

**COOPER LANDING WALKABLE COMMUNITY COMMITTEE**  
**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2019**  
**6:00 PM**  
**LOCATION: COMMUNITY CLUB**  
**MINUTES**

1. CALL TO ORDER 6:00 p.m.
2. ROLL CALL: D Story, C Degernes, J Cadieux, D Carlson absent, K Romig absent
  - a. Guests: M Story, K Feichtinger, K Recken, N VanderHoff, T Norris, H Pearson, K Neis, L Temple, G Galbraith, M Donahue, T Donahue, Ray Wilkes, E Holsten, S Holsten, N Starkey, A Kime, K Green, J Gilliland
3. REVIEW OF MINUTES from 12/3/2018. J Cadieux gave a review for the attendees of the 2018 minutes. C Degernes moved to approve, J Cadieux seconded. All approve.
4. TREASURERS REPORT: C Degernes reported how she's had to accept the number given her by CLCC treasurer and must begin from there since there wasn't a clear history to date. She will attempt to keep a record going forward. See her attached report. Total \$2093.21 in the bank (unencumbered). Anticipated 2020 revenue sharing of \$839.85 (encumbered to spend by May 2020).
5. CORRESPONDENCE – none
6. OLD BUSINESS
  - a. History of Walkable Community Project- Slide show presented.
  - b. Update on projects
    - i. UAA Engineering: Cooper Creek Bridge – See <http://www.walkcooperlanding.org/cooper-creek-bridge> website for detail of plans and report. Consensus Project #8 from original Cooper Landing (CL) Walkable Community priorities list. Kenai Mountains Turnagain Arm Heritage Area (KMTA) facilitated our opportunity to have the students design this project and served as a liaison throughout the process. The cost of this project would have been large if we'd had to fund it on its own. It is considered one of the better projects to come from the Capstone Program.
    - ii. Bean Creek Footpath- Finished between Cooper Landing Community Club (CLCC) Hall and Bean Creek waterbody. It's a means of stepping off the road for a span of the Bean Creek corridor. An ultimate goal is to complete the entire length of Bean Crk Rd with a footpath.
    - iii. Drainage Crossings – Materials obtained for bridging the drainages on the existing Safety Path, especially around MP 46.2. We will need to use this old trail while the new one is being built so the work needs to be done. AWA contributed ~\$1300 donation to help fund.
    - iv. Trail Mapping – See screen captures from [sterlinghighway.net](http://sterlinghighway.net)
    - v. 2019 Trail Run – Karl Romig absent, no report available, deferred for another meeting.
    - vi. Bypass mitigation – East end, Phase I B. See rollplot on [sterlinghighway.net/documents/Phase%20I%20B%20Rollplot\(2019-10-28\).pdf](http://sterlinghighway.net/documents/Phase%20I%20B%20Rollplot(2019-10-28).pdf)
      1. This pathway will help define CL.

2. Bypass will cut Quartz Creek side of town from the rest of town. The bike/ped path will become a critical link.
3. There is no safe north/south crossing of the highway at this east end of the highway.
4. Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT) indicates they are restricted by the EIS, costs, etc. but that they haven't said, "no", yet.
5. Some discussion was held at the Dec 4, 2019 Cooper Landing Advisory Planning Commission (CLAPC) meeting. See those notes online at: <https://www.kpb.us/planning-dept/planning-commissions/cooper-landing-apc>
6. We need to help DOT understand how we'd connect any potential underpass to our community trails on the north side of the highway.
7. RM Consulting firm has the design contract for this section and the engineer worked with CLAPC at the Dec 4, 2019 meeting. The specific design needs to be fluid at present because they don't yet know what the surveying and ground work will show them.
8. The traditional sheep viewing pullout managed by State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will remain accessible via the bike/ped path only so we need to envision how it may be utilized.
9. The entire pathway will be physically separated from the highway. Where possible it could follow the "old" or what is the now existing highway roadbed.
10. See <http://sterlinghighway.net/documents.html> website for drawings of the termination of the pathway.
11. The pinch point near the rock face approximately MP 47 was discussed at the CLAPC meeting. It is technically not in the MP 45-60 project area but the project managers were open to help problem solving.
12. Review of some screen captures from <http://sterlinghighway.net/documents.html> website was carried out.
  - vii. Logo – deferred for another meeting
  - viii. Website – updates are made as information is available and volunteers are able to post. There's a lot of information available already so please visit the website: [walkcooperlanding.org](http://walkcooperlanding.org)

## 7. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Review was held of the Walkable Community Committee vs. Trails Committee groups under the Cooper Landing Community Club
  - i. The groups come together at junctions between trails and pathways, coming to the community or going to the trails.
  - ii. Goals are similar in seeking outdoor recreation and safe movement within our community.

