

**Sudbury Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Task Force**  
**Minutes of Meeting Held 7 p.m., Tuesday, January 17, 2017, Town Hall**  
*Approved February 2, 2017*

Present: John Drobinski, Chairman; Dan Carty, Vice-Chairman; Charlie Russo, Clerk; Bob Schless, LeRoy Sievers; Lana Szwarc.

Also present: Maryanne Bilodeau (Assistant Town Manager); Beth Suedmeyer (Sudbury Town Environmental Planner); Tracie Lenhardt (VHB)

The meeting was called to order at 7:06PM.

**Introductions**

Members of the Task Force introduced themselves and when appropriate noted their membership on other Town groups.

**Review of Mission Statement**

Maryanne Bilodeau, Assistant Town Manager, reviewed the Mission Statement of the Task Force, as posted on the Town website.

**Elections**

Maryanne Bilodeau turned the meeting over to the Task Force to organize itself.

After discussion, Charlie Russo nominated John Drobinski as chairman, second by Bob Schless, unanimous vote in favor.

After discussion, Charlie Russo nominated Dan Carty as vice chairman, second by Bob Schless, unanimous vote in favor.

After discussion, Dan Carty nominated Charlie Russo as clerk, second by Bob Schless, unanimous vote in favor.

**Scheduling**

After discussion, the Task Force agreed to meet on the first and third Thursdays of each month at 7 p.m. and identified Feb. 2 and 16 and March 2 and 16 as the next dates to meet.

Beth Suedmeyer set a goal of producing a report with recommendations to the Board of Selectmen (BOS) by the end of March (for a March 21 BOS meeting).

**Planning**

Task Force members discussed how duplicating prior public outreach efforts – including four prior public hearings, abutter notifications, and Town staff meetings – may not be the best use of the Task Force's efforts. Instead, reviewing existing inputs to identify gaps, specific items of interest, or proactive outreach to relevant groups that may not have yet provided comments might be better. Beth Suedmeyer noted that some Town Department heads had discussed pertinent issues but might not have provided written comments. Task Force members suggested obtaining written comments from Town Departments, as well as proactive outreach to major town organizations (e.g., Chamber of Commerce, Council on Aging, Historical Society) and to resident populations that may be particularly interested (e.g., Frost Farm residences, abutters).

**BFRT Overview**

Tracie Lenhardt, Project Manager for design engineer VHB, gave an overview of the project. She highlighted two potential alternative routes (down Union Ave from Old Lancaster Road and down Concord Road from Haynes Road to Morse Road). She gave an overview of some challenging design issues, including the two bridge crossings and sections closest to wetlands.

The presentation outlined:

- Survey
- Wetland delineation
- Structures
- Traffic counts
- Parking
- Overview of project design, and design profiles of the pathway

Identified project challenges include:

- Wetlands adjacent to the rail bed in several locations
- Rivers/bridge crossings
- Cattle crossings

Lenhardt noted that design trade-offs will need to be evaluated. For example, a raised wooden boardwalk in some cases may reduce wetland impacts, but presents issues with maintenance and public safety/emergency access.

Potential alternative routes – one diverting from the rail bed at Old Lancaster Road to Union Avenue down to Route 20 terminus, the other diverting from the rail bed at Haynes Road to Concord Road to Morse road back to the rail bed – were shown.

Issues considered when discussing alternatives included: wetland impacts, safety access, abutter concerns, costs, intersection traffic /safety, and changes to vegetation/mature trees.

Lenhardt expressed greater concern about environmental issues for the stretch along Concord Road. Chairman Drobinksi noted that the Concord Road alternative seemed to be environmentally driven while the Union Ave alternative seemed more abutter/commercial property driven.

Dan Carty questioned how the alternative routes were identified, and Charlie Russo noted that each of the alternatives diverted around one of the two stream crossings.

Task Force members requested a graphic depicting the “challenge areas” on a map.

Task Force members discussed the best means to obtain additional input, without repeating the efforts of prior public hearings or abutter/public outreach.

### **Public Comment**

Dan Depompeii suggested that the Task Force explore additional alternatives beyond the two identified alternatives.

Carol Wolfe noted that sensitive environmental issues remain to be addressed.

Len Simon noted that it would be helpful to incorporate prior comment into Task Force findings and have VHB be present at public hearings so that any questions could be addressed as they are raised.

### **Next Steps**

Task Force members expressed concern that they did not yet have enough knowledge of the project to adequately present to interested groups or solicit valuable feedback. For the February 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, it was agreed that beginning with an informational meeting, with input from Fire and Police department heads and Conservation Agent, before planning outreach efforts, was a good next step.

Task Force members agreed to review available documents prior to the Feb. 2 meeting, when Fire and Police department heads and Conservation Agent will be asked to attend to provide their input.

Beth Suedmeyer to distribute existing comments and responses to Task Force members ahead of next meeting. She will also reach out to boards/committees/interest groups to see when next meetings will be held and determine if it is possible for the BFRT and Task Force members to have time on the agenda or whether their committee members might attend a Task Force meeting.

### **Task Force requests:**

- Copies of existing comments/responses from prior public hearings
- An updated map showing "challenge" locations
- An abutters list to help identify "targets" for outreach?

### **Items Distributed at this meeting:**

- Agenda
- BFRT Design Task Force Mission Statement and Information from BOS
- Email Communications Policy
- Code of Conduct for Committees
- BFRT Presentation to CPC on Dec. 21, 2016 (as background information)

The meeting adjourned at 8:40.