

## Topsfield Rail Trail Committee (TRTC)

### Selectmen's Meeting: August 21, 2006

The TRTC is seeking Selectmen's approval for permission to apply for the following grants and actions items.

1. Update on 8 town effort to apply for the \$800,000 earmark from Congressman John Tierney. We are now writing an 8 town implementation plan, to be finished in October, with the assistance of both the Metropolitan Area and Merrimack Valley Planning Commissions. If successful, the money can be used for most phases of the trail including community outreach, planning, design and construction. Since these funds are for all 8 towns it will only be enough to get us started. There is no way to predict when the funds will become available.
2. Approval for grant writing and submission for trail funding
  - o Recreation Trails grants for up to \$50,000 funding. Application is made through the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). Application is due October 2, 2006.
  - o Grant application approval for other public and private sources.
  - o Private donations
  - o In general the Selectmen approved our grant application activities. Each grant has to be signed by the Selectmen prior to submission.
3. Fund accounts
  - o Where do we keep funds privately donated and grant monies? Town accounts? Topsfield Community Fund?
  - o The Selectmen will look into the proper wording and set up an account within the Town treasury for the Rail Trail. Joe Geller to further pursue having the private Topsfield Educational Fund changed to the Topsfield Community Fund (or some such name).
4. Clean-up activities on the trail
  - o We have verbal permission from the MBTA to keep the trail passable. The work would be from Summer St. to the Wenham town line. We would like to schedule a trail clean-up day in the fall. Volunteers would use clippers, weed whackers and brush cutters.
  - o We must get written permission from the MBTA before maintaining the trail.
5. Safety clean-up on the trail
  - o To improve the safety conditions on the trail we would like to write the MBTA for permission to remove the rails, possibly spread stone dust on the trail and put a decking on the Ipswich River bridge. This would be characterized as a short term measure while awaiting larger funding sources to bring the trail up to Federal standards.
  - o We are hoping the MBTA lets us dispose of the rails on our own. Last week we met with a rail salvage company. If they remove only the rails for their salvage value they would pay the town about \$30,000 (a proposal is being prepared). This may well be enough to cover the cost of stone dust and provide for bridge decking. We would be looking for volunteer assistance to help with this effort. At this time the Conservation Commission has not been contacted. We were told

removal of the rails is a clean operation. If the ties are removed that is another matter.

- This must be applied for at the MBTA and approved before commencing. The Town must follow state laws and the bid for the rails must be on an open bid basis.
- We are free to discuss getting help from the Topsfield Park and Cemetery Commission as well as the Highway Department. We were warned that their budgets are very lean and their staff stretched thin and we shouldn't expect any help. For insurance reasons, no Town equipment is to be operated by other than town employees.