

A History of the Kellar Line Recreational Trail Project

updated as of 2/23/08

In 1980 Peoria acquired the Kellar Branch rail line (Kellar line) that was abandoned by the bankrupt Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad Company that run 8.39 miles from Pioneer Park to Adams Street in front of O'Brien Steel Fabrication. From July 10, 1984 until February 24, 1998 Peoria & Pekin Union Railway Company ("P & PU") hauled freight over the Kellar line from downtown to Pioneer Park to various customers in the Pioneer Park area. In 1998 P & PU assigned its remaining interest of the 20 year contract to Pioneer Industrial Railway Co. (PIRY)

Among other terms the 1998 agreement contemplated that if a spur line were constructed by Peoria allowing a western connection to the Union Pacific (UP), rail traffic on the Kellar line would cease and a recreational trail would be built on the right-of-way that Peoria purchased in 1980 for \$856,000. The agreement by its terms was to terminate on July 10, 2004, a fact which PIRY still disputes. One provision in the agreement states "PIRY will not oppose such discontinuance." [of service] Another provision calls for PIRY to "cooperate with the City's efforts to acquire and construct such connection".

For more than a decade, the City of Peoria, the Village of Peoria Heights and the Peoria Park District have been working to develop a recreational hike/bike trail on the right-of-way of the Kellar line that runs 8.39 miles from Pioneer Park to Adams Street. The Peoria Park District has secured grants to complete most of the trail construction with an asphalt surface. The southern 2.2 miles at the southern end of the Kellar line will remain intact to service O'Brien Steel Fabrication and the 6.3 miles of right-of-way through Peoria Heights and Peoria was supposed to become trail and will end at Harvard Street where it will link up with the street route through Springdale Cemetery.

May 2, 1999

Hoping to stop the efforts of the RTA to encourage Peoria to build the spur extension PIRY sued a member of the RTA for Libel and Civil Conspiracy in Peoria County.

May 21, 1999

Recreational Trail Advocates (RTA) sponsors Bike to Work Day.

May 22, 1999

RTA sponsored first walk on Kellar Branch with both mayors, Bud Grieves of Peoria and Earl Carter of Village of Peoria Heights. The group gathered at Bishop Street to drive the golden spike. The City of Peoria would not approve the walk permit until Peoria Park District PPD got insurance. Grieves announced \$875,000 grant to build western connection.

June 4, 1999

Pioneer Industrial Railway (PIRY sues RTA for libel and civil conspiracy over petition addressed to Peoria requesting conversion of the Kellar Branch into a trail.

October 15, 1999

It was announced the \$875,000 grant won't be received.

October 17, 1999

Second Kellar Branch trail walk with Mayor Carter and Mayor Grieves speaking.

October 26, 1999

Peoria Railroad Commissioners voted against closing the Kellar Branch.

November 4, 1999

Mayor Grieves asked PPD to examine a rail/trail possibility.

December 11, 1999

3.6 million dollar grant awarded to PPD for trail.

December 12, 1999

PIRY took out full page ad in Peoria Journal Star in support of continued rail use of Kellar Branch.

January 21, 2000

PIRY failed to submit to Peoria a signed contract proposal for service over the western connection.

January 22, 2000

Third walk held on the proposed trail with rail cars of PIRY parked in section that has steep sides deliberately forcing walkers to walk around the rail cars with snow on the ground and no room to safely walk.

January 24, 2000

When no progress was being made by Peoria the Recreational Trail Advocates (RTA) was incorporated to promote the extension of the Rock Island Trail State Park to downtown Peoria and to promote the establishment of additional connections with the trail.

February 8, 2000

Libel case against RTA dismissed for second time with prejudice by Peoria Co. Judge Barra which meant it cannot be filed again. The trial court on June 2, 2000 awarded sanctions (monetary penalty) against PIRY and its attorney for filing what the court called a frivolous lawsuit.

February 17, 2000

State Representative David Leitch obtains \$875,000 Illinois First money for western connection.

March 1, 2000

Peoria City Council defers decision on Kellar Branch trail.

April 8, 2000

RTA counsel awarded attorney fees by the Peoria County trial court.

April 30, 2000

Walk on the Rock Island Trail from Barracks Cater Inn west followed by brunch at the inn.

May 30, 2000

City of Peoria requested bids on construction of the 1,800 foot western connection to the Union Pacific main line (UP).

