



Town of Topshfield

TOPSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

Rail Trail Committee

Minutes of Committee Meeting September 17, 2007 8:00 PM

Members Present: Joe Geller, Gregg Demers, Dave Read, Nancy Luther and Kathie Tremblay

Guests: Roy Baessler, Bob Morgan, Kathy Morgan

New Business:

1. Trail rerouting around Tot-lot: Nancy and Joe met with the Principal of the Proctor School about the proximity of the proposed Rail Trail to the Tot Lot. The principal does not oppose re-routing the trail further from the Tot Lot. It is now intended when built the trail will now be 100ft. from the Tot Lot.
2. Notice of Intent: After the recent Conservation Commission meeting where some of the trail neighbors attended to discuss wetlands issues and possible erosion of stone dust from the trail, the Commission voted to have the rail trail process go through the more lengthy Notice of Intent process. Some of the abutters had had to go through a similar process when making changes to their property. Gregg will work on the application for the NOI.
3. ENHC grant: Tonight (Sept 17) the Selectmen are considering signing the Essex National Heritage Grant to allow us to take advantage of the awarded \$2000 for planning, design and construction of the trail. This is a matching grant where we can provide in-kind volunteer services to come up with our contribution. For our guests it was reiterated that no town funds would be used to come up with the matching funds.
4. Bike racks for schools: During the meeting at the Proctor school Joe and Nancy observed many bikes with damaged and/or an insufficient number of bike racks. Joe also learned that there is state grant program to provide bike racks to schools. He contacted the individual who administers this grant and learned the program is currently not well known and thus not being applied for by many municipalities, thus plenty of funds are available for the bike racks. We have requested three racks for the Proctor School and one for the Steward School. Joe got in touch with the Recreation Committee and they will provide the upfront shipping costs and

the Parks and Cemetery has agreed to do the installation of the racks with some volunteer help from the Rail Trail Committee. The racks need to be installed by December 1st of this year to qualify for reimbursement.

5. Trail mowing: The weekend mowing of the trail has continued per the Conservation Commission's approval that a 4 foot swath can be cut. The areas recently done are from Route 97 to the Topsfield Fair and then over the Ipswich River Bridge. Summer St. to Route 1 has been done about half way.
6. 2007 Grant application: With Phase One well defined it will soon be time to determine what the next phase or phases of the trail would be for us to put another state grant in. After a discussion about possible areas it was decided that Summer St. from Main St. to Route 1 should most likely be Phase Two. Gregg can use much of the work he did on the 2006 grant application as a template to apply for this year's grant.
7. Transystems: For the state to be able to assess what it would cost to design the trail they have retained the services of Transystems, Inc. To initiate the process Transystems has requested some of the old rail road valuation maps and known locations of bridges, culverts and road crossings. They will be here in Topsfield to walk the trail on Monday September 24th with a team consisting of a civil engineer, a structural engineer and a wetlands expert.
8. Topsfield Fair: The group agreed that it needs to continue its community outreach efforts. As another way to reach more residents it would set up a booth on "Topsfield night" at the Fair (opening night of Friday September 30th). The group also thought marching in the parade with a banner could also help get the word out about the trail. Dave would order some more "Support the Topsfield Rail Trail" t-shirts like we had two year ago and Kathie will reserve booth space at the Fair and apply for a parade number. For the parade we should highlight the non-motorized multi-modal ways that the trail will be used for: horse riding, biking, walking, baby carriage, etc. so we will try to incorporate those into our procession or any type of float.
9. Response to the Coalition for Child Safety, etc.: On October 9th the selectman have asked if we would address the issues that the Coalition brought forward at the July 9th Selectman meeting. The group agreed to start preparing a document to address the concerns and correct any misunderstandings about the trail and myths about rail trails in general.
10. Border to Boston Relay: On October 21st the Essex National Heritage Commission in conjunction with the National Park Service is holding an end-to-end walking event on the proposed Boston to Border trail for the trail committees of the 8 towns that may be part of this. Trail groups can start in their town and walk to the approximate midpoint of the trail at Camp Dennison in Georgetown

where we will meet up with other groups walking from the northern towns of Salisbury, Newburyport, etc.

Before the meeting concluded we responded to additional questions and comments from Bob Morgan. The meeting adjourned at 9:30.

Respectfully submitted: Dave Read