



Town of Sudbury

Rail Trails Advisory Committee

Flynn Building
278 Old Sudbury Road
Sudbury, MA 01776
978-639-3387
Fax : 978-639-3314

railtrails@sudbury.ma.us

<https://sudbury.ma.us/bfrr/>

MINUTES

January 10, 2024 AT 7:30 PM

VIRTUAL MEETING

Members Present: John Drobinski, Glen Pransky, Lana Szwarc, Laurie Eliason, and Ken Holtz

Others Present: Marcia Rasmussen, Planning & Community Development Department

Absent: Frank Vitale, John Sugrue

Update from Chair

Mr. Drobinski said is looking forward to upcoming year and reminded the Committee they could do future walks of the trail to see updates.

Review and Approval of Annual Report

Ms. Rasmussen developed the Rail Trails Advisory Committee Annual Report, and the Committee reviewed during the meeting.

Mr. Pransky motioned to approve the report. Ms. Szwarc seconded the motion. It was on motion 5-0; Drobinski - aye, Pransky - aye, Szwarc - aye, Holtz - aye, Eliason - aye

Review of Written Update from Fuss & O'Neill:

The Committee discussion from Fuss & O'Neill, including a report on recent trail activities: protective fencing, Parkinson's lot spur, vegetation on wetland replication area, emergency vehicle turnaround north of North Road., Pantry Brook bridge, spur to Davis Field.

Staff Update

Still on schedule for completion for Fall 2024. Still need planting and top-coat of asphalt, roadway crossings, including traffic signal at Hudson Road and Peakham Road, and hydration stations and water lines.

Phase 2d Update

The Conservation Commission approved pipe under railroad bed at Fairview Farm. Damage to pipe caused by beaver activity (Mr. Holtz later shared a beaver deceiver will be added). Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) needs to approve before AA Will can complete the work. Ms. Rasmussen is following up on this.

No response from Mr. Tighe on plans that were submitted in November 2023, so current assumption that constructions is fine to move ahead in Spring 2024.

Following up on signage for interpretive panels. Various individuals involved in developing the content. There is a grant from the Sudbury Foundation for 30k to help with graphics. Signs to be completed and installed for completion of trail.

November 2021 Fuss & O'Neill did a report on artifacts and locations of signs

Phase 3 Update

Ms. Rasmussen received proposal for 25% design from Fuss & O'Neil. Goal is to have preliminary set of plans to MassDOT by February 2024 and final 25% design by June 2024. This will allow Sudbury to seek reimbursement from the MassTrails grant.

Framingham portion of Bruce Freeman rail Trail (BFRT) - closing documents were finalized, and Framingham is now the owner of the right-of-way and can seek funding for 25% design.

Massachusetts Central Rail Trail (MCRT)- Ms. Rasmussen has followed up, though Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is short-staffed at moment. She will continue to do so.

Community Preservation Committee (CPC) applications for Articles at May 2024 Town Meeting

- CPC requested changing request to 600k (originally 250k) after learning funds from prior awards cannot be reappropriated. Sudbury also seeing a Mass Trails Grant to hopefully return some funds.
- Parkinsons Field driveway design funds- original estimate from Fuss & O'Neill to be increased to around 100k (to cover elements such as retaining walls, stormwater management, etc.). The hope is the application will be approved by CPC at the next meeting.

Miscellaneous

Ms. Rasmussen had a meeting with a resident interested in pollinator garden/meadows/perennials to improve the ecology along the trail. She will develop a memo for different commissions and committees to consider.

Maintenance survey went out last week. So far Acton and Weston have returned surveys, and we are expecting 5 more. Once received we will have information to share with the Town Manager and Select Board down the road.

Mr. Pransky asked more about the signage process. Ms. Rasmussen said she now has information about all of the artifacts on the trail. The current contract included 4 panels and 10 small signs, and kiosks. Ms. Rasmussen is coordinating with individuals working on the signs. At present we know less about the MCRT panels. Ms. Rasmussen suggested there may be future meetings with DCR to discuss panels, as well as additional benches and hydration station. Mr.

Pransky said while there may not always be funding (though could be through CPC grants), in other areas of the MCRT there is interest in more information.

Public comment

Chris Menge (9 Fern Trail, Sudbury). Volunteer for Sudbury Valley Trustees. He discussed importance of accessibility around trail to Memorial Forest, including off of Dutton. Mr. Pransky said that DCR has a new program to do accessibility work to various parks. There was general agreement that there is future work to be done on accessibility.

John McQueen (265 Hudson Rd, Sudbury). He asked about status of hydrology of Phase 3. Ms. Rasmussen said that Fuss & O'Neill has the information that they need to provide estimate for the 25% design. Mr. McQueen also suggested considering the King Phillip's War in signage. Also, individuals interested in plantings may want to be in contact with Sudbury Garden clubs.

Wayfinding Workshop

Ms. Rasmussen and Mr. Pransky participated in workshop set up looking at wayfinding in Acton in late 2023. It included a broad conversation about how to get people interested in exploring the community. It also explored how to make trails more inclusive and include art and culture. Invitees were asked to go out on BFRT in Acton and provided questions to think about, including about signage. A lot of the questions were directly relevant to Sudbury. Information can be used to think about signs in Sudbury and in future conversations with the business community.

Current Phase 2d plan includes limited, basic MassDOT signs. In the future Sudbury may seek CPC funding or other grants to cover additional wayfinding signs. Acton and Concord coordinated on Wayfinding signs, with the same dragon fly logos (used along BFRT). Sudbury could have the same signs. Ms. Eliason suggested having signs at Hudson Road BFRT crossing orienting to historic town center sites.

Mr. McQueen suggested using QR codes on signs to help with Wayfinding.

25% design

Ms. Rasmussen asked committee if they want to meet with community leading up to 25% design in Sudbury to provide information and ensure feedback can be collected. Mr. Drobinski said there was a 25% design meeting to get input before submission for Phase 2d. There was general agreement with the idea to hold for Phase 3. The official hearing will be done later by Fuss & O'Neill. Ms. Rasmussen will discuss with Town Manager the potential times for town-led meeting. It was agreed that April could be a suitable time to answer questions on Phase 3 25% design, as well as on CPC articles.

Member Reports

Mr. Pransky shared that late 2023 Governor Healy announced 23 million in American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funds for the MCRT, with a large portion to help with major crossings. He also shared that Eversource is ahead of schedule in many locations.

Mr. Drobinski added that there has been amazing process on the trails, and it will be a great amenity for Sudbury.

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Next RTAC meeting February 7, 7:30PM via Zoom (pending confirmation no Planning Board conflict)

Meeting Adjourned at 8:45 PM