

## 2017-08-01-Creek Walk History

Despite repeated setbacks, the Village Creek Walk finally came under construction and is now virtually complete. While the Board, at one time, considered abandoning the project, a decision was reached to go ahead with the project in 2013, even though it was not as complete as originally envisioned. Since 2013, the delays continued to mount.

# Fred's Trail



**Dedicated to the Memory of  
Mayor Fred Eisenberg**

SEPTEMBER 2017

Beginning in March 2013, the engineers thought that plans had been finalized and that the NYSDOT could begin the process of securing property rights for the creek walk. The Village also constructed new sidewalk on Maple Street and

assumed responsibility for the sidewalks on Maple Street Extension in front of the Upper Crown Mill Condos and the Marcellus Free Library, some of which would be considered as part of the creek walk trail.

In June 2013, however, a second cultural resources report had to be completed, added to the Design Report and submitted to the NYSDOT for approval. Through the summer and fall of 2013, the rights of way maps were drawn by Village engineers, and early in 2014, delivered to NYSDOT, which began to order appraisals of the properties. However, early in 2014, a relatively new environmental directive would add further delay. This involved the Northern Long-eared Bat (not to be confused with the Indiana Bat) – a new Threatened and Endangered Species – and the engineers had to follow new instructions as well as submit a synopsis of the project to the US Fish & Wildlife Service to get its concurrence that there would be no environmental impact. The Federal Highway Agency (FHWA), which agency was providing some of the funding for the trail, had to get concurrence from the US Fish & Wildlife Service on the Northern Long-eared Bat and its listing as endangered under the Endangered Species Act, similar to that required for the Indiana Bat, the Bald Eagle, Bog Turtle, Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake and American Hart's Tongue Fern or their habitat. The NYSDOT, however, could not grant Final Design Approval until the issue of the Northern Long-eared Bat was resolved, further delaying the project. Because some of the trees along the trail could be nesting areas for the Northern Long-eared Bat (an endangered species) the US Fish & Wildlife Agency noted that the identified trees could be cut only from November 1<sup>st</sup> to April 1<sup>st</sup>, further delaying the project.

Throughout 2014 and into 2015, Village engineers worked with the Village surveyor and the NYSDOT to complete Right-of-Way maps and with NYSDOT Real Estate to acquire the properties required for construction of the trail. By February 2015, the Real Estate Division of NYSDOT notified the Village that all property and necessary rights-of-way had been acquired for the project in the name of New York State. The Village put payment for each of the rights-of-way on deposit in early February 2015, and the property owners were notified that the money could now be claimed. The Village now expected to put the project out to bid in the summer of 2015, with construction expected by the fall of that year. However, another setback occurred when it was notified that two more trees, possible nesting areas for the Northern Long-eared Bat, were recently identified and needed to be cut – only, however, from November 1<sup>st</sup> to April 1<sup>st</sup> so as not to disturb the nesting season of the endangered species. This meant that bidding and construction would now have to wait until 2016.

With the trees cut during the allowed season, and wetland permit authorization having been provided, advertising for the project began in February 2016 with bids accepted until March 9, 2016. When the bids were opened, and there were only two, the Board was shocked at the cost. After consulting with its engineers, the Board decided to reject all bids and consider whether or not it would be able to construct part of the trail at this time and the remainder when more funds became available. The Board also discussed the idea having highway department members, from both the Village and Town, through an Inter-municipal Agreement, complete some of the work involved. This would require a

request for approval from the NYSDOT for the use of what is called Force Account Work to complete some of the work involved. Parts of the project, the Board noted in its letter of request to NYSDOT, would still be competitively bid.

In mid September 2015, the NYSDOT extended approval for the use of force account work. This work involved the clearing and grubbing that was necessary, excavation, installation of drainage pipes, the placement of millings and stone dust for the trail itself, and the installation of signage, railings and plantings. The Village and Town of Marcellus then negotiated and signed an Inter-municipal Agreement in late September and work began in early October, with the hope that much of this work might be completed in the fall of 2016. An eight-foot wide section of the trail would require a retaining wall to be built, along with asphalt paving, concrete work and pavement striping and that part of the project would be competitively bid in the winter of 2017. The construction that took place in the month of October was truly remarkable, and the Village Board was most grateful, not only to its own highway and treatment plant operators, but also to the Town of Marcellus and its highway department for all of the help that had been extended. This would not only help to reduce the cost of constructing the trail but it also served as another excellent example of inter-municipal cooperation between the Town and the Village. It might also be noted that, during that past construction season, Village employees have reciprocated by helping Town employees during the construction of the Brewer Road bridge, sewer repairs in the Town Park, the complete re-roofing of one of the rest rooms in the Town Park and most recently, the assistance provided by our plant operators to locate and correct a flooding problem in the Town Park. This spirit of cooperation has always been evident in the past, but it has often been unrecognized. On behalf of the Village of Marcellus and its residents, the Board of Trustees conveyed its great appreciation and gratitude to its Village employees as well as the Town and its employees for the spirit of cooperation and collaboration created by the creek walk project between our two municipalities.