June 2, 2000

Peoria County trial court awarded \$1,000 in attorney's fees against Attorney La Kemper, \$2,000 attorney fees against PIRY and \$75.00 costs against PIRY.

June 15, 2000

Three rail companies offer to serve the western connection but PIRY is not one of the companies.

June 26, 2000.

The contract was awarded to DOT who owned Central Illinois Railway (CIRY). Peoria entered into a contact with CIRY.

July 17, 2000.

Not giving up PIRY appealed the trial court decision.

August 12, 2000

UP offers to sell UP spur to Peoria for \$175,000 secured by Representative Leitch.

October 14, 2000

Fund raiser event on Rock Island Trail

October 15, 2000

PIRY announces intention to offer passenger service over Kellar Branch.

October 19, 2000

Meeting in Canton of supporters of the proposed Canton-Farmington Trail

November 15, 2000

Peoria gave 2 more weeks to PIRY to put in an offer to ship over western connection.

November 29, 2000

City of Peoria approved (DOT) a/k/a (Central Illinois Railroad Company OR CIRY) rail contract to operate over western connection.

January 8, 2001

RTA discussed uniform signage on all the trails.

January 18, 2001

RTA representatives met with Illinois Central College officials regarding construction of prototype for bike racks.

March 20, 2001

Jennifer Costa, ICC instructor, presented drawings of the proposed bike rack. Peoria City Councilman, Gary Sandburg, started his campaign for rail parallel to trail project.

April 22, 2001

RTA has booth at Peoria Earth Day Fair in Lakeview Park.

May 14, 2001

RTA reviewed Jennifer Costa's model bike racks.

June 8, 2001

RTA has booth at Second Classic Sports Festival.

June 15, 2001

Operating agreement between DOT and City of Peoria finalized; approval of construction of 1,800 foot extension of UP spur with wye tracks. Later wye track was eliminated.

June 16, 2001

Guy Brenkman resigns from railroad commission.

June 26, 2001

Peoria City Council (except Gary Sandburg) approved western connection and conversion of Kellar Branch trail.

August 2, 2001

The Illinois Appellate Court awarded sanctions and stated the appeal of PIRY was

frivolous as well.

August 13, 2001

Appellate Court decision rejected Pioneer's appeal.

September 12, 2001

RTA pays for more steel for bike rack design.

September 20, 2001

Peoria announced it now owns the UP spur from University Avenue to UP mainline.

October 17, 2001

"Spooks and Goblins" public event was sponsored by RTA at Kickapoo Creek picnic area.

January 15, 2002

RTA came up with possible location in Peoria for bike rack construction and discussed marketing them. Jennifer Costa showed drawings of a locomotive style bike rack she developed.

January 23, 2002

George Burrier made presentation to PPD regarding the two styles of bike racks. The racks were recommended for use by PPD.

February 12, 2002

Phil Lockwood reported that Peoria Convention and Visitors' Bureau wants to meet with RTA regarding bike racks and uniform signage on the trails. Earth Day bike ride was set for April 21, 2002.

March 13, 2002

Parker Fabrications can produce bike racks for \$400 per unit. There would be a \$400 one time charge for purchase of a pipe bender.

April 10, 2002

George Burrier met with PRIDE. They had no money to spend on bike racks but thought the idea was good.

May 14, 2002

Discussion regarding getting Peoria started on a master plan for Peoria linking up bike routes. Nobody volunteered to take project. It was announced that Morton Bike Trail construction might begin.

August 11, 2002

David P. Jordon blogger article says the Rock Island Trail extension "will be a waste of taxpayers' money and can be better spent on economic infrastructure."

September 1, 2002

City of Peoria says it lacks funds to purchase an easement for extending the spur through Ameren-CILCO property. Paper reports that Gateway Milling has terminated shipments by rail over Kellar Branch. Fewer than 75 cars travel annually over the Kellar Branch from Carver Lumber and Peoria Plastics.

September 16, 2002

PPD is asked to pay CILCO \$210,000 for an additional 15 feet of right-of-way needed to extend the spur through Ameren-CILCO property. 15 feet would have been provided at no charge, but Peoria needed 30 feet requiring poles to be moved and parking spaces to be relocated.

October 7, 2002

Peoria Journal Star "(PJS)" article letter to editor from Scott Barger pointed out Madison, WI has more bikes than cars and over 110 miles of bike paths for its residents and Scott urges Peoria to become more bike friendly.

