

**RAIL TRAIL CONVERSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Town of Sudbury, Massachusetts
Minutes of Meeting on April 4, 2007**

Present: Pat Brown, Bob Hall, Dennis Mannone, Jennifer Pincus, Bill Place, Eric Poch, Nancy Powers, Dick Williamson, Carole Wolfe

Absent: Betty Foley, Madeleine Gelsinon, Bridget Hanson

The meeting convened at 7:05 P.M. in the cafeteria of the Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School

Responses of Sudbury Officials to Questions Posed by RTCAC

Pat Brown announced that responses by Sudbury Public Safety officials to the RTCAC questions posed in the summer of 2006 will be made available in the Town Clerk's office. This was in response to a question posed by Mimi DiMauro in an email message to the RTCAC. Printed copies of the responses were distributed to those members of the public who wanted them, including Mimi DiMauro.

Wildlife Study, Article 23 on the Warrant for Town Meeting

The matter at hand concerned three amendments to this article suggested by Sigrid Pickering in her Letter to the Editor of the Town Crier, March 29, 2007. Pat Brown announced that Chris Morely of the Community Preservation Commission had been able to replace "four seasons" to indicate that the study include observations throughout the year. The other amendments that Sigrid requested, to make the article consistent with the RTCAC's request to the selectmen, have not been made and would have to be made on the floor. This was inadvisable, because the article as written was prepared by the Board of Selectmen, approved by the CPC, and approved by Town Counsel. Amendment could invalidate the article. Pat Brown indicated that the RTCAC could vote for the article as it is or reject it. Carole Wolfe thought that the article should contain all of the features contained in the original proposal, including the services of a conservation biologist and the consideration of all species, not only endangered ones. Carole indicated that if the services of a conservation biologist were not included the cost of the study might be significantly reduced. Maureen Valente, Town Manager, had indicated to Pat that those features would be covered in an RFP. Pat Brown, summarizing her April 4 phone conversation with the Town Manager, said that we can advise town staff about the content of the RFP but not control it. It was noted that the BOS and the Conservation Committee (ConCom) will write the RFP, but Carole thought that the ConCom will not be involved until the 75% design, therefore not involved in writing the proposal for this wildlife study. Dick Williamson pointed out that the RTCAC had already approved Article 23. At this point Nancy Powers made a motion that the Committee approve it once again. The motion was seconded and approved by a vote of 8 to 1.

Discussion of Maureen Valente's Warning Not to Post Comments by Non-Committee Members Regarding RTCAC affairs on the Internet.

This concern stemmed from a series of email messages initiated by Jim Nigrelli who felt that the description of the Sudbury Citizens for Responsible Land Stewardship (SCRLS) in the FAQ did not accurately reflect the nature of the organization. He had submitted a statement to

the RTCAC that said that his organization wants “to keep the rail bed as it exists today, a rural path and wildlife corridor.” The description in the FAQ was modified and printed without his permission. The FAQ included the wording before the comma and deleted the modifying phrase describing the right of way as “a rural path and wildlife corridor.” The objection to including it, voiced by Dick Williamson, was that it was inaccurate, as no status for the corridor has been established by the RTCAC. It is not clear that the matter was resolved in the hurry to adjourn the meeting in order to get to Town Meeting.

The Town Manager’s specific concern, reported by Pat Brown from her phone conversation with the Town Manager on April 4, was that private individuals and groups do not have the right to post on the Town website. The RTCAC as an agent of the Town may post its findings and opinions, but may not post content on behalf of other organizations.

Discussion of the Removal of Trail Signs Urging Voters to Vote for or Against Rail-Trail Articles

There was another hurried discussion about the removal of signs for and against the rail trail in the last two days from where they had been placed on residents’ lawns or public spaces. Both sides of the rail-trail debate were present, as Committee members or interested residents, and agreed that accusations of wrong doing were not in the spirit of open and democratic debate. There was no information about who might have removed the signs except that Carole had spoken with a woman who had seen a man taking a sign and had the presence of mind to take his license plate number.

This discussion proceeded between advocates of opposing positions who happened to be present. The RTCAC was not responsible for and had not discussed posting any signs regarding the rail trail.

Next Meetings:

Pat Brown will post notices of meetings next week preceding sessions of Town Meeting on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday if necessary.

Final Questions:

Dick Williamson inquired if anyone knew whether the town manager had extended an invitation to Cathy Buckley Lewis to talk to the BOS. No one had any new information about that. He suggested that if the BOS is not going to do that perhaps the RTCAC should invite her to speak.

Introducing a New Member of the RTCAC

Rebecca Corkin was present just before the meeting adjourned and was introduced as a new member of the RTCAC representing the ConCom. She was appointed by the Board of Selectmen at their March 27, 2007, meeting.

Sigrid Pickering’s resignation from the RTCAC also was accepted by the Board of Selectmen at their March 27, 2007, meeting.

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

Submitted by Bob Hall on April 9, 2007

Approved on May 10, 2007

