



Town of Topsfield

TOPSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

Rail Trail Committee

Minutes of Committee Meeting January 6, 2009 8:00 PM

Members Present: Joe Geller, Dave Read, Gregg Demers, Roy Baessler, Katherine Carlson
Guests: Dick Gandt, John Atkins, Norm Isler

Public Forum: prior to the official rail trail meeting the committee held another public forum to update the town's citizens on phase 1B of the Topsfield Linear Common project. The following was discussed:

- Joe reviewed the location of the segments or the four phases of the trail with the assessor's maps and the current condition of each. He discussed the timeline for phase 1B and that the design bids were soon going out to firms. Several photos of the trail were shown on a slide projector. It was reiterated that no town funds are being used to design or construct the trail other than those raised explicitly for development of the trail (grants, etc).
- The MBTA is still assessing the condition of the rails to determine if they want the rails for reuse or if they could be sold as scrap steel with the proceeds going toward development of the trail.
- Mr. Atkins who is an abutter on this section of the trail asked a few questions and is not opposed to developing the trail.
- Norm Isler, President of the Topsfield Historical Society, said the THS has agreed to donate an interpretive sign that will depict the history of the railroad in Topsfield via a historical narrative that will go along side an old photo. He showed some historical photos of trains going through Topsfield and had examples of some interpretive signs being installed on the recent trails in Salisbury and Amesbury.

Rail Trail Committee Meeting followed the Public Forum:

Old Business:

The minutes from December 8, 2008 meeting were read and unanimously approved.

New Business:

1. **New T-shirt design:** Joe donated the newest version of the Topsfield Linear Common t-shirts with our new logo. He presented each member of the committee with one as thanks for their efforts.
2. **New easement through Topsfield Station property:** The location of the easement has been agreed upon by all parties: The Town of Topsfield, the Rail Trail Committee and Brian Woodland. The surveyors, Parkhurst and Donahue, will draw up the easement for review by the MBTA general counsel and the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT). Then it will be filed at the Salem Registry of deeds where it will be officially recorded. The Rail Trail Committee voted unanimously to fund the \$750 required to record the easement. Note: the cost was subsequently reduced to \$500 and Brian Woodland agreed to pay for the drawing.
3. **Construction proposal going out to bid:** There was some discussion if we need to wait for the easement to be recorded before construction bids can proceed but it was decided that the bids can mention that the recoding of the easement is pending and that all parties have agreed to where the trail will be located. The committee voted to proceed with the trail as presented at the public forum.
4. **Priorities for Construction:** It was discussed whether we needed to have the construction companies bid on all 4 sections of the trail and then if funds aren't sufficient then take away sections to reduce the proposal to the amount of grant money currently available. Section 1 is from Washington St. to just before the tot lot. 2 is from this point to the end of the Town property. 3 is on Brian Woodland's property and 4 is from Main to Park St. The sections to be removed are in this order; 3, 1, 4. In segment 1 the contract will specify that the construction company just remove three inches of soil so the Rail Trail Committee and Friends of the Topsfield Trail could spread and pack the stone dust ourselves to save some money.
5. **Decking Donation:** The Topsfield Rail Trail committee was contacted by a Topsfield resident who inquired if we could use some pressure treated decking. The family is starting a new addition to their house and they need to remove a large pressure treated deck approx. 14' x 35' in size, at the back of their house. Dave and Roy went to take a look at the wood and it's in excellent shape and could be used in the spring to partially redeck the Ipswich River Bridge. The bridge and adjacent spillway are currently unsafe for crossing with 6 to 8 inch gaps between the ties.
6. **Stimulus package:** The towns have received a letter for the lieutenant governor asking for all "shovel ready" projects to be submitted as part of a comprehensive state list for eligibility of the Economic Stimulus packets. The Rail Trail committee will submit a proposal due on January, 8, 2009 for \$600,000 which would be enough to build our entire trail. This proposal is a 'long shot' but it will keep our trail on the state's radar screen.

Meeting adjourned: 10:40 PM

Respectfully submitted: Dave Read