

The Preservationist

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Sheboygan County Includes Plan to Widen Historic Circuits in Non-motorized Vehicle Plan

In September of 2007 the Sheboygan County Planning Department adopted a county wide Non-motorized Vehicle Plan. Included in the plan is widening some of the roads comprising the Elkhart Lake Historic Race Circuits by adding 3 to 5 foot blacktopped shoulder on both side of the road for pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Under Wisconsin statute 66.1111 the County was required to notify the Wisconsin Historical Society of this plan at the earliest stage of planning but with total disregard for historic preservation, has failed to do so.

The Historical Society was made aware of he plan by HRC in April 2008 After a site inspection, the Society determined that the planned project constituted “adverse effect” to a listed property under Wisconsin historic preservation statute 44.42.

It is believed that funding for the Counties planned non-motorized vehicle pathways comes from a \$25,000,000 grant of Federal tax payer dollars for a county wide project. If the source of funds is federal, the National Historic Preservation law will come into play with stronger protection provisions than state law and funds can be withdrawn if preservation standards are not met.

Chip Brown, Compliance Officer for the Wisconsin Historical Society, is currently in the investigation stage and expects to begin negotiation with the Sheboygan County Highway Department to seek and identify mitigating alternatives in the near future.

HRC supports the Counties goal of providing a pedestrian and bike path around Elkhart Lake but as a separate pathway and not as a part of the Historic Race Circuits. The County has acquired substantial right of way to the north of the CTH “A” portion of the circuits to install a separate pathway similar to the pathway along Highway 23. Such a pathway would be safer and more pleasant to use and still preserve the integrity of the historic circuits.

Update on Grading of Banks at Hamill’s Hollow

On April 28th, HRC President Tom Hollfelder met with Sheboygan County Administrator Adam Payne and Highway Commissioner Greg Schnell. The County made two important commitments at the meeting. One, no more work would be started on the CTH “A” portion of the historic circuits until a full and complete disposition of the issues with the Wisconsin Historical Society had been resolved (other than seeding raw banks to prevent erosion) and two, the expression of a willingness to consider partial restoration of the bank on the north side of the road that gave Hamill’s Hollow much of its character.

As a goodwill gesture, President Hollfelder presented a signed collector edition of the print “The Last Race” autographed by 1951 and 1952 main event winner, John Fitch, to Sheboygan County. Administrator Payne thanked President Hollfelder and indicated that the print would be hung in the meeting room of the Transportation Committee at the Highway Department headquarters building.