



Morris Canal Working Group

EDUCATION, EVENTS, AND MARKETING COMMITTEE

FINAL Meeting Minutes

Tuesday September 30, 2014

**NJTPA
Newark, NJ**

I. Welcome and Introductions

Ted Ritter, NJTPA Central Staff, opened the first meeting of the Morris Canal Working Group's (MCWG) Education, Events, and Marketing Committee and noted the MCWG's other committee (Planning and Implementation) met for the first time earlier in the day. Ritter then prompted self-introductions.

Those present at the meeting included:

Michael Davidson, Greater Newark Convention & Visitors Bureau
Kathy Fisher, Montville Township Historical Society
Marty Kane, Lake Hopatcong Historical Museum
Steve Lauf, Canal Society of NJ
Joe Macasek, Canal Society of NJ
John Manna, Borough of Wharton
Robert Morris, Roxbury Historic Trust
Andrea Proctor, DEP Parks & Forestry Waterloo Village
Nicole Fox, Passaic County DMO
Miriam Morris, Roxbury Historic Trust
Mike Kruimer, East Coast Greenway
Bob Barth, Canal Society of NJ
Gerry Scharfenberger, Office of Planning Advocacy, NJ Dept. of State
Doug Greenfeld, NJTPA
Megan Kelly, NJTPA
Karl Vilacoba, NJTPA
David Behrend, NJTPA (via conference call)
Ted Ritter, NJTPA
Eliza Haburay-Herrling, NJTPA

Ritter next briefly reviewed the mission of the Morris Canal Working Group (to transform the former Morris Canal into a connected greenway across the region) and the Events, Education, and Marketing Committee (to build support for the Greenway effort and help brand/market the Greenway through ongoing communications efforts). He then turned the meeting over to the Committee's co-chairs.

II. Targeted Events, Conferences, Meetings

Joe Macasek, Canal Society of NJ; Andrea Proctor, NJDEP, Waterloo Village, as Committee Co-Chairs, led a discussion about events, conferences, and meetings that could be used to help promote the effort to create a connected, regional greenway. This discussion included a review of list of sample events covered in the past, as well as potential conferences and events coming up later this year and into 2015. Macasek emphasized the importance of members bringing potentially relevant events to the attention of the committee as well as identifying existing meetings, conferences, and other events that could be used to build support for the Greenway.

As an example, Proctor said she will be presenting at the NJEA convention in Atlantic City in early November, providing an opportunity to publicize the Greenway effort among teachers and possibly identify opportunities to create Greenway/Canal-related education materials for students.

During the general discussion that followed, several committee members suggested examples of upcoming events that could be targeted, promoted, and/or added to the MCWG website's calendar. Examples included the New Jersey Clean Communities Exchange Program, the Freewalkers Tour, an upcoming Canal-related bus tour. Macasek highlighted the importance of keeping the calendar updated with fresh material and upcoming events. The calendar will be maintained by NJTPA staff.

John Manna, Wharton Borough, suggested making the calendar more interactive and more effective as a tool to plan schedules ahead.

Michael Davidson, Greater Newark Convention & Visitors Bureau, suggested adding an annual events section to the calendar.

Steven Lauf, Canal Society of NJ, said the committee should consider whether to include relevant meetings, instead of only events, to the calendar.

Macasek said he expects the calendar will evolve and be improved as the the work of the MCWG and its committees progresses.

Robert Morris, Roxbury Historic Trust, suggested participation in the League of Municipalities' annual conference (held in November) will enable the MCWG and its committees to reach a key audience.

Bob Barth, Canal Society of NJ, suggested the idea of holding a follow-up Morris Canal Greenway conference, given the success of the first conference held in March 2014.

Kathy Fisher, Montville Township Historical Society, noted Morris County's Heritage Commission is looking to sponsor an event in 2015.

Fisher also announced the state's historic preservation conference will be held in June in Mt. Laurel with a theme of "New Perspectives on the Past," which ties in nicely with the efforts of the MCWG. Proctor noted the deadline to submit for that conference is in mid-November. Conference sessions run about 75 minutes with a moderator and up to four speakers.

David Behrend, NJTPA, said the NJTPA is participating in a "table session" at the NJ League of Municipalities' conference in November, and he suggested Morris Canal Greenway-related material could be included.

III. Morris Canal Greenway Promotional Materials

Joe Macasek and Andrea Proctor led a general discussion about existing and potential materials to help advance the Morris Canal Greenway effort.

Macasek distributed an existing Morris Canal "fact sheet" that he said will be updated. After discussion, it was agreed that a new fact sheet should focus less on the Morris Canal's history and more on efforts to create the Greenway.

In addition, the existing group of Morris Canal brochures may be updated or possibly expanded to include more locations. Michael Davidson suggested giving all Greenway-related documents, including the brochures, a more "universal feel" or Theme. Davidson also suggested a "general" Greenway brochure should be created to complement the others for specific locations.

Kathy Fisher emphasized the importance of consistent branding in all Greenway-related materials.

