



Town of Sudbury

Rail Trails Advisory Committee

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MINUTES

December 11, 2024 AT 7:30 PM

VIRTUAL MEETING

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

Others Present: Marcia Rasmussen, Planning & Community Development Department

Meeting called to order at 7:32 p.m. by Chair John Drobinski

Chair Comments:

Mr. Drobinski mentioned that many people are using the Bruce Freeman trail, and asked that all users please be careful, especially at street crossings. Fortunately, almost all of the crossing signals (except Old Lancaster Road) on the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) are operational. He acknowledged good collaboration with Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) on several trail-related topics along the Massachusetts Central Rail Trail (MCRT).

Marcia Rasmussen provided an update on the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and the Mass Central Rail Trail Projects.

BFRT Phase 2D

MassDOT and Fuss and O'Neill have evaluated traffic signals at Hudson and Peakham, and will soon be following up with the contractor to discuss revision to the signal timing to improve traffic flow. It appears that the Opticon pre-emptive emergency signal system is not yet working at the Hudson Rd signal. Chief Nix has provided an observation that the left turn signal north-bound from Hudson Rd to Concord Rd is insufficiently long for vehicles to clear that intersection, so this will be evaluated as well. Laurie asked if it would be possible to have a right turn arrow from Peakham to Hudson Rd, but unfortunately without a dedicated lane this isn't possible (state law requirement).

The flashing beacons at Old Lancaster had failed; the battery was replaced, but it seems that the underlying problem is that trees are blocking solar panel. Marcia has filed a Scenic Roads Application with the Planning Board to allow removal of a 36-in Oak tree, which will be discussed at a public hearing on Wednesday, December 18th. If approved, the tree will be removed, along with a White Pine (located within the former railroad right-of-way, therefore not subject to the Scenic Roads bylaw. Ken asked if it's possible to move the solar panel instead. Marcia noted that raising the solar panel was discussed, however, the panel would have to be raised 50-ft. higher to receive adequate sunshine, and there isn't an alternative location where the

panel could be moved to power the flashers (there is one signal on each side of the road). The estimated cost to supply direct power line is approximately \$50,000, which was not in the budget for this project, so we are moving forward with solar power.

On the BFRT Punch list, signage problems at several locations are expected to be addressed this week.

Interpretive panels – 5 panels for the BFRT were reviewed and approved by the Historical Commission at their meeting Dec 10. Information posters are being developed and will be placed in the kiosks – these are less durable than the interpretive plaques, as they are intended to be updated/replaced as needed.

Planning staff will work with the Recreation Department to construct new signs at the driveway entrance to the Parkinson Field area indicating both “Parkinson Field and BFRT” and will work with Ti-SALES to install additional signs adjacent to their parking areas to clarify where people accessing the BFRT should park.

A sculpture gift from the Friends of the BFRT was accepted by the Select Board at its meeting on December 3rd but questions were asked about the potential location for the sculpture. The RTAC could make a recommendation for the installation location – perhaps a site near Morse Rd./Broadacres Farm might provide the best viewing opportunities and less interference with trail users. Laurie mentioned concerns about safety and kids climbing on the sculpture. Marcia affirmed the need to install signage indicating that it’s public art and not a play structure and suggested that the RTAC conduct a site visit to view the potential locations.

Marcia has scheduled a meeting with Eagle Scout candidate Ryan Barrett about a possible project to create a path from the trail to the cattle crossing north of Parkinson, enabling trail users to walk off the trail and see the cattle crossing from the side.

The proposal for the Parkinson Field driveway improvement was reviewed by DPW and Conservation staff. They recommended some revisions to the scope of work, suggesting that the Town may want to get multiple quotes for further evaluation and construction. It was noted that Gale Associates is currently working on a recreation field study, and might have capacity to add to its work. It may be possible to widen the entire access road to accommodate 2 cars side by side, depending on the location and quality of wetlands near the existing roadway, and ability to stabilize nearby embankments. Otherwise, we may be limited to widening the access road only near Hudson Rd. Obtaining a wetland scientist evaluation to help answer this question is part of this project.

John McQueen asked if there’s been any discussion about porta potties. Two potential locations are at Morse Rd and Davis Field. The RTAC will submit a request to the Friends to supply these units, once the trail is complete, and year-round availability may be requested in one location. So far, no other locations have been proposed for porta potties.

