



Town of Sudbury

Rail Trails Advisory Committee

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MINUTES

August 14, 2024 AT 7:30 PM

VIRTUAL MEETING

Members Present: John Drobinski (Chair), Lana Schwarz, Ken Holtz, and Glenn Pransky

Others Present: Marcia Rasmussen, Planning & Community Development Department

Absent: Laurie Eliason, and John Sugrue

Chair John Drobinski called the meeting to order at 7:34 PM.

Glenn Pransky volunteered to take minutes of the meeting.

Update from Chair

Mr. Drobinski gave a brief update on the following:

- A reminder that the rail trail continues to be closed due to the ongoing construction activity and asked residents to avoid trail use.
- Noted that photographs taken by resident Len Simon are posted on the Town's BFRT web page.
- Two Town residents have submitted applications for membership on the RTAC, and we encourage others who are interested to apply. We will review their applications and perhaps invite them to an upcoming meeting.

Review of Written Update from Fuss & O'Neill:

The Committee discussed the August 12, 2024 (#20) Fuss & O'Neill Field Inspection report -

- Crushed stone, concrete splitters islands and flashing beacons have all been installed and connected. Concrete pouring around the splitter islands is underway.
- Display boards are being installed.
- Pavement installed at all major crossings, and almost all of the road markings are complete as well.
- Mass DOT will make the decision about activating traffic signals, which are now in flashing mode at Hudson Rd. This signal will be coordinated with the Concord Rd / Old Sudbury Rd intersection signal as part of the contract.

There will be a Construction Progress Meeting on 8/15 to provide an update on construction activity. One of the questions to be addressed is whether sight lines can be improved at the Pantry Rd. crossing; Fuss & O'Neill has been asked to evaluate the intersection to see if additional work should be conducted to increase visibility for trail users and drivers. Mr. Holtz

noted that the area around there is jurisdictional, but that there may be opportunities to do some trimming of tree branches within the Conservation Commission's Order of Conditions.

The Fire Chief and Police Chief have noted that there have been some reports about vehicles mistakenly entering the trail; Mass DOT recommends that such data/information about these events be collected to support potential solutions that may be necessary in the future.

The contractor is moving quickly toward construction completion, but cannot open the trail until the work has been reviewed and approved by Mass DOT and the Town. Design of the interpretive panels won't be completed for fabrication until October at the earliest, and fabrication may take several months so the final installation of the Interpretive Panels will not be until spring 2025. It was noted that since the interpretive panels are not safety features, it may be possible to open the trail for use by the public before spring 2025.

Staff Update

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

- Engineering Design consultant Fuss & O'Neill finalized the 25% design submission package, which was delivered to MassDOT on June 20th. These plans have been posted to the Town's Rail Trail webpage and are now available for public viewing.
- The final report for the MassTrails grant which funded a significant portion of the 25% Design for Phase 3, was submitted. The Town is awaiting the reimbursement check of \$192,000.
- The Contract for the next MassTrails grant, awarded to the Town in June 2024, has been completed and the Project Initiation Report submitted. The Town has received a Notice to Proceed
- Eversource reported the following activities completed in Sudbury on the Mass Central Rail Trail:
 - Cut & Fill/Grading/Gravel Install – Loam installation in Segment 12 (Union Ave. to Boston Post Road) and Segment 13 (Boston Post Road to Bridge 127).
 - Bridge 127 – Timber rail post installation completed 7/17/24
 - Erosion & Sedimentation repairs and hydroseeding in progress
 - Invasive vegetation removal activities in progress
 - Cable pulling activities – splicing in Sudbury
- Eversource also reports that the following activities are underway (7/29 – 8/17)
 - Grading and site work in Sudbury – Loam installation in segments 12, 13, and 14 (Union Ave. to Sudbury Substation), loam installation in segment 8 (Bridge 128 to Dutton Rd.) tentatively scheduled.
 - Bridge 128 – Timber rail post installation
 - Continued E&S repairs and hydroseeding; Invasive vegetation removal, and cable pulling/splicing.

Mr. Pransky added that he recently attended the Hudson Bike and Pedestrian Committee, learning that the infrastructure installation is ahead of schedule but the testing and turn over to the Department of Conservation and Recreation would be at a future date in 2025.

Mr. Holtz noted that the first treatment of the invasive Japanese Hops has been done but a second treatment will likely be necessary given that the plant has flowered and may have gone to seed. He added that this invasive plant has also been found on the Mass Central Rail Trail.

Review of Gifts and Donations Policy for the BFRT

The Committee reviewed a draft Gifts and Donation policy prepared by Ms. Rasmussen after meeting with John Drobinski, Glenn Pransky and Len Simon, as well as additional materials concerning considerations related to accepting memorial gifts and a policy example from another community. Mr. Holtz suggested placing memorial plaques on an existing bench since there have been 14 benches already installed on the BFRT, and Ms. Rasmussen has verified that MassDOT would allow plaque installation after the construction is completed. The Committee may want to specify that memorial items and gifts should be consistent with the intended design – that these opportunities might be limited and will be reviewed in the context of the overall design. Mr. Pransky cited an example as assuring that plantings do not block visibility or create significant maintenance burdens for the Town. Others suggested that guidelines for the size of a gift related to the particular item requested be included in the document. The Committee also discussed consideration of a larger plaque to commemorate those who contributed toward the design, acquisition, construction and overall support/advocacy of the rail trail over the years.

Community Preservation Act - applications

Mr. Pransky commented that there was interest in seeking Community Preservation funds for a wayfinding study for the Rail Trails but noted that this should be coordinated with the Boston Post Road business area study that anticipated to be done this year. He added that Town staff don't currently have the capacity to manage a detailed wayfinding study for the Rail Trails and noted that it may be something to revisit in 2025.

Len Simon commented that the Friends of the BFRT is interested in supporting fabrication of a metal sculpture with iron from the rail trail, with the theme of rail to trail transportation, that could be placed at one of the art installation locations along the trail. It's not clear what the cost would be, and how much the Town of Sudbury would be asked to contribute, perhaps via a Community Preservation Act grant. Ms. Rasmussen will work with Mr. Simon to identify art fabrication costs, and possible opportunities to reuse old railroad materials for the sculpture; Ms. Rasmussen and Mr. Simon will also explore whether a Community Preservation grant might help initiate this project provided Town staff is available to assist if needed.

Review and Approval of Minutes

Minutes of May 1, 2024 were reviewed and unanimously approved as written.

Next RTAC meetings via Zoom at 7:30PM:

- October 9, 2024
- November 6, 2024
- December 4, 2024

Meeting Adjourned at 8:36 PM