John Manna suggested focusing on what the Greenway "will be" versus what the historical Canal "was" before. He said materials should be targeted to a broad audience and not just "history buffs." Manna also suggested an emphasis on potential Greenway links to other existing trails in the region.

Nicole Fox, Passaic County DMO, suggested that promotional materials include Greenway access locations and types of permitted uses.

Doug Greenfeld, NJTPA, noted that it's possible to add Canal/Greenway assets to Google Maps, meaning you can plot out sections of the Greenway as they're completed.

IV. Upgrades to the Morris Canal Working Group Website

Joe Macasek and Andrea Proctor next began a discussion about ongoing upgrades to the Morris Canal Greenway website, which is “hosted” and maintained by the NJTPA.

Karl Vilacoba, NJTPA, navigated through the website and its sections and demonstrated some of the site’s features. Vilacoba said the present stand-alone site was developed, around the time of the Greenway conference, from a single page that existed on the NJTPA’s website.

Vilacoba said although the site works well now, more capacity may be needed in the future depending on the type and amount of content that is added. He said current features include history, links, maps, a list of municipalities, plans and studies that have been completed, a stakeholders list, events, a recap of the conference with video, and a news/press page.

Vilacoba said the NJTPA has worked to regularly update the site with new information, events, and news stories to keep the site fresh and relevant. Megan Kelly, NJTPA, said this has resulted in the MCWG site becoming first in the Google internet search engine.

Robert Morris suggested that a key goal should be to eventually transition the site away from a MCWG focus in favor of focusing on the Greenway itself as things develop further. Vilacoba agreed, but pointed out that for the content that exists today, the current site functions effectively.

Proctor suggested the Working Group portion of the site could eventually be retained as a page within the Greenway site. Proctor also suggested that a recreation “tab,” or page be added to the existing MCWG website.

Mike Kruimer, East Coast Greenway, suggested potentially developing a Morris Canal Greenway “app” to show travel routes and other information aimed at Greenway users.

Michael Davidson briefly demonstrated the app for the Greater Newark Convention & Visitors Bureau and emphasized that information is more important than images in apps. Marty Kane noted that the Lake Hopatcong Historical Museum also has an app (related to its trail development) which might be helpful for review purposes.

V. Creating an Identity

Joe Macasek and Andrea Proctor led a discussion focused on creating a Morris Canal Greenway “identity.”

Ted Ritter, NJTPA, said a two-minute Morris Canal Greenway video is currently being developed by the NJTPA to help increase awareness and promote the ongoing effort to create a regional Greenway along the remains of the historic Morris Canal. He said the NJTPA spent three days filming Canal assets and conducting interviews for the video. Ritter said the video has a lot of potential as a promotional and

outreach tool as long as MCWG members share and use it. He said the NJTPA hopes to have the video completed this fall.

Robert Morris emphasized the importance of establishing a clear vision statement, versus a wordier mission statement, for the Greenway. A general discussion followed regarding the differences between a mission statement and vision statement and their purposes.

Morris suggested that perhaps the committee could develop a revised statement and make a recommendation to the full Working Group.

Kathy Fisher said any such a statement, as well as other promotional materials, should be written in such a way that they can be read and used by students. Ted Ritter added that an “education tab” should eventually be added to the MCWG website.

Andrea Proctor said the committee needs to think about how to effectively manage the distribution of materials (print and electronic) to maximize their value and exposure.

Newsletter possibilities also were discussed.

- It was noted that the Working Group will be able to feature Greenway-related content in Passaic County’s newsletter.
- Michael Davidson said the Greater Newark Convention & Visitors Bureau’s newsletter could feature Greenway information, especially given the former Canal’s place in Newark’s history.
- Marty Kane said the Lake Hoptatcong Historical Society has an extensive website that could be used to cross-promote.
- There may be possibilities to include material in the East Coast Greenway newsletter, as appropriate.

VI. Task List for Committee Members

The committee reviewed a list of tasks that are to be completed before the next meeting. These task assignments include:

- Designing a new Morris Canal Greenway brochure prototype: Joe Macasek
- Revised Morris Canal historical fact sheet: Macasek
- Morris Canal Greenway fact sheet: Bob Barth
- Morris Canal Greenway video: NJTPA
- Morris Canal Working Group website/calendar updates: NJTPA
- Draft Morris Canal Greenway “purpose statement”: Robert Morris
- Morris Canal Greenway newsletter article: Robert Morris
- Application for Historic Preservation Conference panel: Kathy Fisher
- Prepare meeting summary/minutes: NJTPA

VII. Next Steps/Date for Next Committee Meeting

The Committee briefly discussed plans for subsequent meetings, including the next full Morris Canal Working Group meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Dec. 4, 2014 in Warren County (meeting details to be announced as soon as possible).

Also discussed was the potential date and location for the next Events, Education, and Marketing Committee. Potential meeting dates of either Feb. 3, 4, or 5 were suggested; Committee members were encourage to check their schedules for availability and indicate such as per a reminder to be distributed with a meeting summary/minutes in mid-October 2014.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:05 p.m.