

**RAIL TRAIL CONVERSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Town of Sudbury, Massachusetts**  
**Minutes of Meeting on July 24, 2008**

**Present:** Betty Foley, Bob Hall, Bridget Hanson (acting chairperson), Chris McClure, Eric Poch, Dick Williamson,

**Absent:** Pat Brown, Debbie Dineen (ex officio), Madeleine Gelsinon, Dennis Mannone (ex officio), Jennifer Pincus, Bill Place (ex officio), Nancy Powers, Carole Wolfe

**Also Present:** Residents Dan DePompei, Jim Nigrelli

**Community Input:**

Dan DePompei found on the MAPC website that Sudbury had submitted the rail trail as a high priority item for state transportation funding, which seemed at odds with the statement made by selectman Drobinski at the last meeting, namely, that Sudbury had not made any decision to go forward with the trail. None of the Committee members were aware of this or could throw any light on the matter. Jim Nigrelli asked if the title search would come up for discussion at this meeting and was wondering why at a recent meeting there was interest in the titles along the right of way (ROW) at intersections, driveways, etc. Bridget noted that the title search was on the agenda, and Dick Williamson indicated that the town maps and railroad maps are not identical and the Committee should be aware of the differences.

**The Meeting was convened at 7:39 P.M.**

**Old Business**

*Updates:* Bridget Hanson, substituting as chairperson for Pat Brown, reported that there was nothing new to report on the three CPC projects or other communications.

**Subcommittee Reports**

*Commercial/Agricultural Subcommittee*

Eric Poch has written a draft of questions to be put to the businesses in town, not just those that abut the trail on Union Avenue but on Route 20 as well. He has not presented the list yet, but noted that he would also follow up with telephone calls or face-to-face interviews to ensure accurate interpretation of the opinions expressed. The opinions of some businessmen have already been made known in the survey that was part of the Engineering and Environmental Assessment, and an attempt will be made not to bother the owners with redundant questions with answers already known to the Committee. Eric will submit a draft of the questions to the RTCAC for its comments and suggestions. Chris McClure said that some businesses, such as the Field House, might be well disposed toward the trail.

Dick Williamson noted that the Division of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is pushing the development of a section of the east-west trail, the Mass Central Rail Trail, from Waltham to Berlin. He suggested that the Sudbury Board of Selectmen might want to broaden the scope of the RTCAC's mission at an appropriate time to consider that development.

*Conservation Subcommittee*

Chris McClure reported that the Conservation Commission has not yet received a report from Call of the Wild, the consultant doing the wildlife survey, even though the spring report was due

by June 30. The expectation is that it would be submitted any day now. American Engineering (AE), likewise, has submitted nothing to date, even though their contract was scheduled to finish by the end of June. Eric suggested that Pat Brown ask Maureen Valente, Town Manager, to communicate the current status of the project to this group. Chris then noted that a presentation by Diane Boretos of Call of the Wild has not been scheduled, even though its contract calls for several presentations during the course of the study. One reason appears to be that there has been no decision on what the nature of the presentation should be, a presentation before the Conservation Commission or a more inclusive one before the town. The Committee was clear about the desirability of having a presentation soon, so that it could evaluate the work to date and make suggestions about how the remaining work might be carried out if changes seem desirable.

### **Submission of Items for the Notebook**

#### *Public Information on Other Trails*

No additional information has been presented for review concerning the Assabet River Rail Trail, the Nashua River Rail Trail and the Minuteman Bikeway. Carole Wolfe had circulated a second draft of the report on the Wachussett Greenways but asked that the document not be considered at this meeting because she would not be present to answer questions.

### **Organizational Issues**

Bridget opened the discussion with the question of whether we should encourage the BOS to appoint another abutter to the RTCAC. Chris said he would welcome another set of hands to help with all of the work, perhaps as a substitute for the missing Park and Recreation representative. Eric noted that at some point Park and Rec might own oversight of the trail, which raised the more general question of who will administer it as many constituencies clearly share interest in it (DPW, Sudbury Water District, ConCom, etc.). He noted also that there is some strong dissatisfaction in the community about Park and Rec's perceived singular focus on the playing fields, with much less consideration of other facilities or issues. Chris suggested one could argue that ConCom should fill that role, but in any case we should begin discussion about how it will be managed. Bridget called the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority to ask if the rail trail would have any deleterious effect on the town's drinking water supply, and she was told it would not.

Bridget then turned the discussion to what items should be in the Notebook in addition to those the Committee has already considered, such as considering alternate sources of funding such as businesses, explanation of how various sources of funding drive or constrain the design of trails, exploring the range of methods that might be used to mitigate abutters' problems. It was pointed out that the east-west Mass Central Rail Trail will benefit from very large donations from trail-side developers in Waltham and Wayland. Eric suggested that the Notebook contain a "white board" or "parking lot" for undeveloped ideas that the Committee feels may warrant more investigation or consideration by the BOS. Chris agreed saying that his vision of the Committee is that it will end or change at the end of this year and that it should think about what other kinds of information it might supply the BOS so it isn't surprised in the design phase of the project. Eric offered that the RTCAC is best suited to carry the work beyond the present information gathering stage, since at this point it is the best informed body in town. Bridget said she would prepare a draft of the additional subjects the Committee should consider and submit it before the next meeting.

The Regional Overview of the trail has been updated by Dick Williamson and reviewed by Pat Brown and Bob Hall whose suggestions were incorporated. As there were no other criticisms or suggestions a motion was made to approve it for inclusion in the Notebook, duly seconded and passed.

Chris told of a rumor he had heard, and emphasized it was only a rumor he had not yet been able to check, that the town was requesting additional funds to do soil testing on the CSX ROW, which the town has agreed to purchase and has acquired funds to complement those obtained in a grant from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority. It appears that the soil testing is a new requirement by CSX for the purchase. If this cannot be done in a timely fashion it is feared that it might mean the loss of the MWRA grant. Dick Williamson called attention to Amendment 15 to the Transportation Bond Bill offered by Senator Resor that allows towns to purchase insurance to cover the costs of solving unforeseen problems on land owned by the EOT and MBTA. Eric called attention to the fact that the town is already monitoring the CSX land in several places, at least near the intersection of Nobscot road and Route 20.

**The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 P.M.**

### **Community Input**

Jim Nigrelli stated that the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail has been removed from the latest draft of the TIP and wondered if the RTCAC has made note of this. Dick Williamson replied that this information is contained in the latest update of the Regional Overview approved for the Notebook this evening. Jim also stated that in the MPO meeting of a year ago the Sudbury part of the BFRT received a low evaluation. Does the CD that Bill Place obtained at a meeting at which this was discussed clarify this evaluation? Attention was also called to the fact that the request by Senator Spilka for funds to purchase the ROW in Framingham was not approved in the senate budget, but several Committee members applauded her making the request.

Submitted by Bob Hall on July 28, 2008

Resubmitted on August 11, 2008

Approved August 28, 2008