October 9, 2002

George Burrier made second presentation to PRIDE regarding bike racks.

October 19, 2002

Peoria agreed to split the \$210,000 cost of a CILCO easement with PPD. State Representative David Leitch secures a \$1.6 million dollar grant to extend spur track linking the UP main line to Carver Lumber Company. Peoria will vote on October 22, 2002 to hire attorney to help seek approval from Surface Transportation Board "(STB)" for trail. Steve Van Winkle expects the rail extension to be in spring of 2003 and trail conversion to start in summer of 2003.

October 22, 2002

Peoria reports hiring of Thomas McFarland as Counsel to help with STB proceeding and approval of agreement with PPD for lease of bike trail over Kellar Branch for \$1.00. City council reaffirmed its commitment (9 to 1) to connect Rock Island Trail with its riverfront and provide replacement rail service to customers in Pioneer Park. Dick Carver came to town and extolled the benefits of the western connection. PPD will be responsible for removal and disposal of the old track and restoration of 26 street crossing and alleys where the track will be removed.

November 13, 2002

RTA wrote to Mayor Carter of Peoria Heights about our bike racks for use by Peoria Heights.

January 2003

A thick Powder coating of trolley type bike racks was applied that reduces chipping and fading for the two racks ordered by the transit district

February 4, 2003

Peoria Heights approved Earth Day trail cleanup on April 26, 2003.

April 8, 2003

City Link announced it will purchase 2 trolley design bike racks from "(RTA)".

April 26, 2003

Kellar Branch trail cleanup from Peoria Heights Library

April 29, 2003

Peoria buys final easement from Illinois American Water for western rail connection.

July 6, 2003

"(RTA)" received order for 2 trolley design bike racks from City Link.

September 9, 2003

RTA votes to give the locomotive design prototype to Lakeview Museum and the trolley design prototype to the Rock Island Trail State Park.

September 11, 2003

Canton Park District meeting regarding LaHarpe to Mapleton Trail

September 21, 2003

First Cancer Center for Healthy Living bike ride utilizing the Rock Island Trail State Park

October 5, 2003

Hikemabika event on Hennepin Canal was held.

November 2003

City Link installed the 2 trolley design bike racks.

March 16, 2004

Hala Ahmed gave an update on the 25 mile inactive UP line from Bellevue to Middle Grove. BFI continues to pay for an option to use the line to haul garbage into Fulton County. Fulton County does not want to expand its garbage dump. Jim Martin made a presentation to Tri-County Regional Planning Commission about Fargo Run in Growth Cells 2 and 3. The City of Peoria is proposing developers put 10 foot path on one side of all new streets and connect to the Rock Island Trail.

April 13, 2004

Jim Martin gave the same presentation to RTA members as above. STB approved Environmental Impact Study of the extension of the 1800 feet UP spur track. David Pittman is working on a connection of Sommer Park to Kinsey Park.

June 5, 2004

National Trails Day bike ride on the Rock Island Trail.

July 10, 2004

Peoria took the position that the 20 year contract it originally had with P & PU that was assigned to "(PIRY)" for the balance of the contract term had expired. "(PIRY)" effectively blocked "(CIRY)" from making deliveries on the Kellar line by parking its engine or cars where the new switch was being installed which prevented Carver Lumber Company "(CLC)" from getting shipments of lumber from the west. (See "(PJS)" article August 1, 2004)

August 10, 2004

Peoria adopted ordinance calling for 10 foot wide walks in new subdivisions on one side of street in Growth Cell III.

August 23, 2004

Bid opening date for construction on the spur track extension.

October 12, 2004 Suggestions for signage was a pictogram showing a bike for all jurisdictions or calling it Heart of Illinois Trail System. \$47,000 was donated by a handful of trail advocates to the RTA when Peoria said it was short \$175,000 for funds needed to pay for the rehabilitation of the track from Pioneer Parkway to its most northern end. The \$175,000 came as a pledge to be paid by O'Brien Steel Fabrication on condition that the trail would be completed. "(PJS)" articles October 6 and 13, 2004. The \$47,000 was placed in the Friends of the Rock Island Trail, Inc. account for future trail projects. The first one was the installation of solar lighting for the tunnel under Rt. 6. and the second use was for the "Build the Kellar Branch Now" sign campaign.

January, 2005

PIRY began its campaign to block the installation of a rail switch that would allow lumber to be received by Carver Lumber Company (CLC).

