

RAIL TRAIL CONVERSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Town of Sudbury, Massachusetts
Minutes of Meeting on September 24, 2009

Present: Pat Brown (chair), Madeleine Gelsonon, Bob Hall, Bridget Hanson, Jennifer Pincus, Nancy Powers, Dick Williamson, Carole Wolfe

Absent: Betty Foley, Eric Poch

Also Present: Dan DePompei

The Meeting was convened at 7:30 P.M.

Prior to accepting public input, the committee determined that Pat Brown would draft minutes for this session.

Community Input: There were no comments at this time.

Minutes: The May 28, 2009, minutes of the RTCAC were approved as amended.

Developments related to CPC projects: E-mail from Town Planner Jody Kablack forwarded to RTCAC on September 18 states that the Town is reviewing the just-received survey plans, but she does not know whether they are complete (Article 24, 2007). She also states that the Town has not released the wildlife study, but is working on it with the consultant (Article 23, 2007) and that no work has been done on the concept plan (Article 27, 2009). Carole Wolfe noted that Jody Kablack had said the wildlife study would be posted during the week of May 26, and wondered what could cause the delay. Bridget Hanson asked whether the Conservation Commission (ConCom) had held an NRAD (Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation) determination concerning the wetlands delineation for the right of way; no one on the Committee was aware of this. A public hearing is a required part of the NRAD process. Bridget will follow up with Conservation Coordinator Debbie Dineen to find out whether this has been scheduled. A wetlands delineation is valid for three years from the time of its approval by ConCom, but Bridget understood that ConCom prefers not to rely on old data when making the determination.

Membership: E-mail from Town Planner Jody Kablack to the RTCAC on June 12 informed the Committee that the Board of Selectmen had revised the RTCAC mission statement by changing its membership “in order to improve the ability to get a quorum”. This revision removed all Town Staff from the RTCAC, even in their “ex officio” (non-voting, and so not counting toward quorum) capacities, removed the requirement for a representative from the Park and Recreation Commission which had never been filled, removed the requirement for a representative from ConCom currently vacant, and continued Eric Poch’s appointment to the RTCAC. Eric Poch, previously a representative of the Planning Board, was redesignated a “member at large”; he has not attended a RTCAC meeting nor responded to e-mails since July 2008. Pat Brown pointed out that none of these changes make it easier to achieve a quorum.

Committee Direction: Nancy Powers observed that there is little motivation to “complete” the Notebook, both because the Selectmen and Town Staff have not clarified for RTCAC what information would be useful, and also because the information collected will be out of date before any foreseeable action. Bridget suggested a hiatus rather than continuing to meet. Carole Wolfe expressed concern that the Town would remove the RTCAC documents from the website if the committee became inactive. Pat Brown pointed out that Selectmen Larry O’Brien had said at the October 28, 2008 Board of Selectmen’s meeting that RTCAC materials would remain on the website indefinitely, but Carole questioned whether that applied only to active committees. Pat mentioned that there are example bylaws from other towns that should be added to the Notebook, and Jennifer Pincus described her difficulties in finding anyone to respond to questions about the Nashua River Rail Trail (NRRT). Dick Williamson suggested Jennifer contact Duane Cromwell, a member of the NRRT friends’ group. RTCAC members expressed a strong desire that the Committee’s work remain posted on the Town website to be easily available to the public. The Committee proposes to meet again in six months (March 25, 2010). If Town Staff formulates specific questions for RTCAC in the interim, Committee members will engage their citizen energy to address them.

Discussion of the Notebook: Pat Brown’s update to the History section of the Notebook was approved with amendment.

Storage Requirements: Pat Brown asked for Committee input on the paper storage requirements of the RTCAC, as requested by Town Clerk Rosemary Harvell on September 10. Considering the minutes and other documents produced by the RTCAC, Bridget Hanson suggested that 5 cubic feet of storage should be adequate, and the Committee concurred.

Transportation process: The public review period for the 2010-2013 TIP and the “Journey to 2030” Regional Transportation Plan ended September 22. The Bruce Freeman Rail Trail is listed in the Regional Transportation Plan for the 2021-2025 period. The Route 2 rotary in Concord connecting the Acton (Phase 2A) and Concord (Phase 2C) sections of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail does not receive funding in the Regional Transportation Plan. Dick Williamson stated that, while it is required that a project receiving earmarked money for design be slated for construction within 10 years, using enhancements money for design does not create the same restriction.

Communications: Town Planner Jody Kablack suspended Sudbury’s membership in the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Uniformity Committee in an e-mail to that committee and CC’ed to the RTCAC on June 1.

Pat Brown reported from the September 15 meeting held in Woburn by the Boston MPO to discuss the 2010-2013 TIP and the Regional Transportation Plan. The MPO intends to make the Project Proponent Information Forms (PPIFs) available online on the bostonmpo.org website for the Federal Fiscal Year 2010 (FFY10) TIP cycle. TIP contacts from the cities and towns will be able to update their documents online; the

PPIFs will be available to the public for viewing only. This should prevent misunderstandings about project priorities in the community.

RTCAC members were reminded of the sixth meeting of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Committee at the Mass Highway District 4 office at 10 am on September 30. Additionally, there is a meeting of MAGIC (Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination) to discuss transportation issues in the subregion on October 1 in Acton. The Chair had notified the Committee of both these events by e-mail for informational purposes; no action by RTCAC members is required.

Carole Wolfe mentioned that the CSX right of way that is visible looking south from Route 20 had been paved and asked whether Sudbury had acquired the land from CSX. No one was aware of such an acquisition. The paving is apparently part of the Nobscot Road walkway project.

Phase I of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail opened in Chelmsford on August 29. Some of the members of the RTCAC were present at the opening. The 25% design hearing for the Concord (Phase 2C) section of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail was held in Concord on June 25.

Dick Williamson noted that the Commonwealth had recently agreed to purchase rights to the CSXT line from Worcester to Boston, as part of the effort to improve commuter rail between Boston and Worcester, and to implement the South Coast Rail project. This agreement does not include acquiring rights to the “Phase 3” section of the BFRT right of way in south Sudbury and Framingham. Negotiations continue.

The Meeting Adjourned at 8:43 P.M.

Community Input: There were no comments at this time.

Submitted by Pat Brown on September 29, 2009
Resubmitted by Pat Brown on October 14, 2009