 - Route 3 improvements are underway –
 - Potential for a Scenic Bikeway
 - Services are available
 - Bill Haefele – Canada has invested more into dedicated bikeways
 - Tourists are arriving here looking for places to ride safely
 - Are there infrastructure options in this region?
 - Edmunston – 80 miles stone dust
 - Can we do more to separate bike/ped from automobiles
 - Is there grant funding for infrastructure
 - Mount Desert town commitment
 - Southwest Harbor – SRTS

- Tremont – SRTS
- Mount Desert – Seal Harbor – possible
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- Ron Greenberg and Bike MDI
 - Bike Plan
- Transportation alternatives
 - Bay Ferries considering option of returning to Bar Harbor
 - Attraction to bring Greyhound back to MDI
- Mount Desert 365 – put out an RFQ for a study
 - Housing program
 - RFQ asking for organization
- Climate to Thrive – interest

Sign at the head of the Island

- Concerns – might say “Welcome to” - “Mount Desert Island”
- Color is dark

Blue Star Site

- Concern about directing traffic into that site

State Byway Signs

- Need to inventory –replace all the faded signs
- Add a tagline – Acadia
- Logo? John Kelly suggests not having a logo on the sign
- Bill Haeferle – suggest keeping DART informed
- Locations

Public Involvement

- Larry held a meeting in 2016 about the wayfinding program
- Need to formally extend State designation through Trenton
- Meet with Towns of Mount Desert and Southwest Harbor about their interest in the byway
 - Jim – can meet with the other towns to see whether they are interested

Sustainable Economic Development and tourism management

- Shoulder season has grown
 - Mid-April to Mid-November
 - Spring Break schedules –
 - Weather
 - Interested in promoting winter
 - No reliable snow
 - Use of social media for spontaneous vacations
 - Park has 65 miles of snowmobiling in the Park
 - Loop Road and other motor roads
 - Some businesses don’t want to operate in the winter
 - Staffing is difficult

- Lack critical mass for visitors in the winter
- Bill Haefele – need to clarify what “Closed for the Season”
- Many of the properties are difficult to heat in the winter
 - Don’t have sufficient revenue to justify costs

ITS – still room for improvement

- USDOT put in capital for park ITS
- System is not fully functioning
- Demands have changed
- App works for bus locations – real time updates on arrivals

Hulls Cove

- People are using Hulls Cove as a park-and-ride lot for Island Explorer
- Trenton site does not have frequent service, information, visitor amenities

Day Use

Parking solutions task force

- Meeting with schools about use of School Lots in the summer
- Need to schedule around school events
- MDI High School

Hotels have built bus stands

- Encourage guests to use the hotel parking lot
- Small B&Bs let people park before checking in
- Guests are willing to ride the buses if they don’t have to wait for the bus

Park Entrance Fees

- Proposed increase in visitor fees – no apparent analysis
- Bill Haefele – motorcycle visits declined with an increase in motorcycle fees
- 15% of visitors to the park are Maine residents
- Many local people opt not to visit the park because of the visitor fees
- Parks are required to spend the money they collect – adding revenues will put more pressure on the park to manage projects around deferred maintenance.

Can the Byway Comment on this?

- Impact on visitation
 - Tourists on longer vacations are likely to pay as always
 - Day users, particularly blue collar visitors that are touring may choose not to visit
- Concern that more visitors will play Cat and mouse games to dodge the fee
 - ANP is porous – may need to close some openings
- Annual passes will be a relatively better value
- There may be some collateral losses in spending in local businesses
- Jim will draft a letter and circulate it to the committee

Tourism and the internet

- Scenic drives are #1 or #2 reasons for visiting Maine (including Canada)
- Need to help Phil Savignano at MOT to update the website
- Moving marketing away from regions – focus on destinations
- Martha – surprising that people have not heard of ANP
 - o Need ongoing promotional efforts
- Bill Haefele
 - o people that are here for more than a day are National Park followers
 - o people coming for a few hours are driving the loop road – are less familiar with the park

Updates Related to the Byway

- Acadia National Park – John Kelly
- Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce – Martha Searchfield
- Trenton/MDI Chamber of Commerce – Pete Lazas / Bill Haefele
- Town of Bar Harbor – Angela Chamberlain
- Town of Trenton – Pete Lazas
- Maine Coast Heritage Trust – Misha Mytar
 - Jones
- MaineDOT – Fred Michaud
- DART - TBA

ANP Transportation Plan

- Planning to have public meetings in the spring, 2018
- Alternatives for managing high congestion areas
 - o Jordon Pond House
 - o Cadillac Mountain
 - o Sand Beach
- Acadia Gateway Center
- Bus fees
 - o Commercial buses – funds stay in the park
 - o Other fees – costs per passenger \$3 - \$18 in 2019

Chamber updates

- Participating in the parking task force

Trenton update

- Want to raise the gateway sign – on new posts
- Hoped to salvage some poles
- Need to clarify ownership of the polls
- Need two 20-foot poles
- Question about how the remaining enhancement funds were spent? (Jim – Follow Up)

Round Table Discussion – What’s next?

- Updating Plan
 - o Intrinsic Values (Asset Inventory)
 - o Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

- Goals, Objectives and Strategies
 - Goal 1. Protect and Enhance Scenic, Historical, and Natural Resources
 - Goal 2. Insure Health and Safety for Movement Along the Byway
 - Goal 3: Promote Community Support and Participation in the Acadia Byway
 - Goal 4: Promote Education on the Need for Resource Protection and Preservation
 - Goal 5: Promote Sustainable Economic Development and Tourism Management
- Partner Organizations – Who will participate? Who is missing?

Next Steps

- Letter about Park Entrance Fees
 - ANP Not involved
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- Signage inventory and replacement plan
- Scenic Bikeway Concept
 - Safety
 - Infrastructure improvements
 - Distracted drivers
 - Congested areas
 - Doors
 - Bike-pedestrian crashes
- Trenton Extension