January 11, 2005

2 Trek bikes donated to J. P. O'Brien and his brother of O'Brien Steel for their company's commitment to help fund the western rail connection by Illinois Cycle and Fitness.

February 24, 2005

STB ruled that PIRY's offer to buy the Kellar Branch is rejected.

March 21, 2005

Gateway Milling, a Pioneer Park rail user, filed for bankruptcy.

June 14, 2005

RTA members marked the Springdale Cemetery section of the trail with painted bike and runner symbols.

July 5, 2005

Friends of the Rock Island Trail, Inc. paid for the tools necessary to install the posts for the Fondulac Park District and PPD sections.

July 7, 2005

PIRY continues to prevent Metroplex from installing a rail switch into CLC and other Pioneer potential rail users and Metroplex leaves the site. (See "(PJS)" January 5 and July 7, 2005)

August 2005

STB ordered PIRY off the Kellar Branch after several months of a blockade by PIRY preventing a switch from being installed on the Kellar Branch.

August 1, 2005

PIRY finally agrees to remove its locomotive from the switch and allow construction to resume (See PJS August 3 and 10, 2005)

August 2, 2005

PIRY continues to put locomotive on Kellar Branch to prevent installation of rail switch.

August 3, 2005 Despite its agreement to remove its equipment PIRY still blocks the switch. (See PJS August 3, 2005)

August 5, 2005

Friends of the Rock Island Trail, Inc. donated over \$5,000 to pay for the electrical equipment for the lighting of the tunnel under route 6 on the Rock Island Trail.

August 10, 2005

PIRY again agrees to remove its engine (PJS August 10, 2005)

August 10, 2005

(STB) which has jurisdiction over all railroad matters and which has the final say in this controversy ruled on 8-10-05 that Peoria can discontinue service over the Kellar line and remove PIRY after 90 days expires. (See PJS August 11, 2005)

August 17, 2005

After agreeing to continue service to CLC until the new spur extension is finished, PIRY pulled its locomotive off the Kellar line and refused to provide service to his former only customer. This forced CIRY to begin service on short notice. Rail spur construction resumes. (See PJS August 18, 2005)

August 18, 2005

PIRY sued Peoria, Peoria Heights and DOT Railroad in LaSalle County (improper county) asking for \$50,000 in damages, permanent right to operate on Kellar Branch, declaration that the contract with CIRY is invalid, and injunction to prevent removal of Kellar Branch. PIRY was forced by the court to transfer the case to Tazewell County on 1-18-06. This lawsuit was ripe for decision but nothing was done and PIRY dismissed its case in Tazewell County on April 25, 2007.

August 24, 2005

PPD accepted bid for trail construction from Pioneer Parkway to Candletree Court. (See PJS August 25, 2005)

August 31, 2005

PPD awarded grant of \$200,000 for the Glen Avenue to

Peoria Heights section of the trail. (See PJS August 31, 2005)

September 20, 2005

RTA arranged for placement of a utility pole at the south entrance to the route 6 tunnel of the Rock Island Trail which will hold the solar panels for the tunnel lighting. RTA raised \$1,025 selling raffle tickets on a Trek bicycle donated by John Bousky of Illinois Cycle and Fitness.

October 29, 2005

RTA cleanup of Alta parking lot of the Rock Island Trail of debris, weeds and invasive trees

November 2005

PPD lost \$200,000 in Illinois Department of Natural Resources grant because there has been no construction of the recreational trail. (Peoria-Times Observer November 2, 2005).

January 20, 2006

The STB reversed its December 23, 2005 decision that previously allowed for the discontinuance of service over the Kellar line and the removal of PIRY from the right-of-way.

February 27, 2006

Peoria Park District lost \$300,000 trail grant because of construction delays in completing western connection.

March 2, 2006

First load of lumber delivered to CLC over western connection.

March 4, 2006

PIRY offered again to purchase Kellar Branch for \$565,000.

April 14, 2006

Trail/rail cleanup from Pioneer Parkway to Chanute Road.

April 26, 2006

STB finds it has insufficient information to determine the adequacy of current and future rail service to CLC and gave Carver and CIRY until July 24, 2006 to supplement the record and gave PIRY until August 14, 2006 to reply.

July 15, 2006

CLC has received 24 railcars without complaint.

September 20, 2006

Sharon Decker of Illinois Prairie Railroad Foundation calls for a trolley line to operate on the Kellar Branch.

