



Town of Sudbury

Rail Trails Advisory Committee

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MINUTES

April 3, 2024 AT 7:30 PM

VIRTUAL MEETING

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

Others Present: Marcia Rasmussen, Planning & Community Development Department

Absent: John Sugrue

Chair John Drobinski called the meeting to order at 7:30PM.

Update from Chair

Mr. Drobinski gave a brief update on the following topics:

- Public Forum for Phase 3 of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) that is scheduled for April 23, 2024 from 6:30PM-8:30PM (Hybrid meeting) at the Goodnow Library, Community Room.
- May 6, 2024 Annual Town Meeting Articles. These articles are currently on the Consent Calendar, but could be pulled on the floor at Town Meeting.
 - Article 36 - Parkinson Study
 - Article 40 – Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Phase 3
- Earth Day (April 20, 2024) and Spring Fest (June 22, 2024) are two events that the Rail Trail Advisory Committee could attend, perhaps collaborating with the Friends of the BFRT at their booth.
- As a reminder the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) is still under construction, and is closed to the public until construction is finished.

Review of Written Update from Fuss & O'Neill:

The Committee discussed the March Fuss & O'Neill report.

- The report did not have a lot of information since construction not in full swing, but there has been a lot of progress in the last few weeks. Ben Anderson from Fuss & O'Neill provided photos of some fencing in areas and the mast arm for traffic signal at Peakham Road and Hudson Road was recently installed.
- Fairview Farms Trespassing – The Planning & Community Development Department has received several complaints about trespassing at Fairview Farms. People are going off trail onto private property despite signage telling people to stay off private property. Ms.

Rasmussen said she discussed this matter with the contractor, and they are working on additional ways to keep people on the trail and off private property.

Staff Update

Ms. Rasmussen provided the Committee with an update on several items.

- Contract completion date is set for June 9, 2025. The contractor, is hoping to finish before then. We don't expect completion this summer.
- Fuss & O'Neill report will be posted to the website.
- Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is continuing to review information about the pipe under the railbed near Fairview Farm, and has not yet met with the contractor to discuss how they plan to do this work. Hopefully a construction update meeting can be scheduled with MassDOT and the contractor soon.
- Historical Commission provided feedback on interpretive signs. Lori Capone provided an excellent historical overview of Hop Brook, and some additional information on the importance of the brook for indigenous peoples in pre-Colonial times will be included.
- Two applications for the hydration station installations were filed with Sudbury Water District. A spigot will be added to the base of each hydration station. One station will be at Peakham Road and Hudson Road, the other station location will be at Broadacres Farm. The additional station being considered is at the Diamond. This is still in discussion with Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) for the Massachusetts Central Rail Trail (MCRT), and we have not heard back from them. The committee may want to include this location with the plans for Phase 3 – as this is on town owned land and there aren't Right of Way (ROW) issues.
- Phase 3 design was submitted by Fuss and O'Neill to MDOT; the review meeting with MDOT is scheduled for April 9, 2024, and we will review their comments at our meeting on May 1, 2024.
- The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) did prepare a proposed Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for FFY25-29, including Phase 3 in FFY29; however, there are financial issues in 2027, and they may consider funding partially in 2029 and partial funding in 2030. However, if our project is shovel-ready, we may move up in the sequence over the next few years. We are encouraged to attend an upcoming meeting. Next meetings of the MPO are April 4, 2024 and 18, 2024. Residents are encouraged to attend.
- We have a public information session scheduled for Tuesday April 23 in the Library. The Framingham Town Planner will be invited as well as Eaton Rd Framingham residents.
- The inter-municipal agreement between Sudbury and Framingham is under review in Framingham.
- The Finance Committee will re-review article 36 at their next meeting. We will emphasize the opportunities for this parking lot to enable access to all the trails north of here, as well as the connector to the BFRT, which has been designed to be fully accessible.

Public Comment:

Sudbury Resident John McQueen, 265 Hudson Road, asked about the construction completion date/opening of the trail, and a ribbon cutting opening. He stated that the trail looks like it will not be opening in 2024. Ms. Rasmussen replied, the construction completion date is set for June 9, 2025.

Sudbury Resident Len Simon, Meadowbrook Circle, asked about contributions of benches along the rail. He asked if there was a process or submission form. Ms. Rasmussen replied there is no form as of right now, and that the Committee might want to make a recommendation to the Select Board on how to address requests for memorial benches and donations – the donations would go through the Select Board.

Sudbury Resident and Select Board Chair Janie Dretler stated that the Select Board has discussed updating this process in general, and that this discussion could be added to a future Select Board agenda when the Committee is ready for this discussion to happen.

Mr. Simon asked if the process for benches along the MCRT would be the same process as benches along the BFRT. Ms. Rasmussen replied it would be a different process since MCRT is owned by the MBTA, and is under the purview of DCR.

Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Phase 3 Public Forum - April 23, 2024

Drop-in info session from 6:30PM-7:00PM, hybrid formal meeting starts at 7:00PM. Fuss & O'Neill will attend, and plans for Phase 3 will be available. The goal is to educate, inform, and solicit public input on the amenities – ensure that we have included what is important to the community. This forum will be available on Sudbury TV.

Up Coming Events

- Earth Day – April 20, 2024
- May 6, 2024 - 2024 Annual Town Meeting.
- Spring Fest – June 22, 2024

Miscellaneous

Public questions that are being emailed to the RTAC – Ms. Rasmussen and Mr. Drobinski have been responding.

- A local beekeeper is interested in establishing a business at the old South Sudbury train station (Crumble Station).
- The Sudbury Historical Society would like to acquire this building but it's not clear if the MBTA will sell or lease it. They would be deciding about future use.

The Mass Central Rail Trail Coalition will be meeting again on April 10, 2024 to discuss next steps to advance completion of the MCRT from Boston to Northampton.

Review and Approval of Minutes

The Committee reviewed the December 13, 2023 meeting minutes.

Mr. Drobinski motioned to approve the December 13, 2024 minutes as presented. Ms. Eliason seconded the motion. It was on motion 6-0; Drobinski - aye, Pransky - aye, Szwarc - aye, Holtz - aye, Eliason – aye, Vitale - aye

The Committee reviewed the January 10, 2024 meeting minutes.

Mr. Drobinski motioned to approve the January 10, 2024 minutes as amended. Mr. Vitale seconded the motion. It was on motion 6-0; Drobinski - aye, Pransky - aye, Szwarc - aye, Holtz - aye, Eliason – aye, Vitale - aye

Next RTAC meetings via Zoom at 7:30PM:

- May 1, 2024
- June 5, 2024
- Summer Schedule TBD

The Committee had a brief discussion regarding the two Annual Town Meeting Articles for the Rail Trails. The Committee will discuss the presentations at their next meeting scheduled for May 1, 2024.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:45 PM