

Local

■ RECREATION

Walkways and signs on riverfront master plan

By Karen Blackledge
The Daily Item

DANVILLE — Projects for a walking and biking trail can be as simple as placing directional signs and as expensive as paving a levee.

The cheapest way to draw people to the trail would be to add “way-finding” signs, Montour Area Recreation Commission Director Bob Stoudt said. “This would be the easiest way to build interest in the trail and awareness of the trail,” he said following Monday night’s presentation of the Danville Riverfront Master Plan in the municipal building.

The most expensive part of the plan would be asphalt along the grass flood levee system from near Grand and Iron streets to the soccer fields along East Market Street at an estimated cost of \$200,000 to \$500,000. The asphalt would prevent erosion of the levee.

Danville Borough Council Presi-

dent Dick Johns favored the recreation commission to first install some type of guardrail-size fence along Route 54 for bikes and people to walk along.

Decorative-style guardrails are included in the Route 54 portion of the plan. The rails could be erected so pedestrians, kids and dogs don’t end up on Route 54. The trail could continue under the footbridge and onto the sidewalk to Hess Field or people could walk up the footbridge and continue onto sidewalks at Beaver Place to Hess Field, Stoudt said.

The Route 54 plan would “make Danville more inviting and offer residents healthy, active things to do and afford everybody a lot of good options,” he said.

Stoudt said council could approve it contingent upon the commission obtaining funds for it. The borough’s share of the cost could be in-kind services.

Trish Carothers, executive direc-

tor of the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership, said the deadline for the partnership’s first \$60,000 mini grant program is Aug. 20. The partnership hopes to award grants at the end of September. A maximum of \$10,000 would be approved for an implementation grant.

Dave Decoteau, former recreation commission director, said people from out-of-town don’t know where the walking path system is in Danville.

He said the recreation committee liked a plan detailing a route through Market Street so people could see the town.

Stoudt will speak at tonight’s borough council meeting. He wants to know what the council thinks of the plan since the proposals involve borough land.

Johns said the report was very thorough. “Other than employment and safety, recreation is the most important. I was born and raised on

the river,” he said.

Councilman Bill Hause said he thought most council members would favor the report but financing would be the issue.

Stoudt said the master plan contains plans for the soccer park, the levee trail, Riverfront Park and the Route 54 gateway “to logically flow from one place to another in a safe fashion.”

Cutting walls in either side of the bridge when PennDOT needs to make changes to the span would allow the commission to make a pedestrian walkway at Riverfront Park.

A plan for a trail along the soccer park would connect through the park but would not interfere with games.

A levee trail neighborhood gateway, at Grand and Iron streets, could be decorative so people know where the trail entrance is, Stoudt said.

If the council approves some aspects of the plan, Stoudt said his job will be to find grant sources and

funds from local businesses and from local private donors who would have the chance to leave a legacy.

Some of the parts of the plan could be done in one to two years while the Riverfront Trail will take an estimated six to 10 years to complete.

The SEDA-COG Community Resource Center did the study with funding provided by various programs and government entities.

Tom Grbenick, director of the Community Resource Center at SEDA-COG, said the Susquehanna River is the attraction in a river town such as Danville.

Saying Danville has made great strides since being a “pretty sad-looking place” in 1982, he said the challenge now will be how to build a trail system and how to capitalize on the downtown.

■ Email comments to
kblackledge@dailyitem.com.