In November 2016, the creek walk project reached its limit for the construction season, and the next and final construction phase, which required a retaining wall to be built, along with asphalt paving, concrete work and pavement striping, would be competitively bid in the spring of 2017. A number of bids were received by the Village Board on April 12, 2017, and at its regular Board Meeting on April 24, 2017, the Trustees awarded the bid for the final phase of the creek walk project to JL Excavation of Chaumont, NY, in the amount of \$122,830.00.

Soon after the Olde Home Days celebration in early June 2017, the contractor began final construction of the creek walk project. Over the next four weeks, JL Excavation Co. conducted a most satisfactory task, hauling in blocks of limestone for the retaining wall, and beginning the excavation that was needed to install them along the creek side. In laying out the trail to its required width, massive amounts of vegetation, tree stumps, rocks and boulders were removed, soil was exposed, construction fabric laid, followed by gravel stone that was compacted. About 675 sq. ft. of large block were required to then install a segmental retaining wall system. About 100 Redi-Rock blocks of stone, 41" x 18" x 48" in size, and 35 capstones were then installed, gravel stone was again brought in to shore up the blocks, and drainage pipe

laid behind the blocks and covered with fabric and stone. The new retaining wall was then tied into the existing wall as the trail was again excavated to a width of ten feet around the McClurg Building to the bridge on East Main Street. The soil was covered with fabric paper and stone, rolled and compacted. The next phase called for the entire length of the trail around and behind the McClurg Building to be covered with asphalt, compacted and rolled and connected to the stone dust trail that had been earlier completed. In addition, because some of the McClurg parking lot had been disturbed during construction of the trail, the contractor completely restored those areas. It might also be noted that the McClurg Company employees were most cooperative during this phase of the construction and also touted quite highly the professional manner with which JL Excavation Company conducted its operations.

The project also called for some sidewalk restoration on the south side of the Main Street bridge, including new warning pads and striping, as the trail crossed the highway at Station Lane to Limerick Street, and then west along the north side of the bridge to Orange Street, using existing Village sidewalks, and following trail signs that had been earlier installed, to Maple Street and its terminus at the Marcellus Free Library.

With the trail now virtually complete, the installation of wooden railing posts (4" x 4" x 4') on the creek side and wooden bollards (6" x 6" x 4') on the parking lot side would clearly define the project. After a short construction delay, a final task took place – the installation of wire mesh on the wooden railings, and reflectors on the wooden bollards, providing a safety factor for walkers on the creek side and vehicles on the parking lot side, as well as an appealing addition to an already well-designed trail.

Throughout this final phase of construction, as in the initial phase, the Village D.P.W. employees were very much involved and their dedication to task was truly outstanding. The department actively assisted the contractor in providing labor and equipment and also installed all of the ground mounted sign panels that identified the trail route. The department was also very busy adding some finishing touches to the trail, including the installation of attractive wooden fencing at two critical places along the trail – at its southern terminus from the Park to the Village, and at the point where the stone dust meets the asphalt, the site of a potential historic overlook, showing the ruins of Baker's Dam. The Village crew also provided top soil and turf establishment for lawns, and installed 45 evergreen shrubs to again define the trail, separating it from private property as well as providing an attractive screening device for a nature walk. When all is said and done, it will be the Village Department of Public Works that will provide maintenance and upkeep for the trail. To them, a great deal of gratitude is extended.

To both commemorate and dedicate the completed trail, a community-wide celebration is planned for September 16, 2017 in back of the McClurg Building parking lot, from 1 pm to 3:30 pm, complete with live music, free ice cream and food for sale. We urge the community to park in the Village or at the Marcellus Library or Marcellus Park and walk the trail to the McClurg Building and join us as we dedicate the trail, about 2:30 pm, to the memory of the one who started it all, whose vision has now been realized – Mayor Fred Eisenberg.