December 7, 2006

CIRY filed petition with STB to continue operations over the Kellar Branch between Candletree Lane and Jefferson Street. Previously CIRY requested approval to discontinue service over that part. CIRY cited new customers as the reason.

January 12, 2007

PIRY requested authority to return to the Kellar Branch and provide alternative service to CLC and to reopen the STB's decision of August 10, 2005 that allowed the discontinuance of service over the Kellar line and the removal of PIRY. The STB allowed the case to be

reopened but denied PIRY the right to operate on the Kellar line. It further ordered PIRY to submit any additional evidence by March 5, 2007 and ordered CLC to submit any additional evidence by March 12, 2007. (See STB document AB-878, AB 1066X)

January 18, 2007

PIRY contacted Mayor Allen of Peoria Heights regarding the purchase of the right-of-way through Peoria Heights for the purpose of shipping freight and carrying passengers on a trolley all the way to the downtown area. PIRY offered to develop a self-propelled trolley but made no financial commitment. PIRY offered to carry bikes on the trolley and to work with the trail advocates. PIRY made a presentation about the trolley to Peoria Heights trustee March 12, 2007 at 6:30 at the Village Hall.

February 12, 2007

Peoria submitted its response to the STB requesting CIRY be selected as the new rail provider and continued to seek the removal of PIRY from the Kellar line. Peoria Heights told the STB it had not decided whether to support the action of Peoria at this time.

February 14, 2007

Alexis Khazzam stated he has spent \$15 million in Junction City and plans to spend an additional \$45 million which probably won't happen if the rail is re-activated.

February 20, 2007

City of Peoria Council directed the staff to negotiate a deal with CIRY that would keep PIRY off the Kellar line and let CIRY run cars on the part of the line not affected by a trail. PIRY offered to purchase the Kellar Branch for only \$565,000, even though Peoria purchased it in 1984 for \$856,000 and spent an additional \$350,000 in rehabilitating of the track totaling \$1,206,000.

February 21, 2007

Peoria City Council directs staff to take action to oust PIRY and chose CIRY as new operator.

February 22, 2007

Peoria Heights decides it wants a trolley for Peoria Heights and asks for \$50,000 grant for trolley feasibility study from Tri County Regional Planning Commission.

March 12, 2007

Mike Carr, president of PIRY and Sharon Deckard of the Illinois Prairie Railroad Foundation made presentations regarding a trolley on the Kellar Line to the Village of Peoria Heights trustees and mayor. The possibility of the trolley is contingent upon PIRY being permitted to take over the Kellar Line. PIRY still maintained that the trail can exist alongside of the rail. Peoria at this time has requested the STB to remove PIRY from the Kellar Line and that CIRY be permitted to operate on the Kellar Line on the northern and southern ends of the Kellar Line as it has done in the past. CIRY has agreed (only at this time) to allow the middle section of the Kellar Line from Candletree Lane to Springdale Cemetery to be removed for conversion to a trail.

March 28, 2007

The PPD, RTA and supporters of the trail were asked to make a presentation to the Peoria Heights Mayor Mark B. Allen and the trustees that date.

March 29, 2007

It was announced that the {PPD} was forced to give up \$400,000 of previously awarded grants because the park district has been prevented from proceeding. Mike Friberg of PPD made a power point presentation showing that the combination rail with trail would cost over \$28 million and that it would not qualify for federal dollars because it was not a Class I separated trail.

April 5, 2007

Mayor Mark Allen of Peoria Heights announced that Peoria Heights' has found little or no support present for a trolley system through Peoria Heights and has notified the Surface Transportation Board the Village no longer wants rail traffic through Peoria Heights.

May 3, 2007

Oil tank cars placed on Kellar Branch by CIRY.

May 19, 2007

The Friends of Rock Island Trail held a clean up of 2 miles of the Kellar Branch along the Peoria Heights section of the proposed trail. Mayor Mark Allen, Tom Horstman and other trustee joined more than 75 volunteers.

June 25, 2007

The STB ruled that CIRY had a legal right to operate on the western connection of the Kellar Branch which is the new 1,800 foot spur connection. Further the STB ordered that CIRY had until July 27, 2007 to obtain an operating agreement with Peoria. This still has not been submitted as of 2/23/08.

July 21, 2007

Peoria Heights decided to apply to Peoria-Pekin Urbanized Transportation Study (PPUATS) for funds to build a trailhead.

