

## **Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Design Task Force Meeting Minutes of March 16, 2017**

(Minutes approved on March 29 ,2017)

**7 p.m., Town Hall, Lower Level, 322 Concord Road, Sudbury, MA**

**Present: Daniel Carty, Charles Russo, Lana Szwarc, John Drobinski, LeRoy Sievers, Robert Beagan (arrived at 7:25)**

**Absent: Robert Schless**

**Also attending: Beth Suedmeyer, Sudbury Planning Department; Tracie Lenhardt, VHB**

Public comments were not allowed, as comment period had closed on March 14, 2017.

### *Preparation of recommendations for BOS from the BFRT Design Task Force*

Task Force is an advisory committee and does not have ultimate decision making role. The Task Force is charged with advising the BOS on how to progress the BFRT design. The comments received and past documents were discussed.

Beth Suedmeyer updated the Task Force on comments and documents received since the last meeting. The Task Force was given a summary of comments received both in writing and by phone communications in a spreadsheet format. Additionally, members received printed and digital copies of all written comments from public, abutters, town staff, and committees.

Also circulated is a response to comments from VHB for comments previously issued by Chief Miles and Debbie Dineen in the Conservation Department.

Beth Suedmeyer provided an update on outreach activities since the last meeting. The following meetings were attended:

Council on Aging meeting 3/9 – not comments received

Abutters meetings Methods Machine and Cavicchio 3/9 – meeting summary to be provided by VHB

Parks and Recreation Commission 3/13 – summary provided by Bobby Beagan

Conservation Commission 3/13 – Written comments developed by Charlie Russo

A Board of Health meeting was attended previously (2/14) and comments are still forthcoming.

Others committees of whom the Task Force requested time to present the project and solicit comments:

Sudbury Public Schools and LSRHS – SPS meetings weren't able to happen in timeframe given their full agendas; LSRHS thinks the project hasn't advanced to a point they can provide meaningful input. Beth can follow up at a later date.

Agricultural Commission – Beth received recommendations from the chair on farmers who should be consulted – outreach had already occurred to these farm owners.

Energy and Sustainability Committee –No response, timing didn't work out.

Chamber of Commerce – Dan Carty and Meagen Donoghue had planned meeting with the Chamber, but timing didn't work out.

Comments from abutter meeting and public meeting still being compiled.

Task Force prioritized what topics for recommendations would be considered at the meeting and reflected on the past draft outline developed as well as the mission and charter assigned to the Task Force by the BOS. The Task Force wants to confirm that the work of the Task Force met expectations.

Priority topics for tonight's meeting include:

Alternate roadway routes

Trail width

Treatment in challenge areas

Roadway crossings

Surface material

Stream crossings and wetlands concerns

The Task Force also wants to acknowledge the constraints under which the operated, especially working under-tight timeline. Additional information should be gathered through 75% design and other outreach efforts. For example, ongoing coordination with businesses and the Chamber of Commerce outreach.

The recommendations are based on information available today, recognizing the project will continue to generate more information as it advances. More details will be available on the topics of constructability, cost, wetland resource impacts and mitigations, etc.

Give Beth wide latitude in shoehorning the information into a presentation and report. The report will be compiled based on the desired requirements of the BOS (yet to be determined).

#### Recommendation on Alternatives

As presented, the alternatives considered are infeasible.

Opposition to roadway routes clearly identified. Infeasible due to impacts to abutters and lack of interest from abutters to grant easements anticipated to be needed.

Consideration of impacts to businesses are ongoing. Alternatives that have not yet been considered will be further investigated by the design team.

Bobby Beagan arrives at 7:25.

#### Recommendation on Surface Material

DPW and Safety staff clearly identified desire to have a hard surface. Alternate surface materials should be presented at Con Com meeting when NOI is heard in anticipation of the question from Con Com.

Paved surface is MassDEP's preferred treatment in order to prevent contamination release.

Task Force is in consensus on a paved surface, recognizing that boardwalks may have a different non-skid surface.

Boardwalk width 14 feet and bump outs added every 300 or so feet to allow passage of emergency vehicles, if warranted.

Challenge areas discussion

Beth Suedmeyer provided an update to Task Force on meetings with MassDOT and Conservation Commission.

First and foremost both desire to avoid the requirement of a variance to the Wetlands Protection Act (WPA), meaning bordering vegetated wetlands impacts need to be under 5000 sq ft (temporary and permanent). In order for this to occur, the challenge areas will need to be narrower than a 10-foot path with 2-foot shoulders on each side.

MassDOT will allow the option of a 10-foot paved with 1 foot (reduced width) shoulders rather than 8 foot path with 2 foot shoulders (part of option 1 and 2). Resource impacts are equivalent between these two options. MassDOT also agrees to boardwalk option (14-feet wide with railings).

