

Durham Valley Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan

Open House Meeting Notes

September 27, 2008

Compiled by Andy Cole, ERO Resources

Attendees: List of individuals in attendance collected on separate sign-in sheet.

Mapping Review

Attendees had the opportunity to review mapping for the first 30 minutes of the open house prior to the PowerPoint presentation that began at 9:30 a.m.

Introduction (Richard Goldstein)

Richard Goldstein, chair of the Byway Coordinating Committee, presented an overview of the history of the Durham Valley Scenic Byway; outlined the background of the corridor management planning grant; and introduced the Coordinating Committee.

- A planning brochure with the project background, Byway Coordinating Committee, and consultant contact information was available for all the attendees. A pdf is available at: http://www.eroresources.com/Durham/scenic_byway.html

PowerPoint Presentation (Andy Cole and Heidi Ochis)

Andy Cole, ERO Resources, went through a 20-minute PowerPoint presentation that included general background of the National Scenic Byways Program; corridor management planning elements; and findings from the inventory of the Durham Valley Scenic Byway. Heidi Ochis, Computer Terrain Mapping, discussed the visual analysis completed for the Durham Valley Scenic Byway.

- A pdf of the PowerPoint presentation was posted on the project website on October 2, 2008. http://www.eroresources.com/Durham/scenic_byway.html

Discussion (Question and Answer)

Following the PowerPoint presentation, the group asked several questions and made several suggestions. These suggestions, along with any responses are presented below.

- The Newell Homestead burned down and is in disrepair. Could a grant be obtained to repair this building?
 - This may be something to bring before the Historic Preservation Commission.
 - Historic preservation and byway grants may be available for restoration should the landowner be interested.

- Are there other byways in New York and how do they function?
 - The Hunter Scenic Byway in the Catskills is also completing a corridor management plan.
 - Lakes to Locks Passage is a National Scenic Byway.
 - There is a link on the project website to New York's Scenic Byways. The link is: <https://www.nysdot.gov/portal/page/portal/programs/scenic-byways>
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of a Scenic Byway?
 - Potential advantages include additional marketing and subsequent economic development, as well as additional grant funding in order to implement the corridor management plan. These grants are generally used to maintain the “intrinsic qualities” of the Scenic Byway. As previously mentioned, the intrinsic qualities include the historic and cultural aspects, as well as the pastoral nature of the Durham Valley.
 - One potential disadvantage might include additional traffic on the roads due to increased visitation.
- What types of grants are available?
 - Examples of potential projects include: land preservation, wayside development, website development, marketing materials, and interpretive panels or materials.
- It would be nice to get grants to keep the Byway clean and scenic.
- What are the different levels of Byway promotion?
 - National – in terms of links on the Scenic Byways’ website.
 - State – in terms of links on the Scenic Byways’ website and inclusion within other promotional materials distributed by the program.
 - Regional – in terms of materials distributed by Greene County.
 - Local – in terms of information distributed by businesses and local knowledge.
- Why is the byway the way it is?
 - The roads in the Durham Valley are Scenic Roads that were designated by the New York State Department of Conservation prior to the creation of the Scenic Byways Program. The segments were nominated through a local grassroots effort beginning in the late 1980s and officially designated in 1991. These roads have been grandfathered into the Scenic Byways Program.
- Will additional segments be added?
 - Potentially additional segments of road could be nominated for inclusion. This involves an additional level of approval beyond the administrative approval required for the corridor management plan.

- The top of the Susquehanna Turnpike is designated agricultural land, but it is not being kept up. It would be good to implement some forest thinning.
- The Town has cleared a number of significant trees along roads and does not remove the stumps.
 - There may be an opportunity to include a strategy in the corridor management plan to coordinate tree clearing activities with the Town in order to maintain the visual character of the Byway.
- There need to be locations along the Byway where people can pull off and enjoy the view or have a picnic.
 - It is important to note that this would either require land acquisition or and easement with a willing landowner since the land along the Byway is private.
- It would be nice to promote bicycle safety along the Byway and/or potentially add shoulders to road for bicyclists.
- Durham would be an excellent area to promote as a music festival. A town park high up above the valley would be an ideal setting.