July 25, 2007

An informational meeting was held at Peoria heights to discuss the procedure for application of \$400,000 for construction of a trailhead in Peoria Heights at the library or in front of the former Cohen's' Warehouse. A grant would be requested from (PPUATS) that would not be available for 5 to 7 years.

October 11, 2007

Peoria County Board passed unanimously a resolution supporting the development of the Kellar Branch into a recreation trail.

October 18, 2007

PPUATS committee approves \$400,000 for Peoria Heights trailhead that would include parking, restrooms, drinking water, emergency phone, pavilion and picnic area.

November 1, 2007

Allen Road is now a priority in Peoria by IDOT. This will result in the future of a tunnel under Allen road where the trail crosses the road.

Peoria formerly demanded CIRY 12 % of the fair market value of Peoria's asset annually to operate over the Kellar Branch. In 1984 it paid \$856,000 which equals annual rent due of \$102,000 to Peoria. A more recent appraisal would increase the charge to \$200,000 annually to operate over the Kellar Branch. Peoria offered to charge only 1 dollar to operate over the rehabilitated 1,800 foot western connection that the taxpayers paid \$2.3 million to rehabilitate.

November 8, 2007

Full PPUATS approved \$400,000 for Peoria heights trailhead.

November 17, 2007

Fon du Lac Park District received \$200,000 to complete the final leg of its trail that will connect CVS Pharmacy to the Bob Michel Bridge.

November 19, 2007

STB denied, in a 2-1 decision, Peoria the right to stop rail service over the Kellar Branch line and allowed both CIRY and PIRY to operate over the Kellar Branch. It made this decision based on the allegation by both carriers that there were customers who were ready to use the old track.

November 27, 2007

City of Peoria tabled a resolution of support for the Kellar Branch and formally charge for the use of the Kellar Branch.

December 5, 2007

Peoria Heights unanimously approved resolution of support for conversion of Kellar Branch into recreational trail.

December 6, 2007

CIRY and PIRY had altercation on Kellar Branch while both carriers were traveling in opposite directions at same time.

CIRY meets with PPD regarding a shared use of the right-of-way which it feels can be done with their help. Peoria Heights already has demanded \$79,200 to operate over its portion of Kellar Branch.

December 11, 2007

CIRY and PIRY reach a joint operating protocol on operating over Kellar Branch.

December 22, 2007

A 6 person committee is selected to explore the feasibility of a side by side rail and trail. Peoria Councilman Bill Spears will serve as chair. The 3 people from Peoria will be J. P. O'Brien, President of O'Brien Steel Service Co., former Peoria Mayor and Chairman of the former Peoria and Peoria Heights Railroad Commission Richard Neumiller, and Steve Jaeger, Executive Director of Heart of Illinois Regional Port District. The 3 people from Peoria Heights will be Alex Khazzam, President of Junction Ventures, Sheryl Carter and Vern Kimberlin. The PPD, City of Peoria, Village of Peoria Heights, PIRY, and CIRY are to donate \$2,500 each to pay for a professional engineering group to review the results of PPD study and the feasibility of a combination rail and trail in this corridor. As yet nothing has been offered by either railroad as of 2/23/08.

January 4, 2007

Peoria Heights officially offered up to \$5,000 for the formalized study of the rail and trail concept.

January 23, 2008

Press conference at Vonachen's Old Place was organized by David Pitmann and former Peoria Mayor Jim Maloof to show political support for the conversion of the Kellar Branch into a multi-purpose recreational trail. Supporters present were Sen. David Koehler; former Peoria Mayor Jim Maloof; East Peoria Mayor Dave Mingus; Peoria Heights Mayor Mark Allen; Mayor Jim Ardis; Peoria Councilman Ryan M. Spain; Peoria Councilman Jim

Montelongo; Peoria Councilman Clyde Gulley, Morton Village Trustee Ginger Hermann, representing Morton Mayor Norman Durlinger; Pat Lewis, General Manager of Springdale Cemetery; Sandra Fritz, representing Citizens for Community Values of Peoria and Woodbrook Manor Neighborhood Association; Representative from Senator Durbin's office; Representative from Senator O'Bama's office; and Dede Rice from the Stark County Trails and Greenway; Bonnie Noble, Director of the Peoria Park District; Peoria County Sheriff Mike Mc Coy, members of the Illinois Striders; members of the Recreational

Trail Advocates, members of the Friends of the Rock Island Trail.