Boardwalk reconstruction and repavement of the trail are eligible for state and federal construction funding. DPW indicated they are willing to accept the boardwalk construction, although additional maintenance may be required. Boardwalk is a higher cost construction item and MassDOT has agreed to accept costs.

Discussion occurred about whether Task Force needed to specifically alternate treatment for challenge areas or if this could be left to the NOI process at a much later date. Ultimately, the decision is deferred to Con Com through permitting process. But at this time a treatment for the whole corridor is needed to advance the design to 25% . We need to give the designers a specified width for all sections.

Charlie summarized that the ConCom seeks to keep the trail footprint as small as possible. They had a discussion of boardwalk at their meeting but no consensus on pursuing boardwalk (although this has the lowest impact to BVW).

#### Recommendation for Treatment of Challenge Areas

Based on a Matrix distributed there are three options to be considered that are approved by MassDOT and avoid the WPA variance requirement.

Option 1: 14-foot boardwalk for challenge area South of Hudson and 10 foot paved with 1 foot shoulders (1A) or 8 foot paved with 2 foot shoulders and retaining walls for challenge area South of North Rd—this option has least amount of impacts to BVW

Option 2: 10 foot paved with 1-foot shoulders or 8 foot paved with 2-foot shoulders and retaining walls for both challenge areas

Option 3: 14-foot boardwalk for challenge area South of Hudson and 10 foot paved with 2-foot shoulders and retaining walls

Recommendation for 10 foot wide paved and reduced shoulder, Option 1A, for the area South of North Road . It is realized that permitting process will influence outcome.

South of Hudson 14-foot boardwalk (4 members approve, 2 members disagree)

### Recommendations on Stream Crossings

Pantry Brook – reuse stones from existing, but failed abutment to the extent possible

Stream crossings designs will be considered and evaluated at 25% stage. Stream Crossing Standards from MassDEP will need to be considered and may require the bridge span to be widened. Stream Crossing Standards seek to restore hydrodynamic flow of stream to extent that flood dynamics are not impacted and adds habitat value to the corridor. Pantry Brook is a regulatory floodway and the flood elevations cannot be modified. Army Corps of Engineers will review.

Hop Brook is straight forward and will be able to use the existing structure. A retaining wall will be proposed in the section that doesn't have an existing one.

Anticipate bridges will be paved and meet surface of the path.

The Task Force recommends that the designers examine culverts and upgrade as warranted. Also look at opportunities for improving the environmental condition where opportunities exist.

### Roadway Crossings

Pantry Road may need additional signs and/or Hawk signal. Tracie indicated that traffic volumes at Pantry Road will not warrant the Hawk, but the rapid flashing beacon could be put on an overhead arm. Task Force desires the overhead arm be avoided where possible. Overhead arm is only recommended at Hudson Road and North Road, as this is warranted by traffic volumes.

Peakham Road need to reconsider the loss of the right turn lane onto Hudson Road. Further traffic study is warranted.

At Morse and Pantry Roads the Task Force seeks more advanced signage.

Historic District Commission issued comments on the Hawk signal. Need to mimic the treatment of the signals at the Town Center. Consider two smaller mast arms rather than 1 larger one.

The Planning Board indicates they would like to review and have an opportunity to comment on roadway crossing designs.

### *Summary of Abutter concerns*

Further discussion with abutters will occur to determine appropriate or desired screening. Abutter concerns with contaminants were identified. This may warrant further investigation, especially when house and gardens are very close to rail bed.

Frost Farm comments were received and at later stages of the design, the design team will work with them to determine what is warranted for fencing to reduce impacts to their property.

### Areas requiring additional investigations

Natural resources summary document

Coordination with chamber of commerce desired

Parking-- a great deal of investigation and coordination still needs to be done.

Clarifying boardwalk weight bearing / loading H10 or H20 specification

Interconnectivity with existing trails and key points of interest, including schools and recreation facilities

Traffic study warranted at Peakham Road to influence design. Consider using traffic data gathered for proposed development that would impact this intersection.

Follow up on comments need to be responded to

Members seek clarification on Task Force role in future.

Recognize environmental issues will be more clearly defined and identified as advance to the environmental permitting phase. The Town will follow the rule of law.

In the future consider kiosks and interpretive panels that will be incorporated (historic town center, recreational areas, history or rail, wildlife habitat features.

#### Update on Parks and Recreation Commission

No formal vote taken or comments issued, but the Commission supports the trail and appreciates the connectivity to the recreational facilities that the trail will offer.

#### *Upcoming Meetings*

Monday night, 3/20 at 7PM (or possibly later, TBD) meeting to review presentation of the recommendations for the BOS Meeting on Tuesday, 3/21.

BOS Meeting on Tuesday, 3/21, 7:30 PM. Task Force meeting has been posted in anticipation of a quorum at the BOS meeting.

Meeting adjourned around 9PM.