1. Walkable Community group have been targeting some simple tasks that could be accomplished with low budget, hand work such as Bean Creek Footpath.
  2. Trails group has been focused on grooming the ski trails at Russian River and Quartz Crk most recently.
- iii. Questions:
1. Should each committee remain distinct?
    - a. Walkable Community Plan is adopted in the Kenai Peninsula Borough Transportation Plan
    - b. Trails in general are often voted down by Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB) residents for funding
    - c. Walkable entity is well-supported in the community
  2. Should they become joined?
    - a. Walkable Community Committee mission is to promote safe travel space for pedestrians and cyclists and to improve connectivity in the community.
    - b. Trails- has lost the previous focus of connecting the community to trails on adjacent lands such as USFS.
    - c. Can the two groups integrate and be joined?
      - i. New trails that can sustain heavier traffic may requiring building different trailbeds. The Snug Harbor separated bike and pedestrian (bike/ped) path's design and the intent of the Walkable Community Project has always been on bike/ped access to our community.
      - ii. We need to address how local use is supported. We must determine which groups we are seeking to bring to the area. We may want to support local OHV movement for transportation in the community while discouraging visitor OHV use and recreation. Our trails are not built to sustain that traffic.
    - d. The steering committee has not made a decision on joining or not joining the two committees and seeks community input before making the decision.
    - e. The grooming group, under Trails Committee, is under the Seward Nordic Ski Club for insurance purposes.
    - f. The Land Management Department of KPB is interested in planning for trailheads that are on KPB land and integrate to lands such as Chugach National Forest (CNF)/United States Forest Service (USFS), State, and Kenai National Wildlife Refuge (KNWR)/United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).
    - g. Hope, CL, and Moose Pass are in the same boat for accessing trails funding and the newly initiated trails effort.

We can all be strengthened by improved assets/facilities in the shared region.

- i. Cyclists, backpackers, and other active travelers tend to stay in an area longer and spend more money in a given area than other visitor groups.
  - ii. The northern Kenai Peninsula communities have shared assets already. Johnson Pass, Russian Lakes Trails, and Resurrection Pass Trail all have connections between communities. The Kenai 250 bicycle race follows all three trails and provides a template for bikepacking or backpacking users to follow for multi-day adventures and through-hiking opportunities.
  - iii. Alaska Trails Statewide Trails Initiative is working to see a connector trail from ANC to Seward.
  - iv. The USFS is putting many resources towards the Historic Iditarod Trail (including requesting a pedestrian bridge over Snow River as a mitigation measure for the Sterling Hwy. MP 45-60 project) which will connect Seward to ANC and beyond.
  - v. Cooper Landing is in a position to benefit from all of these efforts by working to remain attractive to multiple visitor types.
3. Should the two committees jointly or separately become 501C3 non-profit entities for purposes of finances and clarity of mission?
- a. Presently each have funds within CLCC accounts.
    - i. Some interest in making the groups one from a financial view.
  - b. Walkables always has raised money whereas some groups within CLCC do not.
  - c. CLCC does not have a whole separate account for Trails or Walkables. This is a compelling reason to have our own 501C3 status. It helps with obtaining grants and book keeping with grant management. We'd have to get our own insurance.
  - d. Are there enough people interested in re-initiating a Trails Committee? Working together seems to make more sense than separate committees that compete for grants and volunteer time/energy.
  - e. Shared and joined effort seems to be the verbal consensus.
  - f. Suggestion: We need to require meeting attendance to allow folks to vote on direction.
4. Shared Vision:
- a. Many of our goals align with other organizations and trends.