Statements of support were also read on behalf of Aaron Schock, Jim Mc Conoughey and John Morris who could not be present because they were campaigning for the U.S. Representative of the 18th District. All 3 candidates voiced their support for the trail as did all the other candidates who spoke. Former Mayor Maloof summarized the problem by stating that "Peoria is a void on the Rock Island Trail, which could be filled if the Kellar Branch is built. In 2005, the Peoria City Council received 2.3 million from the federal government for a new gateway to the west for railroads. It hasn't brought forth one customer."

January 26, 2008

PIRY ran an engine and one carload of lumber over the Kellar Branch to establish its right to use the line.

February 8, 2008

The first meeting of the City of Peoria/Village of Peoria Heights Joint Rail/Trail Committee was held in room 110 at Peoria City Hall at 3:00 P.M.

The mission of the commission is to explore the financial and engineering feasibility of a side-by-side rail and trail. The target date for picking an engineering firm to review the Peoria Park District's 30 page report is April 1, 2008. It was made clear that the determination by the engineering firm of whether or not the conclusions reached by the Peoria Park District that the side by side trail would not be practical or affordable did not have an April 1, 2008 deadline. The April 1 deadline was only for selecting a firm for the review.

Dave Barber, Superintendent of Public Works was asked to provide a map showing the right-of-way boundaries along the 8.29 miles so everybody could see how much of the right-of-way was available to build the parallel trail which has to be 15 feet from the centerline and an additional 14 feet wide.

Mr. Barber passed out information on the two engineering firms that had a lot of experience working with trails which he thought could be considered. He also asked the committee members to bring back any other firms that the committee members knew about to the next meeting. One firm was Stone Consulting & Design and the other firm was T.Y Lin. International.

J.P. O'Brien informed the group that if the trail was not built on the roadbed that the PPD would lose the \$4 million dollar grant. Mike Friberg's study stated that the PPD would have to pay back the \$200,000 in engineering fees the PPD already has received if the plans are changed. In the PPD study Mike Friberg states that all the engineering work done so far would have to be scrapped and all the approvals by IDOT would be revoked if the trail is not placed on the track bed.

Alex Khazzam brought up the issue of no rent being paid by either

railroad to use the Kellar Branch and asked why they should be allowed to use the City's and Village's property for free. No response was made except to say this was beyond the scope of this commission's focus.

The committee was asked to read the study before February 15.

Finally the chair asked for a discussion of the meeting dates. It was decided that the group would meet every Friday at 7:00 A.M. in room 210 at City Hall for the time being.

February 15, 2008

The committee reviewed the map showing the boundaries of the right-of-way of the 8.2 miles of the Kellar Branch and M. Friberg pointed out each of the problem areas such as: drainage areas, easement problems, washouts, steep embankments, electrical towers that would have to be moved and narrow sections of right-of-way. Chairman Bill Spears then suggested the committee take two weeks to select an engineering firm. The chairman will try to get a presentation from one of the firms. The next meeting will be March 7, 2008

History of Peoria Park District (PPD) Trail Grants

Year	Comp. mileage	Grant Amt.	PPD match amt.	Grant type	Location
1991	1.7	\$19,000.	\$19,000.	OSLAD	Hamilton Blvd. to Grant Street
1991	2.5	\$100,000.	\$238,000.	BP	Alta to Pioneer Pkwy
1995	design	\$120,000.	\$30,000.	ISTEA-ITEP	design Pioneer Pkwy to Springdale Cemetery
1995	2.5	\$200,000.	\$200,000.	BP	Morton St. to Harvard Ave.
1997	.5	\$54,000.	\$54,000.	BP	grant amt. \$200k with match of \$223k; could only use portion
1999	.8	\$20,000.	\$230,500.	BP	Hamilton Blvd. to Michel Bridge.
Totals:		\$513,000.	\$771,500.		

GRANTS IN PROGRESS, REVOKED OR WITHDRAWN:

1996		\$200,000.	\$263,000.	BP	Revoked
1998		\$170,000.	\$169,000.	BP	Withdrawn
2001	5.7*	\$2,858,000.	\$722,000.	ISTEA-ITEP	Pioneer Pkwy. to Springdale Cemetery
				TEA-21	design work of \$250,000. in progress
	2005		\$200,000.	\$200,000.	BP on hold

*The 5.7 miles isn't completed.

Total amount spend to date	\$1,284,500.00
Total money in hand	\$3,980,000.00

Submitted by George Burrier