

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

**Minutes of the Meeting Held May 10, 2005**

Present: Bill Place, Madeleine Gelson, Bridget Hanson, Dick Williamson, Carole Wolfe, Pat Brown, Bob Hall, Jennifer Pincus, Nancy Powers  
Not Present: Debbie Dineen, Eric Poch, Dennis Mannone  
Also present: Five interested Sudbury residents

The meeting came to order at 7:33 p.m.

Community questions: The principal question was about the minutes not yet being posted on the website. The chair indicated that every effort was being made to get them posted in a timely fashion.

Approval of the minutes of the April 28 meeting: These are not yet available to approve.

Old business:

An informal meeting with the Conservation Commission is scheduled for June 6.

Questionnaire for abutters: A subcommittee of Dick Williamson, Nancy Powers and Bridget Hanson will draft a questionnaire.

Website issues: The FAQ and Acronyms files still need to be posted. There needs to be a good way to inform the town information office when information is ready to post. Pat also suggested posting map of the railroad ROW. The goal is also to post studies of rail trails, including paved and unpaved trails, particularly if they were about suburban trails in the Northeast.

Contacting other towns about enhancement process: Dick Williamson reported that Hudson Assistant Town Manager Michelle Ciccolo would be happy to talk to us about the Assabet River Rail Trail. He mentioned the Upper Charles Rail Trail (Milford to Framingham) as another possibility. Carole Wolfe suggested getting someone who had worked to develop an unpaved trail (maybe from Wachusett Greenway) even if that had meant going outside the enhancement process. Craig Della Penna who used to work for the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy was suggested as a knowledgeable source.

Letter to MAPC: Dick Williamson reported that Town Manager Maureen Valente had sent a letter to the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT) asking which firms are qualified to do feasibility studies. There was a discussion about whether concerns identified by RTCAC would be put into the RFP or whether we would prefer to work on those issues ourselves. Carole Wolfe reported that she had read the Acton feasibility study and that it didn't have a lot of information. The study is available on a disc from Mark Thompson, Town Information Officer. After some discussion the group agreed that we would generate the RFP for the study and deliver it to the Town Manager for the bidding process. Bridget Hanson distributed copies of a survey of town residents done as part of the 1995 Open Space and Recreation Plan. One of the questions was about recreational facilities residents felt were most important for the town to

have or to improve. These included conservation areas (58% of respondents), playing fields (50%), hiking/cross-country skiing trails (49%), bike paths (48%), and sidewalks (39%).

**Membership:** There are two vacancies and at least three applicants. The group was unanimous in wanting at least one of the new members to be an abutter. The Park & Recreation Committee has not been able to identify someone to serve on the RTCAC. Park & Recreation has several vacancies itself at present. Its chair had suggested a rotating representative on RTCAC, but the group felt there is so much information a person needs to be familiar with that this would not be successful.

### New Business

**Letter to abutters:** Bob Hall distributed copies of a letter to abutters describing the RTCAC, and its mandate, indicating that the abutters would be surveyed to determine their thoughts and concerns about a potential rail trail. After minor revisions Bridget Hanson moved that the committee approve and send the letter. Dick Williamson seconded the motion, and the group voted unanimously to send the letter as revised. Bob Hall reported that there are about 200 addresses the letter will go to, as we are contacting people who are neighbors to the rail bed as well as direct abutters. As the group has no budget for printing and mailing he proposed hand delivery by volunteers.

**Status of Phase I Contamination Issues:** Dick Williamson reported that the awarding of a contract has been delayed because of concerns about possible soil contamination. It is not clear what the extent of the contamination might be or what its effect on the design and construction of the trail might be.

**Topics for future meetings:** The group committed to reading and discussing at least two of the studies of rail trails with the goal of being able to approve some of them for posting on our website. We also agreed we would like to discuss the enhancements process with someone who had been through it. We also agreed to meet with people from at least two firms which do feasibility studies, although some felt we need to have a clearer idea of what we want to have our study contain before interviewing firms.

### Tasks-

Madeleine Gelsinon will try to get a hard copy of the Weston study with its appendices.

Dick Williamson will confirm a date for Michelle Ciccolo to meet with the group.

Dick, Nancy Powers and Bridget Hanson will meet to draft the questionnaire.

Pat Brown will clarify the process of getting our material posted on the website.

Dick and Pat will meet with Park & Recreation to ask for a representative for the RTCAC.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:25 p.m., after which there was a discussion with the public.