Baileys: Opportunities & Challenges

Chauncey’s new mayor says major trail system can help community but also may lead to higher housing costs

By Conor Morris
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Local discussions concerning construction of the 88-mile Baileys Trail System in the Wayne National Forest – with its main trailhead in Chauncey-Dover Community Park in Chauncey – has the newly installed mayor of that Athens County village excited about economic development prospects for her town, but she’s also worried.

Mayor Amy Renner in an interview last week expressed concern about the potential for gentrification arising from the big trail project, which could mean higher property and rent prices driving out the town’s long-time residents (Chauncey has a 32 percent poverty rate).

“You see the ‘for sale’ signs going up, and by the end of the month it’s being sold,” she said, referring to homes in the village. “It’s very quick, and it’s making everybody a little nervous.”

As an important caveat, Renner said that for now, it’s still quite affordable to live in Chauncey. Plus, discussions about funding for the Baileys Trail System are still far from settled, with only

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This is the front of a house on Main Street in Chauncey that’s listed for sale by the owner. Photo by Conor Morris.