- i. ConfluenceAK and the Alaska Outdoor Alliance: Dedicated to economic diversification and stimulating rural economic development through empowering the outdoor recreation sector. Parallels national efforts by organizations like the Outdoor Industry Association to show the economic impact of outdoor recreation in general.
- b. Agency advice to the Alaska Outdoor Alliance has encouraged all trail user groups to show a united front when approaching agencies for requests even if in private we have our differences.
- c. Our community has shared goals amidst all our user groups.
- d. We can look out for each other and still accomplish our individual group goals.
- e. There's been disagreement nationally and locally about pathway use. At least one motorized user is interested in joining the group to work on efforts.
  - i. Why cannot motorized users have access to the separated bike/ped paths? (Construction requirements are often different if motorized traffic is intended on any pathway. DOT requires snow machine and OHV use within department rights of way to be managed specifically. The MP45-60 Project manager, Sean Holland, has provided the CLAPC the memorandum outlining these specifics.
  - ii. Some communities have solved the motorized/non-motorized issues through speed control.
  - iii. Having some separate gravel paths was an option discussed at the CLAPC meeting Dec 4, 2019.
  - iv. DOTPF offered the possibility of utilizing the whole width of the old roadbed in the new section from MP 45-46.6. User groups can be near each other within that space but not in the same lanes. Divisions might be, "pedestrian" and "wheeled," for instance.
    - 1. Double-wide pathways can become assets in emergencies.
- f. Priorities:
  - i. Cooper Creek Bridge pathway: STIP grant is the most likely next target and would be sought through the Walkable Committee of the CLCC
  - ii. Schooner Bend Bridge pathway
  - iii. Need survey results. This can be shared with CLCC and could be renewed annually. Visitors too might be able to use the survey and support the idea of

how much money is brought to the community by recreation visitors.

- iv. Trails that are important to us?
  1. Bean Crk ski trails/multiuse have been GPS'd and a map created years ago. S Holsten has the GPS data. Can we revitalize them?
  2. Old Sterling Hwy: Tern Lake to Crescent Crk Trailhead is a recognized USFS trail and mapped. It can be a part of our catalog to state its importance to our community.
  3. Slaughter Gulch trail
  4. Coyote Notch trails: Critical timing with Bypass project due to access problems. Trail itself needs work. Junction to a possible underpass is important in planning.
  5. Survey results are needed. Another meeting is needed.

iv. Regular meetings: We need to improve our frequency but many folks are already busy.

v. Obtaining help:

1. Alaska Trails- assets for trail work, expertise and advice.
2. KMTA- already a good partner and they are committed to remaining our partners.
3. Land Managers such as USFS and USFWS?

vi. Survey: Please take the survey so we can use it in grant applications and in addressing trail needs and utilization with agency groups.

b. Sterling Highway MP 45-60 Project

i. East End Phase 1B

1. Coyote Notch – not accessible in the current DOT plan.
2. Underpass/Safe Crossing from Quartz Creek Rd. to north side of highway
  - a. S Holland indicated at the Dec 4, 2019 CLAPC meeting that the underpass was not feasible right at the Quartz Creek Rd. interchange.
  - b. S Holland provided a follow-up email with drawing and criteria today, Dec 5, 2019.
  - c. Let's work with him by identifying what works for us and what does not. (The specific drawing he submitted today does not particularly work well because of the location. We have some initial ideas e.g. immediately east from the MP 45-60 project across from Tract C. Another meeting will be helpful. Most useful is still across from Sunrise.)

- d. Helping DOT understand the importance of these trails might be moved forward if we do some repair work on the trail itself.
    - 3. Our Point of View – we want to sustain access to this wonderful overlook of the lake and valley. Recall that Our Point of View was a lodge on the Old Sterling Hwy. that burned down. We now have identified the high point on the Old Sterling Hwy. near to the old lodge as “Our Point of View” overlook.
    - 4. West end of pathway. – identified as needing to extend past current project boundaries in order to deliver users safely past the cliff between proposed end of pathway and the Kenai Lake Lodge.
    - 5. Other Design considerations – see elsewhere in these minutes
  - c. Cooper Landing Trails Committee Collaboration
    - i. Trailheads, signage, and map information
    - ii. Volunteers
      - 1. Trail Maintenance – participants are always welcome
      - 2. Nordic Ski Grooming – some new folks are getting trained
- 8. INFORMATION and ANNOUNCEMENTS – none specifically
- 9. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS – none specifically
- 10. SELECT NEW MEETING DATE – March 5, 2020 is tentative
- 11. ADJOURNMENT 8:43 p.m.