

Town of Sudbury Massachusetts
RAIL TRAIL CONVERSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting Held April 28, 2005

Present: Bill Place, Carol Wolfe, Madeleine Gelsinon, Pat Brown, Dick Williamson, Bob Hall, Jennifer Pincus, Bridget Hanson, Dennis Mannone, Eric Poch

Not Present: Debbie Dineen, Gregory Hunt, Nancy Powers

Also Attending: ten interested Sudbury residents

1. Opening of the meeting was at approximately 7:35 PM
2. Public Comment Period: There were no comments from the public at this time.
3. Minutes of previous meetings: The March 30 minutes were approved. Carol Wolfe had a question about the April 14 minutes – she thought Madeleine Gelsinon had asked if the committee would be able to review the RFP. Madeleine couldn't remember asking the question, but thought that she had just asked that Maureen Valente request that the Town Council keep us informed during the process of writing the RFP. Minutes were then accepted.
4. Bill Place made a presentation to the committee about storm water management. The presentation included general practices for controlling runoff over impervious surfaces and options available under Massachusetts General Law for areas bordering wetlands. Other issues include the presence of vernal pools within 100 ft. of the railbed, possible contamination of the soil, and the possibility of a sewer line for the Route 20 businesses running along the right of way of the railbed. The committee wondered if we could request that the feasibility study include a comparison of runoff management options for the various surface options for the trail. Dick Williamson suggested that we invite a representative from one of the engineering firms to speak to us about the kinds of issues that can be covered by the study.
5. Schedule of future meetings: The committee agreed to meet next on May 10. Dick Williamson will set up another scheduling matrix for June. We will attempt to meet in July and August as well. Carol Wolfe suggested that we all walk the length of the trail. We will try to organize groups of 2-4 to facilitate movement of cars from various access points.
6. Conservation Commission Meeting: Bridget Hanson said we are scheduled to attend the Conservation Commission meeting on June 6 at 7:00 P.M.
7. List of abutters and others living near the trail: Dick and Bill will study a map of Sudbury to determine boundaries for the list.
8. Informational letter: Bob Hall is working on an informational letter to be mailed to those on the above list.
9. Questionnaire: The committee had agreed at the April 14 meeting to draft a questionnaire to go to those on the above list as well. Committee members will send

suggested questions to Dick Williamson and Pat Brown (via email) to compile the questionnaire. The questionnaire should be no more than 2 pages long.

10. FAQ's and acronyms on the web site: The committee has forwarded these documents to Mark Thompson to be posted on the web site. Meeting minutes are also not yet posted. Pat Brown will contact Mark.
11. Contacting other towns: Dick Williamson will contact Michele Ciccolo from Hudson to see if she could speak to our committee about how Hudson worked through the enhancements program for the rail trail there. He will also contact Craig DellaPena (formerly of the Rails To Trails Conservancy) to find out which other regional trails worked through this program.
12. Wells near rail trail: Bridget Hanson contacted Mr. Renzi about wells near the railbed. Town wells do not appear to be an environmental issue. Though he was somewhat concerned about access to the wells by the public, they could be enclosed by fencing, as with wells adjacent to walking trails in conservation land.
13. Draft letter to MAPC: Dick Williamson has written a draft letter to MAPC about obtaining a list of qualified bidders for the feasibility study. He will send the draft to Maureen Valente.
14. RTCAC's role in RFP process: The committee assumes it will have some role in advising the Town Council on the RFP process. This role is as yet undefined, and could include everything except the boilerplate document or something less. Normally committees do not evaluate the bids, as the lowest bid wins, but if all bids come in at \$25,000 will the committee have input on the bid evaluations?
15. List of issues and concerns: In an effort to determine the kinds of issues to be included in the study, the committee had agreed at the previous meeting to put together a list of all the issues it faces and then divide the list into items to be included in the study and those to be studied by the committee. Maureen Valente had emailed the Power Point presentation made at the Town Meeting by Selectman John Drobinski, in which many issues were highlighted. The committee agreed to work with this list as a starting point. Bob Hall will also bring copies of a list of concerns authored by Allen Wallack to the next meeting. Dick again suggested input from a representative of one of the approved engineering firms. He will look into it for the June meeting.
16. Documents concerning contamination: Dick read aloud a copy of his commentary (that he had emailed to committee members) concerning the history of railbed contamination liability issues, specifically regarding the east/west (MBTA owned) railbed, for public record. Detailed documents that were found on the Massbike website were referenced. He also passed out copies of a news article regarding a new proposal for east/west trail development within the boundaries of Waltham. Carol Wolfe asked when liability negotiations with EOT for the north/south trail would begin. The EOT has indicated they would like to see the completed feasibility study first. The main issues are: will there be contamination concerns on the north/south trail development, and if so, will the EOT try to pass liability onto Sudbury?
17. CSXT extension of time: CSXT recently was granted an extension of time to continue negotiations with Sudbury and Framingham for development of the railbed. This extension has been granted a number of times in the past, and is desirable to CSXT for railbanking (as opposed to abandonment). The new extension expires on

October 4, 2005. Pat Brown asked if the committee would likely be involved in these negotiations. Dick Williamson believes it would.

18. Replacement for Greg Hunt: Dick Williamson asked Dennis Mannone if Greg Hunt would be attending any future meetings, or if we should ask the Park and Recreation Commission for a replacement representative. Dennis will look into it.

19. This concluded the formal meeting of the committee. The meeting was opened to public comment. The following topics were discussed:

A resident asked for clarification of the plans for the Rt. 20 district sewer plans. Eric Poch said the plans are still just “a conversation” and are hypothetical. If a sewer were to be constructed though, running the pipes along the railbed would perhaps be more suitable than digging up Union Ave.

Will the survey of abutters influence what goes into the RFP? Dick Williamson responded “probably not”, at least not directly. The survey is a mechanism for feedback from the targeted residents to the committee.

Jay Leu from Meadow Dr. asked if the committee as a whole has a preference for the surface material of the proposed trail. Dick described the “visioning” session we had at an earlier meeting, at which each member of the committee described his or her own vision for the trail. The committee does not have a consensus opinion and continues to study all options. Jay also asked how difficult the stormwater management issue is. Bill Place answered, “Difficult!”

Another resident pointed out that many houses along the trail currently do not meet perk requirements and asked if trail runoff will make things worse for these properties. Bridget answered that stormwater is not allowed to runoff into adjacent properties, hence the stormwater management requirements.

A resident asked, “What happens if feedback from the abutters is overwhelmingly against the trail?” Dick answered that the committee needs to address the consensus of the town. The resident then asked what we will do with the survey results. Dick said we will use them to determine what issues there are to be addressed.

Someone asked if the Federal Government is funding non-paved trails anywhere. They are, but in other parts of the country, not Massachusetts.

20. There were no other comments or questions from the public and the meeting concluded at 9:40 PM