

## Town of Sudbury

Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Task Force

Tuesday, February 23, 2021 at 7:00 PM

### Minutes of the Virtual Meeting

#### Task Force Attendees:

John Drobinski, Charlie Karustis, Richard Morse, Glenn Pransky, Lana Szwarc, Frank Vitale, and Dick Williamson

#### Staff:

Beth Suedmeyer, Environmental Planner, Planning and Community Development

#### Fuss & O'Neill Attendees:

Nick LaPointe, Arnold Robinson

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- 1) Meeting was called to order and roll call was requested by Beth Suedmeyer at 7:05 p.m. Meeting is being recorded by Sudbury TV.
- 2) Introductions – Members briefly stated why they volunteered for the Task Force and your favorite amenity of a rail trail they have visited. Beth thanked and welcomed everyone and expressed an appreciation for their expertise and experience with rail trails.
- 3) Review Task Force Charge and Responsibilities – Beth presented 3 slides describing the charge and responsibilities of the Task Force as established by the Select Board, as the Task Force helps navigate the project to 75% design, final design, and 2022 construction, and ultimately operations and maintenance. The Task Force is building off of the work of the previous BFRT Design Task Force and will make recommendations to the Board of Selectmen.
- 4) Organization – Selection of Officers

Chair: John Drobinski was unanimously elected

Vice Chair: Lana Szwarc was unanimously elected

Clerk: “Rotating Clerk” - Minute taker will be assigned by the Chairperson at the prior meeting. Minutes are summaries of the actual meeting. Recordings are available for details at Sudbury TV. (Beth to confirm this with Town Counsel.)

Beth turned the meeting over to the Chairman, John Drobinski. John noted that public comments will be welcomed at the end of each meeting. He welcomes suggestions on how the meetings are run.

#### 5) Project Overview – Project Status and Consistency with the 25% Design

Beth described the history of the BFRT and the work completed by the 2017 Task Force.

- 1987 – Central Transportation Planning Staff – prepared feasibility study to develop a rail trail from Lowell to Sudbury.
- 2004 – Sudbury started planning
- 2014 – Town contracted with VHB for 25% design
- 2017 – BFRT Task Force appointed by the Board of Selectmen
- 2017 – Project programmed on Boston MPO TIP for FY2022
- 2017 – 25% Path Design was submitted to Mass DOT
- 2018 – Town contracted Jacobs to develop Sketch Plans
- 2019 – Sketch Plans submitted to Mass DOT
- 2020 – Mass DOT approved 25% Design and Sketch Plans
- July 2020 – Mass DOT held Design Public Hearing (Transcript and response to Comments from MassDOT are still pending.)
- September 2020 - RFP issued for Final Design
- November 2020 - Fuss & O'Neill contracted to prepare Final Design
- 2021 – The Task Force is working with Fuss & O'Neill toward a 75% design by April
- Fall 2021 – Anticipate 100% Design
- April 2022 – Project advertised for Construction Contractor
- Late Summer 2022 – Start Construction
- Fall 2024 – Project Completion

The progress of BFRT the design and construction of path sections in Towns north of Sudbury was reviewed. The Town of Sudbury acquired the southern extension of the rail corridor from CSX in 2020. Framingham is still negotiating with CSX to acquire the section in their City. Lowell is also planning an extension of the rail trail further into the downtown area.

#### Revisions - Boardwalk Eliminated and Hop Brook Bridge

The overall project design is consistent with the 25% plan except for the elimination of the boardwalk section south of Hudson Road and revisions to the design of the Hop Brook Bridge. The boardwalk was eliminated after it was determined MassDOT would be the project applicant for environmental permits. MassDOT is exempt from the local wetlands bylaw, and it was determined through a revision to the Order of Resource Area Determination approved by the Conservation Commission that the wetlands at the boardwalk area were only jurisdictional under the local bylaw. MassDOT is still committed to mitigating for impacts to these wetlands, but the quantification of impacts will be considered separately.

