



# Town of Sudbury

## Rail Trails Advisory Committee

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### MINUTES

**July 9, 2025 AT 7:30 PM**

### VIRTUAL MEETING

**Members Present:** John Drobinski (chair), Glenn Pransky, Laurie Eliason, and Ken Holtz

**Others Present:** Marcia Rasmussen, Planning & Community Development Department

Meeting called to order 7:30 PM by John Drobinski, Chair

#### **Update from Chair:**

- Chair John Drobinski noted that the trail is unofficially open but is not yet being maintained by the Town so please be careful.
- Rail Trails Advisory Committee (RTAC) members should start thinking about potential Community Preservation Committee (CPC) projects for funding in the next fiscal year. RTAC members are encouraged to submit ideas to Ms. Rasmussen for inclusion in the August meeting agenda, anticipating a September submission date.

#### **Staff Update – BFRT Phase 2D:**

- Ms. Rasmussen presented a staff update noting that the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Phase 2D (BFRT) is open for use by the public but caution is needed. At road crossings, drivers are not yet fully accustomed to pedestrians and bicyclists.
- During the June 26, 2025 site walk with Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) and Town staff, the following items were noted:
  - some but not all plantings that had died have been replaced – MassDOT will follow up with the DOT Landscape Architect;
  - there are extensive locations where Japanese Hops have not been eradicated (this is an invasive plant new to the trail) along with several locations of Japanese Knotweed and Giant Ragweed – the sub-contractor responsible for invasives removal will need to address this;
  - two interpretive signs for whistle posts were installed at incorrect locations and need to be repositioned or swapped,
  - hydration stations are operational but one was leaking and the other was missing a panel,
  - a sign post near Morse Road was leaning over the trail and needs to be repositioned or reinstalled;
  - fencing broken as a result of a tree branch falling will be replaced by the contractor;

- graffiti on railroad relics and granite posts south of Hudson Road needs to be addressed but the contractor is concerned that the relics may be damaged or compromised given the extent of rust and degradation present. Ms. Rasmussen will follow up with Steve Greene and Rick Conard, along with the Historical Commission, for their advice.
- Removing the chain link fence at Powder Mill Road (north side of the tunnel) was outside of the scope of work for the current project, MassDOT District 4/Concord is discussing how best to achieve this with MassDOT District 3/Sudbury.
- MassDOT has given the okay to install an additional surface-mounted interpretive panel at Hop Brook and a sculpture at Morse Road/Broadacres Farm parking lot.
- The Parkinson Field driveway and parking lot improvement project was awarded to TEC, who is eager to get started, hopefully later in July or early August.
- Mr. Holtz suggested that training is needed to encourage safe use of the trail and crossing signals, as several members observed that trail users aren't sure how to use the trail or cross intersections safely. Additional signage to instruct users (drivers and walkers) on how to use HAWK signals might be useful.
- Mr. Pransky will look into training programs along other trails.
- Sudbury resident and Friends member, John McQueen is exploring conducting a Bicycle Safety Rodeo in collaboration with the schools and the police department.

**Staff Update continued - BFRT Phase 3 Design and MCRT update:**

- The inter-municipal agreement between Framingham and Sudbury is complete, and Fuss and O'Neill have begun work on a 75% design – with an initial invoice to be reimbursed by the Mass Trails grant. The owner of Chiswick Park is interested in leasing land adjacent to the Diamond to the Town to expand parking options near the two trails.
- Mass Central Rail Trail work is progressing – next week the top course of asphalt will be applied to most of the trail in Sudbury. Fence work is progressing. The final paving at the Diamond will not happen until the fall, after the Diamond is completed. The contractor will remove an 18-inch wide area around three sides of the ticket office which will be replaced with crushed stone for drainage. There will be a Town staff meeting on the Massachusetts Central Rail Trail (MCRT) in August. Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) staff urges people to stay off the MCRT during weekly work hours because of ongoing active construction.
- Mr. Pransky will meet with Ms. Rasmussen tomorrow to look at connections to the MCRT and BFRT, in preparation for potential grant applications.

**Update – Vacant Rail Trails Advisory Committee Seats:**

- The Select Board will interview the 4 candidates who applied for committee membership to the RTAC and will decide appointments at the July 15<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**BFRT Sculpture at Broadacres Farm**

- Sudbury resident Len Simon presented the finished sculpture (funded in part by the Friends of the BFRT), which is over 5 feet tall and just over 7 feet wide, and weighs over 1000 pounds. The proposed location for the sculpture is at the end of the concrete walkway that extends from the trail to the east side of the Broadacres Farm/Morse Rd.

parking lot. There will be sufficient clearance for a person in a wheelchair to go around the south side of the sculpture to access it from the back. An additional concrete pad will not be necessary. There appears to be adequate space for a potential pathway to the field on the south side of this recreation area.

- Chris Menge, 9 Fern Trail, noted that wheelchair users are not likely to want to go around the back of the sculpture, but if they choose to do so, there isn't enough room to make a turn in the narrow space behind the proposed location. There is a concern that the sculpture would block the potential continuation of the cement pathway to the fields directly east, as the original discussions about this area considered a potential 10-ft. wide path extending due east in this location - exactly at the proposed sculpture location. A vote on the sculpture location was tabled; RTAC members, along with Parks and Recreation Commission members will review the site and submit recommendations to the RTAC at the next meeting.
- Possible Boy Scout projects and geocaching along the trails was discussed. Geocaching activity raises a concern about people walking off trail into protected areas (such as wetlands or other environmentally sensitive sites) or onto private property as they look for a hidden object. Because of concerns about people wandering off trails and into protected areas, the RTAC recommended that geocaching be prohibited along the BFRT. As for a possible Boy Scout project, one idea discussed previously had been to install a path allowing access to view the cattle pass north of Hudson Rd.

#### **Member Updates:**

- Ms. Eliason listed her thoughts for possible CPC applications as follows: adding pet waste stations along the trail, design for connections to high interest destinations (especially bridge at Mill Village), installing bathrooms at Morse Road (or porta potties), and installing a shade structure or pavilion at the picnic tables (also at Morse Road).
- A pavilion vendor was identified by the Parks and Recreation Department that might be useful when considering a structure at Morse Road.
- A trail connection in the Landham Rd. area would be beneficial – perhaps a ramp that goes from the Mass Central rail trail up to Landham Rd.

#### **Minutes for Approval: June 18, 2025**

**Mr. Drobinski motioned to approve the minutes of June 18, 2025 as written. Ms. Eliason seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.**

Next RTAC meeting will be September 17, 2025 at 7:30PM via Zoom.

**Meeting adjourned at 9:00PM.**