



Town of Sudbury

Rail Trails Advisory Committee

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MINUTES

October 9, 2024 AT 7:30 PM

VIRTUAL MEETING

Members Present: John Drobinski (Chair), Lana Szwarc, Laurie Eliason, Glenn Pransky, and Ken Holtz

Others Present: Marcia Rasmussen, Planning & Community Development Department

Absent: John Sugrue

Meeting called to order 7:31 p.m.

Chair comments:

Congrats to Glenn on his ride from Western Mass along the Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT).

Observation that there is a lot of use of the rail trail by the public and a request that folks remain cautious and careful since the trail is still under construction and not officially open.

Many informal comments have been heard in support of the Rail Trail.

Task Force may need to start working more closely with DCR as they prepare to pave, perhaps in the spring 2025.

Raised questions about the future impact the intersection of these two rail trails (aka the “Diamond”) in Sudbury, with an observation that the Town’s Planning Director is coordinating a planning/business development study in the area of Boston Post Road/Route 20. The Committee may find it useful to hear from Planning and Community Development Director Adam Burney about the study at some future date.

BFRT Phase 2D construction update:

- Beginning with the punch list prepared and photos taken by Fuss & O’Neill:
 - Many intersections are missing the connecting asphalt between the concrete apron and road pavement.
 - Modified rock swales need better blending in with existing topography
 - Some fence rails need repair
 - Issues with large chunks of asphalt in areas where reclaimed asphalt was used (primarily along the connecting path at Davis Field parking area).
 - Some issues with connection of curb ramp and asphalt
 - Oddly spaced bike racks (perhaps another feature was anticipated).
 - Glenn comments that adding more bike racks may be a good idea
 - Tree within 2’ shoulder (should it remain or be taken away?)
 - Laurie Eliason questioned the gravel alongside paved trail; whether it will settle or not, considering its spreading onto trail? Marcia Rasmussen responded that it

should settle, but noted that she will discuss this with the MassDOT Resident Engineer to correct if needed.

- Some stability issues with guardrail posts along the path to Davis Field parking.
- ConCom helped with DPW of clearing of some sight lines along trail.
- Headwall issue noted
- Culvert issue along North Road.
- Stump within 2' of trail is considered a hazard and will need to be addressed.
 - Stump likely has roots going below trail
- Missing bolts in fencing
- Safety issue with topped tree
- Grass hasn't yet been established at Pantry Brook
- Marcia noted all Town staff was asked to review the punch list generated by Fuss & O'Neill; it will be discussed at the next construction update meeting.
- Trees noted via email are covered under warranty and will be replaced in spring.
- Laurie asked about direction of sign which will be fixed and observed that "Broad acres" is misspelled. It should be one word as in "Broadacres"
- John asked about next steps now the MassDOT has the punch list. Marcia explained MassDOT will use it, conduct their own walkthrough and likely add to it to create a final punch list.
- **Update memo**
 - Marcia showed initial interpretive panel mockups.
 - Blue color palette for the signs.
 - Preliminary granite post layout and text reviewed.
 - BFRT logo for trail markers with "Sudbury" added.
 - Traffic signals
 - MassDOT quickly engaged to resolve community concerns.
 - Information sent to anyone asking and posted to town mediums.
 - HAWK signal explained and also posted to town mediums
 - Ti SALES outreach completed to discuss additional no parking signs and directional signage; a memo shared with Parks and Rec.
 - Laurie asks if this is going in as a new CPC request. Marcia explained it is using existing allocated funds.
 - Fuss & O'Neill study will determine if a 2-lane driveway is possible. What was funded was the study on what can be done and by next spring or summer we will hopefully have a project estimate then seek Community Preservation funds for construction.
 - People are parking along the driveway next to the railroad tracks which is impacting trucks entering. They are also parking in front of the Ti-SALES office and in the employee parking.
 - John notes there is also town parking on site there.
 - Ken clarified that if there are wetland buffers it should not disqualify paving the parking in that area. This was well understood already.
 - Laurie notes that the Morse Rd parking is already getting a lot of use.
 - Continuing work with the MPO and TIP (FFY 2026-2030) funding for Phase 3
 - Still working on Municipal Agreement with Framingham to be completed soon

- Mass Central
 - Glenn notes paving may start in fall. ARPA funds may be leveraged for this.
 - Gerald Autler interested in hearing from Task Force on connections we would like to see.
 - Gerald Autler reached out to Town Manager Andy Sheehan on ribbon cutting estimations on BFRT.
- Fuss & O'Neill submitting for award, RTAC requested to send a letter of support
 - Glenn suggests adding to letter something about accessibility and gave some examples. Marcia identified area in letter to add this.
- **John moves to support letter as amended; Glenn seconded. Vote unanimously approved.**
- Chris Menge stated his thanks to Glenn for raising accessibility to be added to the letter and agrees it is a great element to the trail in Sudbury.

Member updates and reports:

Glenn - Has had a couple weeks of rail trail activity.

- Exploratory ride across state on MCRT. Highlighted group and website that helped organize information. Presented key stats of ride which included 12 riders and multiple organization, foundations, etc. Community events held along ride. Shared pictures taken along ride and explains some different rail trail conditions along the trail mainly due to ownership of the trail over the years. Highlighted some areas where bridges need to be built. Also, accessible trails built around sections where houses have been built. Chris Menge added information about efforts to preserve the desert area in the Memorial Forest and what is being done to preserve it. Ride ended in Boston.
- Last week rode on the GAP (Great Allegheny Passage) rail-trail in Pennsylvania from Pittsburgh, PA to Cumberland, MD
- Glenn's 3 takeaways for Sudbury:
 1. A more complete MCRT is becoming a state priority. Overnight tourism will become easier.
 2. Lots of potential for businesses; however, will be limited by accessibility around the Diamond intersection.
 3. More internal and external connectedness, which will become part of social fabric.
- Laurie agrees area around the Diamond is important. Connection to potential destinations and signage will really help even if the Diamond can't be center of connectivity. Glenn notes no connections made have been observed to be closed off.

Ken - Provided update on rain garden work around Morse Rd with additional detail about a grant of \$40,000.

Glenn - Mass Trails conference is coming up in Worcester. Will send a note to members of the RTAC.

Minutes to be approved from Sept 18:

- No comments or questions
- **Motion to approve by Glenn, Second by Laurie**

- **Unanimously approved.**

Public comment:

Chris Menge comments on his association with Friends of BFRT and messages received. Scouts have reached out hoping to achieve Eagle Scout status. Example provided of scout request provided today. Chris is asking what process he should follow and what information can be shared?

- John mentioned cattle crossing maintenance that may be a good scout project. Marcia suggests Chris have them contact her. Work can't take place until Town takes ownership and responsibility for trail. Could be 8-10 months away. Cattle crossing work - some trees to remove (coordinate with ConCom). Research on what it looked like in past. Some excavation.
- Laurie asks if we have bike repair stations, confirmed we do. She also asked if there is any Davis Field work to be done.
- John notes we may be able to add to some signage for points of interest such as North Sudbury Train Station.
- John thanks Chris for his engagement as described.

Meeting adjourned at 8:41PM