



Town of Toppsfield

TOPPSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

Rail Trail Committee

Minutes of Committee Meeting

May 19, 2008 8:00 PM

Note: This meeting did not have a quorum

Members Present: Joe Geller and Dave Read

Guests: Bob Morgan, Cathy Morgan, Roy Baessler, Mike DeAmario, Katherine Carlson, Kathleen DiDonato, Eric Gutowski, Faye Raynard, Dick Gant

1. Town Meeting and Town Election recap: The votes in favor of the rail trail were briefly discussed.
2. Rail Trail notification letter: A draft of a letter to inform the abutters of the 2008 mowing schedule was reviewed. Some thought the start time of 8:00 AM was too early so it was agreed that this be changed to 9:00 AM. We also added to the letter that if there might be any special circumstances or events (family lawn party, etc.) concerning the mowing in near any property or area to let the trail committee know and they would be taken into consideration and the mowing schedule would be adjusted accordingly. Bob Morgan expressed concern that the mowing process not further spread Japanese knotweed that was growing on his property and out by the trail. Bob has been trying to help eliminate the invasive species with herbicide. Joe indicated that we may need approval to eradicate invasive species in this matter and agreed to look into the issue further. Joe mentioned having a map showing the property boundaries with utility poles indicated for Phase IA. Both Bob Morgan and Mike DeAmario requested copies (Joe to send).
3. Phase 1A design:
 - a. Eastgate Garden Design is donating their services to review site lines of the trail to help mitigate privacy issues. There is \$42,000 of funding available for design and construction of the 1/3 mile trial in phase 1A and it is not known if there will be enough to include fences and plantings. The committee will try to do what it can with the available money but also needs to be careful not to set a precedent that we can't match for future sections of the trail.

- b. Neve-Morin will be contracted to do the layout of the trail. This is the same firm who did the layout for Topsfield Station they will help us with the layout of Phase 1A of the trail including exactly where to locate the trail around the tot-lot.
 - c. Trail walk with Brain Woodland and Dan Peabody. Joe will walk the trail on Wednesday May 21st with Brian, owner and developer of Topsfield station and Dan, a landscape architect.
 - d. Conservation Commission – Notice of Intent. We need to start that process and there have been some volunteers who are experts in this area to help up put together the necessary information and Gregg Demers on our committee is very familiar with the process.
4. Grants: Joe reiterated that the trail would be built with grants, gifts and generosity of volunteers. We discussed the two grants we've received for \$42,000 and that we have an application in for another Mass Department of Conservations and Recreation Grant for \$50,000 but that has not been funded yet. Another grant from ERM will also be applied for. We discussed a long list of grants, resources and award opportunities that fund rail trail projects and we would be asking for funding for many of them. (see attached).
5. Public comments: Bob Morgan suggested we check out the Rails to Trails Conservancy website for the rail trail committee to better understand how to deal with abutters. One of their recommendations is that we set up an advisory committee with the trail neighbors. We agreed to discuss this further.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted: Dave Read