



Town of Topsfield

TOPSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

Rail Trail Committee

Minutes of Committee Meeting May 25, 2009 – 8:00 PM

Members Present: Joe Geller (chair), Dave Read, Gregg Demers, Roy Baessler, and Katherine Carlson

1. **Old Business:** Minutes from the March 10, 2009 meeting were unanimously approved.
2. **Trail on the ground!:** It was noted at the start of the meeting that this is the first TRTC meeting since we started as a committee in the spring of 2005 where we finally have some trail built. More miles to go but this significant progress should be celebrated. Once the section in front on Topsfield Station nears completion a formal ribbon cutting and party will be planned.
3. **Committee memberships & election of officers:** Our fearless leader, Joe, was nominated to serve as the committee chair for another year and was elected in a landslide vote.
4. **Status of Phase I construction:** Roy reported on the status of the phase I building and the steps that need to occur to get everything completed.
 - a. *TLC and 'no motorized vehicles' signs.* The group agreed to have a work party on Saturday May 30th to dig holes and install the signs.
 - b. *Line painting in town parking lot:* Roy will get bids and work with Dave Bond to accomplish.
 - c. *Grass Seeding:* Katherine will take on seeding the remainder of the edges of the trail
 - d. *Guard rails:* The lines in the parking lot are painted and we are waiting for word from the Topsfield Safety Committee on what is needed for guard rails. Katherine has a possible contact for a post hole digger and Dave will rent an asphalt saw to cut the holes for needed posts.
5. **Topsfield Station update:** Two issues need to be resolved before that short section of trail can be completed:
 - a. *Construction lull:* the company that is putting in the new septic system under the shopping plaza only has one licensed septic installer who has taken ill.
 - b. *Easement filing:* the lawyers for the town and for Brian Woodland are still working out the details before the easement can be filed with the county.
6. **Fund raising & grants:**

- a. *Grant applications:* Gregg reported on the grants we have applied for which include a \$10,000 grant from Bikes Belong and a \$2,500 grant from Grassroots of Vermont.
 - b. *Rail bookends:* Joe reported that Kim Philpot has seen bookends made from used rail that can be sold to raise funds for the trail but we'll need an acetylene torch to cut up the rails into short pieces as bookends. We may have identified a volunteer to do the cutting and finishing.
 - c. *Fundraising dinner:* Martha Morrison mentioned that perhaps we could have fundraising dinner with a historical railroad theme and serve items that used to be served on the trains running through Topsfield at one time. Joe handed out a train menu from about 1930.
7. **Mowing update:** Roy reported on the section of the trail that had been mowed and that Joe got a little carried away and took the liberty of mowing other volunteers sections – there was little outcry from the group. Roy will get in touch with Bruce Davison about his section.
 8. **Invasive species update:** Katherine reported that most of the Japanese knotweed had been cut down on the trail except for 7 small stands and one larger stand on a section of trail we are not currently working on. There was discussion if we should treat the knotweed now vs at the end of July which the literature states is the most effective time. Katherine will call the town's preferred contractor and report back to the committee on his recommendation.
 9. **ConComm RDA:** On Wednesday evening, May 27th, the RDA for bridge work and rail removal, trail maintenance will be discussed at the upcoming Conservation Committee meeting. Our hope is that approval will be granted so we can start redecking the Ipswich River bridge and accompanying spillway which are now unpleasant to cross due to gaps between the railroad ties.
 10. **Spike pulling on bridge:** Dave agreed to take the lead on organizing a group to pull the spikes out of the Ipswich River Bridge and spillway rails once we have permission to work on this section. The spike pulling tool was borrowed from the Kennebunk Railroad Museum in Maine and needs to be returned when finished.
 11. **Phase II design planning:** The committee discussed the two proposals from Beal's Associates to design Phase II of the trail. The vote was unanimous that we recommend to the selectmen that we award Beal's the design proposal for \$5,370.
 12. **Library display:** Joan Panella is organizing a display of photos along the rail trail. Please submit your photos to Joan or Joe to be included in the Library's display.
 13. **Strawberry Festival on June 13th:**
 - a. *Table:* Joe has secured a long table for our booth
 - b. *Tent:* Dave will work on getting a canopy tent
 - c. *T-shirts:* The Friends of the Topsfield Trail has ordered 75 on the new black t-shirts with the new logo on them to sell at the event.
 - d. *Volunteer sign-up sheets:* Katherine will make sign-up sheets for the various volunteer functions we'll need help with going forward.
 - e. *Shifts:* please contact Joe if you can work a shift at the table
 14. **Bike racks for trail:** Similar to last year's program the state has a offering free bike racks so long as we properly secure them. The committee discussed locations where we should install the racks including the playground and tennis courts, Main St. near the old

water pump for those who take the bus into Boston, on either side of Topsfield Station for Bike Shop and Sweet Shop, and across from St. Rose's church. We need to find out if there is a limit to the number of racks each town can apply for.

Meeting adjourned at 10:10 PM

Respectfully submitted, Dave Read