As Fuss & O'Neill prepared for final bridge design, their structural engineers found the Hop Brook bridge deck proposed at 25% would result in a bridge deck profile that elevated the bridge surface and have undesirable impacts to the path profile. They considered different options to address the problem. In order to avoid changes to the path profile, the need to design retaining walls at the approaches, changes to the wingwalls, and considerable increased costs for design and construction, it was determined in consultation with MassDOT that the existing steel girders would be replaced with more shallow members to avoid the profile mismatch.

A review of the 25% design process was made. The Project area design and Concord connection were discussed, as well as public outreach, project scope highlights, and design elements (width, configuration, and railway crossings with town roads). Nick from Fuss & O'Neill took us through the crossings and the designs necessary to provide safe passage for everyone. Stream crossings and bridge redesigns were discussed by Beth & Nick.

The junction or intersection of the BFRT and the Mass Central Rail Trail near Union Avenue/Station Road will be designed and constructed by DCR (it is in the MBTA right of way) in a way to preserve the history of the railway system in Sudbury. A path rotary has been proposed so the original tracks of the junction may be preserved.

#### New Concepts Discussion

The intersection at Broadacre Farm was reviewed, which includes the proposal for a new parking lot between the athletic fields and the rail trail off of Morse Road was presented. This parking lot and amenities are proposed for inclusion in the MassDOT rail trail construction. A couple parking layout options are being developed. Feedback received by Town Staff was shared with the Task Force. The parking lot orientation will be shifted to be closer to the rail trail and so the long section runs north-south along the rail trail. A bathroom is proposed at the Broadacres parking lot. Charging stations were suggested.

Parkinson's Field at Ti Sales and Davis Field were discussed as another important access point to the trail with access to parking. Beth and Nick indicated adjustments to the access driveway at Ti Sales, within the rail right of way, and noted the options are being discussed with Ti Sales and the Town. The route of the access path to the trail way from Parkinson's Field will likely move to be closer to the vegetation and preserve more field space. Similarly, the intersection at the North Road spur and the path leading to the David Recreational Field was discussed. The sidewalk leading to Davis Field will be widened to allow improved access to and from the trailway. Water station are being proposed for each of these sites, although given the distance from water utilities to the Parkinson's Field site, it is likely the water station will be near Hudson Road.

#### 6) Abutter Outreach and Engagement Plan Presentation

Beth and Nick addressed the two-pronged approach to work with abutters to the trailway and parking areas. There will be abutter workshops and 1:1 meetings with abutters to discuss issues and questions that have been brought up. Screening, fencing, signage,

encroachments and privacy will be considered. This includes private driveway crossings. The public may contact Beth Suedmeyer (Planning Office) or Arnold Robinson (Fuss & O'Neill) with any concerns. Arnold is the lead person working on engagement with abutters. The dates of abutter workshops will be shared with Task Force members; attendance by members is optional.

7) Topics for Future meetings: this discussion was shortened because of the late hour. We will anticipate discussions about amenity details, wayfinding, interpretive signage and historical and cultural resources.

8) Public Comments – John asked for public comments. Len Simon had a question about a meeting with the Historical Commission. The date is on March 9<sup>th</sup>. He was very complimentary about the work that has been done and is being done by Planning, Fuss & O'Neill and the BFRT ATF. Len asked regarding the 75% design if the design needs to be approved by the MassDOT? Yes, Beth indicated approval is required and will involve comment resolution meetings, if necessary. Nick responded the submissions and MassDOT reviews are specific and detailed, and we will need to pass this review, but failure is very unlikely. Len asked if there are bike racks at parking areas. Yes, and the Task Force will help determine exactly what we need.

There were no other public comments or questions.

9) Postponed until next meeting- Approve Meeting Minutes (2017 Task Force)

10) Postponed until next meeting - Approve 2020 Annual Report 11) Administrative Report

The Chairperson suggested a site walk at some point. He is looking forward to a great process over the next few weeks.

Beth encouraged members of the Task Force to go to other rail trail systems in the area, enjoy them and pickup ideas for our rail trail.

Meeting adjourned by the Chairperson at about 10:08 p.m.

Upcoming meeting: Tuesday, March 2 at 7 PM and Tuesday, March 9 at 7 PM.