

**Town of Sudbury Massachusetts
RAIL TRAIL CONVERSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the Meeting Held April 14, 2005

Present: Pat Brown, Madeleine Gelsinon, Bob Hall, Bridget Hanson, Jennifer Pincus, Bill Place, Nancy Powers, Dick Williamson, Carole Wolfe

Not Present: Debbie Dineen, Gregory Hunt, Dennis Mannone, Eric Poch

In addition to the Committee members the Town Manager, Maureen Valente, was present as were six interested residents.

1. The Chairman, Dick Williamson, called the meeting to order at approximately 7:35 p.m.

2. Visitors were asked if they would like to make any comments, and two did.

Elaine Kneeland inquired if any notices about the rail trail had been sent to abutters of the trail. Maureen Valente answered that none had. At present the Committee does not have a list of abutters, but Dick Williamson and Maureen Valente will ask the Assessors Office to generate such a list. Ms Valente noted that notices about the CTPS hearings regarding the conversion of the CSX rail bed from Framingham to south Sudbury had been posted. Dick Williamson said that notices were also mailed to every abutter of that section.

Allan Wallack noted that he was going to tape the meeting with the permission of the Committee. He was granted permission. See Maureen's comments below. He also distributed an Issues List, "The Rail Conversion to a Bike Trail" from Lowell to Framingham. He suggested that the discussion of these issues be considered early in the Committee's deliberations.

Carole Wolfe had prior to these comments requested a copy of the list of issues selectman Drobinski noted at town meeting would be addressed by the initial feasibility and engineering study for which \$25,000 of CPA funds were approved. Maureen replied that she would get that list from the selectman.

3. Changes in the Committee membership were the next order of business.

The Committee voted to accept Bryan Semple's resignation which he had tendered on March 29.

Carole Wolfe affirmed that she still wanted to resign the co-chairmanship of the Committee. Her resignation was accepted, and there was a motion to elect another co-chair. That motion passed, and Pat Brown was nominated and elected unanimously.

There followed a discussion about replacing the two members lost to the Committee. Several members were of the opinion that the replacements should be abutters, and after further discussion there was a motion to recommend to the board of selectman, who appoint members to the Committee, that two new members be appointed and at least one of them be an abutter. That motion passed by a vote of 7 to 1 one, with one abstention.

4. The Committee approved the minutes of the April 4, 2005 meeting, which had been held at the high school immediately before town meeting. The minutes of the March 30 meeting were tabled because the members had seen them in electronic form, but no hard copies were available for inspection at this meeting.

5. Maureen Valente, having talked with Town Counsel, reviewed the policy about tape recording the proceedings of open town meetings. Tape recording is permitted only when committee members have been informed that it will take place. It can not begin until a meeting has been called to order, nor can it continue after the meeting has been adjourned. It cannot be denied as long as the person who has requested permission makes that request public. It is a serious violation of state law to do otherwise.

6. Two documents created by Dick Williamson and subjected to several revisions by the Committee were reviewed again with the intent of finalizing the documents and making them available on the RTCAC website. The first was the "Frequently Asked Questions About the Proposed North South Rail Trail in Sudbury" (FAQ). Carole Wolfe requested that mention be made specifically to the "conceptual design" and to "trail surfaces" in sections concerned with issues the Committee would tackle. Dick Williamson had made those insertions in the revision under consideration and agreed to create a link to the RTCAC Mission Statement where those features are also included. The document was then approved unanimously. The second document was the "Glossary of Rail-Trail-Related Acronyms". With two minor revisions that had been had made the document was approved.

7. There followed a general discussion of how the Committee would proceed in the immediate future, particularly with regard to a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the feasibility study for which funds are now available. Some of the points made were as follows

a. There is no time limit on when it can be submitted.

b. Town Counsel will oversee the process, but the Committee should have input about the kinds of questions the study is to address. The chairman will consult further with Town Counsel about who writes and evaluates RFPs.

c. It was pointed out that if federal or state funds are to be used in the construction of the trail the consulting company must be one on the federally approved list of such companies. Dick Williamson thought there are about eight on the list, and he would try to obtain the list.

d. Dick proposed that we invite Peter Reed of MAPC to talk with the Committee about the RFP process and what MAPC would like to see in such a proposal. Bill Place noted that it has not been easy working with MAPC because they seem to be very rigid in their expectations about the requirements of specific projects. He also pointed out that the town always accepts the lowest bid on contracts with private companies. The invitation to Reed is presently on hold.

d. There was general agreement that the Committee should try to group the various issues it faces into those it might be able to study on its own and those it would ask the consulting company to investigate, which should help a great deal in shaping the RFP

e. Nancy Powers inquired whether we might learn more about the process from other towns that have already developed rail trails using state and federal funds. Michele Ciccolo, Assistant Administrator for the Town of Hudson, who was largely responsible for overseeing the development of the rail trail in Hudson came to mind, and it was suggested that she be invited to speak to us about the Hudson experience.

8. Communication with our town's own boards and officials was the next topic of discussion. Specifically, Bridget Hanson suggested that we contact the Conservation Commission to ask them what kinds of issues they would like us to address and what kinds of answers they seek. She volunteered to contact them and have a meeting with the RTCAC put on the Commission's agenda. Bridget was also concerned about problems of storm water runoff, and Bill Place was asked to speak at our next meeting on the topic. Bridget will also contact the Sudbury Water District to inquire if there might be problems for the town wells where the rail trail would be

close to them. Such a difficulty would presumably apply only on the southern stretch of the trail in Sudbury where wells are close to the CSX owned rail bed.

9. Outreach to Sudbury residents, particularly those whose properties abut the rail bed, was the final topic of discussion. The idea of an early meeting with abutters was deemed impractical when the Committee is not yet prepared to discuss their concerns in a cohesive way.

The idea of a questionnaire sent to abutters to get a preliminary survey of their feelings and concerns about the proposed rail trail was discussed, and there was a consensus that one should be sent as soon as it could be developed. This might be preceded or accompanied by a letter to abutters that would bring them up to date on the Committee's study of the trail and to advise them about various sources of information about rail trails in general and the north-south trail in particular. Abutters would be encouraged to visit the Committee's website and the studies already posted there. Additional studies will be added as they are approved by the Committee as properly executed and unbiased investigations. The chairman proposed that the FAQ also be sent, but it was generally not deemed too long for an initial informational message. Furthermore, the FAQ is available on the web site. Bob Hall was assigned the task of drafting the letter to abutters.

10. The next meeting will be held on April 28, and the chairman will send out a spreadsheet on which members will indicate dates they will be unable to attend meetings in the next few months. The only topics on the agenda for the April 28 meeting is the approval of the Minutes of the March 30 meeting and Bill Place's discussion of potential storm water problems associated with a rail trail.

11. The meeting was then opened again to comments by the visitors

Margaret Harty of 25 Meadow Drive indicated that in any outreach to abutters it would be a disservice not to include some residents whose properties do not actually abut the trail but are in full view of it with unimpeded access from it. Others agreed and the chairman and Bill Place agreed to work up some criterion for inclusion to meet that objection in the outreach to abutters.

Elaine Kneeland noted that she had been frustrated by The Committee's failure to communicate with the abutters prior to seeking CPA funds for the feasibility study, but she was encouraged after seeing how the Committee is proceeding and is not attempting to force the trail on the town.

Allan Wallack requested that the Weston study of the proposed east-west rail trail some years ago be included in the studies to be posted on RTCAC website. He also noted that the task of the Committee is to educate the town's residents about the proposed trail, not advocate for it.

12. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.