



Memorandum:

To: PA Delaware River Scenic Byway Advisory Committee
From: Jim Klein
Date: May 11, 2010
Subject: Advisory Committee Meeting #1 Meeting Notes

Attendees: Pat McInerney, Gail Putvinski, Jackie Koons-Felion, Mahendra Patel, Jerry Brunetti, Victoria Meghdir, Judith Henckel, Sylvia McInerney, Susan Cooper, John Mauser, Howard Klein, Sherry Acevedo, Jane Bullis, Elaine Pivinski, Mike Sterchic, Victor Rodite, Regina Marinelli, Sidney Deutsch, Scott Dietrich

The first meeting of the Pennsylvania Delaware River Scenic Byway Advisory Committee was held on May 6, 2010 at the Welcome Center in Lower Mt. Bethel Township.

The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the byway planning effort, including its scope and schedule, and to discuss issues and opportunities. Jerry Brunetti presented some background information that led up to the designation of the byway by the Pennsylvania DOT and the subsequent corridor management planning grant. Jackie Koons-Felion, PennDOT Byways Coordinator provided an overview of the Pennsylvania Byways program. Jim Klein presented an introductory presentation on the byway planning process. Elizabeth Watson, a member of the consulting team, facilitated a discussion of byway issues and opportunities. Jim Klein's presentation can be viewed on the project web site (at http://www.lardnerklein.com/drvsb_index.html).

The following summarizes the discussion regarding why this byway is significant (its assets)

- High quality soils and evolving sustainable agriculture - opportunities for both a high quality and local "food shed" as well as the high quality watershed
- The contrast between the "City" and the "Country" is very distinct
- The safety and tranquility associated with the rural feeling of the area
- The water resources – the Delaware River and its aquatic life is incredible and the tributaries are very high quality (multiple comments)
- Great fishing – people come from all over to fish the Delaware
- The woodland areas and associated wildlife further north
- Its historic qualities – over 200 properties are on the National Register
- The development pattern over time – from Victorian homes to Sears Catalogue houses
- Family history – generations over time all stay here (cultural landscape)
- The history associated with the Delaware River and early economic engines of the community (also a challenge)
- Preserved open space – farm and forest
- River towns as part of overall regional connectivity – many of the towns still retain their character
- The Delaware River Scenic Drive
- Regional context – the area is within 100 miles of 30-plus million people – just a gas tank away from even more
- Proximity to Delaware Water Gap and Delaware & Lehigh Heritage make it a logical connection

- Nearby lodging in the greater Lehigh Valley presents options for extending visitor stays and providing a range of choice for lodging and food - not everyone wants to stay in a bed and breakfast so diversity is good

The following summarizes the discussion regarding the issues and challenges for the byway

- The historical and cultural resources associated with the economic engine that is now gone – how do you show that?
- How do you preserve the rural feeling – can new buildings be sensitive to the rural character?
- Population growth is a challenge – how do you guide growth to be compatible with community character and rural feeling?
- Better models for development are needed – better community design in villages instead of sprawl
- When visitors arrive – what activities are available? Is that enough to draw people or do more activities need to be identified and supported?
- How do you build upon the local food movement? – requires a shift in thinking from long-time farm families as well as changes in farm policy
- How can you enhance the perceptions of long-time residents who may not see the special qualities since they have looked at it every day of their lives?
- How do you make the plan “believable” to overcome the natural tendency to be skeptical of plans?
- How does heritage tourism, agri-tourism, and eco-tourism compete economically with traditional forms of economic development? – small business development and dollars staying here in the community rather than to global corporations (also example of Cape May Birding Trail where economics is local and extends the traditional tourism seasons was offered as a success story)
- For marketing the byway, everyone needs to agree on what is the main theme or focus for the byway (could be the Delaware River – both its nature and its culture)
- Holistic approach is a challenge – examples given of regional cooperation evolving including “Common Waters” – multi-jurisdiction effort in the Delaware Water Gap showing that resource protection can lead to economic value for water supply and other ecosystem services; or efforts evolving from the Martins-Jacoby watershed plan

The following summarizes potential opportunities:

- Bicycle touring and potential economic benefits (such as Allegheny Passage) – URDC prepared a trail concept plan – could this be part of the byway, more planning is needed (yes – FHWA is looking at multi-modal opportunities and current USDOT emphasis on “livability” in terms of future funding)
- Evolving agri-tourism and heritage tourism as a destination (for example combining the winery tour with dinners prepared with local food)
- Finding everything you need in Martins Creek– could it be self sustaining?
- Regional corridor connecting Delaware and Lehigh Heritage Area with Delaware Water Gap on both sides of the river is a real possibility – plan can be used as a catalyst for other jurisdictions to follow the lead and add on

Although not extensively discussed, the general thinking of the group based on the discussion was that the corridor should be defined fairly broadly. The route should show possible extensions north, south and across the river. The width of the corridor should reference the views and watershed for conservation purposes, and the destinations should include places to visit that are supportive of the potential theme (including agri-tourism opportunities and river related eco-tourism as well as heritage related resources).