



Town of Sudbury

Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Task Force

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MINUTES

OCTOBER 27, 2022 AT 7:00 PM

VIRTUAL MEETING

Members Present: Chair John Drobinski, Laurie Eliason, Richard Morse, Glenn Pransky, John Sugrue, Frank Vitale, and Associate Member Richard Williamson

Members Absent: Vice Chair Lana Szwarc

Others Present: Director of Planning and Community Development Adam Duchesneau

Project Design and Permitting Update

Mr. Duchesneau indicated the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) was still working on the bid selection process for a construction contractor. He noted all bid responses had been reasonably priced, but the Town was still awaiting to hear who would be awarded the project. Mr. Duchesneau stated he anticipated the project would commence in December of 2022, but this was also dependent upon when the selected contractor felt it would be the best time to start. He also noted it was not clear as to where the construction would start, but it would likely progress from north to south, although some tasks would occur along the entire rail corridor simultaneously. Mr. Duchesneau indicated the entire project would take approximately two years to complete.

It was discussed that Fuss & O'Neill, Inc., the Town's consultant on the project, would advise the Town on how to best complete the quarter mile section of the rail trail south of the Mass Central Rail Trail down to Boston Post Road/Route 20. The Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Task Force's primary objective was to get this portion completed relatively soon, ideally at the same time as the northern section of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, and then to develop the southern portion of the rail trail at a later time.

It was noted there was still debate as to whether the quarter mile section should be funded entirely by the Town or to have the project go through the MassDOT Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) process for funding. Fuss & O'Neill, Inc. would provide advice on which option to pursue. Some of their recommendation would depend upon the extent of grading and wetland issues in the quarter mile section, and the extent of terminus construction needed at either end. Mr. Duchesneau indicated the TIP process would be less costly for Sudbury, but had a higher design standard and the process would take longer than a locally funded project because of multiple required reviews. He also stated the Planning & Community Development Department has asked for \$300,000 of Community Preservation Act funds (as a placeholder) for

completion of this segment of the rail trail (if needed). Mr. Duchesneau stated the funding request could be withdrawn at any time up until the May 2023 Annual Town Meeting if the Town were likely to get TIP funding quickly. The Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Task Force did not want to miss the opportunity to get onto the TIP for the current funding cycle, if possible. As such, the Advisory Task Force asked Mr. Duchesneau to communicate with Fuss & O'Neill, Inc. to obtain their comments on the feasibility of submitting a Massachusetts Project Intake Tool (MaPIT) form (the first step in the MassDOT TIP process) before the December 23, 2022 deadline, as long as doing so would not be detrimental to the project.

There was then discussion regarding the CSX portion of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail which would be the section south of Boston Post Road/Route 20 down to the City of Framingham municipal boundary. Mr. Duchesneau indicated Fuss & O'Neill, Inc. was gathering data and had been delineating wetlands over the past six weeks in this section of the rail trail. He noted they would be getting back to the Town with their findings in December of 2022 and should have a good handle regarding next steps for this portion of the project. Project Manager Nick Lapointe is the lead person on this project for Fuss & O'Neill, Inc.

The Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Task Force then discussed general coordination with the contractors for the Mass Central Rail Trail project. Mr. Duchesneau indicated there has been fairly good coordination by the Town with the Eversource construction team, including bi-weekly meetings with Town officials. He stated work had already started in Hudson and near the power substation behind Buddy Dog at 183 Boston Post Road. It was noted there had not been a lot of coordination regarding the intersection of the two rail trails, but once the contractor for the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail was on board, the contractor and the Town could start coordination with the Eversource project team, with the assistance of Fuss & O'Neill, Inc. It was noted there was a preliminary design for the intersection of the rail trails that had been advanced by the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Design Review Considerations

It was noted the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail hosted a discussion about consistent signage along the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail on September 15, 2022. Mr. Duchesneau indicated he had attended this meeting along with Select Board member Charlie Russo. The current "Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Welcome" signage was discussed. It currently contains 10 different rules, but attendees of the summit felt this list could be reduced down to 4 or 8, with more detailed signage explaining the rules in each specific community posted only at common access points. The Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail has offered to pay for the installation of the uniform signage.

Mr. Drobinski made a motion for the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Task Force, through its Chair, to recommend to the Select Board there be universal uniform signage indicating the following eight (8) rules as suggested by the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail:

Yield to Pedestrians
Keep Right, Pass Left
Give Audible Signal When Passing
Do Not Block Trail
Wear Helmets
Leash Pets, Remove Waste
No Littering – Carry In, Carry Out
Respect Property Adjacent to the Trail

The Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Task Force recommends the above eight (8) rules all be located on one (1) sign with the same font style, size, and coloring. These signs would be placed periodically along the rail trail as indicated in the design plans for the project.

Mr. Vitale seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Drobinski – Aye, Ms. Eliason – Aye, Mr. Morse – Aye, Mr. Pransky – Aye, Mr. Sugrue – Aye, Mr. Vitale – No, and Mr. Williamson – Aye.

It was noted the members of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Task Force could subsequently discuss less frequent posting of additional town-specific signs with more detail at a few major intersections and key trail entry points.

Discussion Regarding E-Bikes

It was noted the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail would convene another summit on this topic at some point in the future. Mr. Drobinski indicated the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Task Force would continue discussions on this topic at their future meetings as well.

Member Report on Rail Trail Observations

Mr. Pransky provided comments regarding various rail trails and their particular aspects he had visited around the country in the last few years.

Public Comments

Len Simon of 40 Meadowbrook Circle provided comments regarding his recommended path forward to pursue funding for the quarter mile section of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail from the Mass Central Rail Trail southward to Boston Post Road/Route 20. He urged the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Task Force and Town staff to file a Massachusetts Project Intake Tool (MaPIT) form with MassDOT to begin the pursuit of programming this project as part of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as soon as possible.

Mr. Morse made a motion for Town staff and Fuss & O'Neill, Inc. to investigate the filing of a Massachusetts Project Intake Tool (MaPIT) form with MassDOT and for Town staff to get back to the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Task Force within two

weeks, if possible. Mr. Williamson seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Drobinski – Aye, Ms. Eliason – Aye, Mr. Morse – Aye, Mr. Pransky – Aye, Mr. Sugrue – Aye, Mr. Vitale – Aye, and Mr. Williamson – Aye.

Charlie Russo of 30 Juniper Road appreciated the discussion and commended the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Task Force for taking the recommendations of Town staff. He also commented on the procedural aspects of the meeting.

Kay Bell of 348 Old Lancaster Road and member of the Commission on Disability provided some general comments regarding disability etiquette and October being Disability Awareness Month.

Minutes for Approval: April 6, 2021

Mr. Williamson made a motion to approve the minutes of April 6, 2021. Mr. Morse seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Drobinski – Aye, Ms. Eliason – Abstain, Mr. Morse – Aye, Mr. Pransky – Aye, Mr. Sugrue – Abstain, Mr. Vitale – Aye, and Mr. Williamson – Aye.

Administrative Report

There were no topics discussed under this item.

Mr. Drobinski adjourned the meeting at 9:19 PM.