BFRT Phase 3

A comment resolution meeting with MassDOT was held in late November. MassDOT will be scheduling a utility meeting with Mass DOT District 3 in the next few months, as well as a coordination meeting with Framingham staff and Eaton Road West residents to discuss parking and trail access. A meeting is also to be scheduled with Middlesex Savings Bank on Boston Post Road to discuss proposed changes to the sidewalk and trail crossing at the Nobscot Road traffic signal, which Marcia is coordinating. After Fuss & O'Neill update the plans based on comments received, a 25% Design Public Hearing will be scheduled by MassDOT, perhaps late February or early March.

On Dec 10, the Historical Commission members discussed their site walk with the MassDOT cultural resources team, and have prepared a letter that will be sent to Fuss & O'Neill regarding historical artifacts that should be included in the design. They requested retaining several stone culverts and preserving a second cattle crossing discovered along the trail, and restoration of the block signal pole near the Framingham city line in this segment of the BFRT.

Staff is attending the MPO meetings to ensure that construction funding for Phase 3 will be included in the FFY2026-2030 TIP.

In early November, RTAC members John Drobinski and Glenn Pransky, along with Marcia Rasmussen, met with the owner of Chiswick Park and his land consultants. In follow-up to that meeting, the land consultants (DGT Associates) were hired by the Town to prepare a conceptual layout for parking, providing 18 spaces on one parcel, and 13 spaces on another parcel of land owned by Chiswick Park located adjacent to the Diamond intersection. This plan will be reviewed by Adam Burney and Lori Capone for comments and input regarding drainage, wetlands and other issues. Adding a significant amount of parking near the Diamond intersection would be a major asset for both trails. It's possible that the owner of the land would provide a lease to the Town for this property. Meeting attendee John McQueen suggested that CMAQ funds might be available for this project (as this added parking and enabling more trail use helps take cars off the road).

Marcia noted that the Framingham Planning Director will help move the inter-municipal agreement forward, and will help facilitate a meeting with the Framingham Traffic Commission regarding Eaton Road West.

Mass Central Rail Trail

Eversource has indicated that the outstanding issues are just minor communication equipment installation and site cleanup, and they are close to done with their construction. This will enable the project to be turned over to DCR in the near future. Amber Christoffersen of DCR is working to update all the MCRT plans, hoping to advertise the paving project over the winter, with a goal of signing a contract by February for paving of the entire MCRT segment in Sudbury and Hudson in late spring. Amber asked if the HAWK signal currently proposed adjacent to the section tool house, can be maintained by the Town as a separate resource. The Town compared this to the installation of a similar signal at Rt 117 on the BFRT, and requested that a standard MDOT traffic signal painted black be installed here. This location on Boston Post Road/Route 20 is just north of the historic district.

Marcia noted that Mass Trails is now accepting applications for grants, which are due at the end of January. The RTAC has had initial conversations with the Town and SVT about trail connections from the MCRT to Memorial Forest and Hop Brook Marsh, with a site walk of Memorial Forest planned in early January. Other potential trail connections on the BFRT include a path north of the Morse Rd parking lot to Featherland recreational fields, and the connection to Thompson Drive that's used by Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School students. Another possible item to include in a grant application is a pavilion at the Morse Rd parking lot. There is about \$250,000 remaining in CPC funds allocated to Phase 2D construction, but the actual amount available for additional projects is unknown until reconciliation with MassDOT on the non-participating construction costs have been finalized.

Chris Menge asked if it would be possible to restore some of the signal boxes and poles along the trails, similar to the one in Concord. Marcia replied that the contractor in Concord who was interested in restoration had passed away. RTAC members will seek other resources, and will inquire if such restoration could also be supported by a Mass Trails grant.

Dog waste remains a nuisance and topic for continued discussion – other towns have posted multiple signs asking people to clean up after their dogs and not leave dog waste behind; some have installed bag dispensers and dog waste collection points. DPW currently collects waste at Featherland from a dog waste collection site.

Future RTAC meetings dates:

- January 8, 2025
- February 12, 2025

Meeting Adjourned at 8:30 p.m.