



Town of Topsfield

TOPSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

Rail Trail Committee

Minutes of Committee Meeting September, 30 2009 – 8:00 PM

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

Guests: Selectman Dick Gandt, Joan Panella and Pete Hayes

1. **Old Business:** Minutes from the August 31st, 2009 meeting were unanimously approved.
2. **Topsfield Fair Planning:** As in the past we are all set to have our annual booth at the Topsfield Fair set for Friday night October 2nd. Kathy and Joe are working on the booth set up and Dave will help pack up at 10 when the fair closes.
3. **Ribbon Cutting Ceremony:** Joan Panella reviewed the agenda and menu for the October 17th ribbon cutting and opening ceremonies which will start at the library. There will be pumpkin muffins, apple cider, coffee and a sheet cake to help celebrate the opening of our first segment of trail. Joe mentioned that to collaborate with our event the Topsfield Open Space Committee will be organizing three separate walks in town – one of them on the trail.
4. **Rail Stop relocation and historical marker:** The rail stop found off a spur in the woods behind Amerigas will be relocated to Main Street during the first week of October. It will be located next to the historical marker that displays a brief history of trains through Topsfield over the years which has been donated by the Topsfield Historical Society. A temporary mock-up will be in place for the ribbon cutting while the permanent one is being fabricated.
5. **Phase 2 forum:** On October 22nd a public forum will be held starting at 8 pm to discuss plans for phase 2 and answer any questions about this segment of the project. It will follow a 7 pm presentation by Richard Symes, a local train historian who has researched the history of trains in Topsfield.
6. **Ipswich River Bridge redecking:** The Essex County Trails Association has agreed to contribute up to \$3,000 toward the redecking of the Ipswich River Bridge. Roy will organize the project and wants us to start with putting up the railing first. We'll plan for October 24th weather depending.
7. **2008 DCR grant status:** Amanda Lewis of the Mass. Department of Recreation and Conservation recently visited the new section of trail opened which they helped fund. Amanda was hosted by Joe and Selectman Nancy Luther. Joe received a follow-up letter

from her saying that Topsfield would hopefully receive \$41,000 in a DCR grant and that Mass Highway was currently reviewing the projects as part of the process.

8. **2009 DCR grant application:** The 2009 grant was submitted yesterday (9/29/09) with letters of support from the Selectmen, Topsfield Council on Aging and Topsfield Historical Society.
9. **Conservation Commission approval status:** A notice of Intent (NOI) for the entire four mile trail, except for the already completed phase 1, will be filed this fall. Gregg is working on the application and consulting with someone familiar with GIS mapping software. The NOI is the limiting step before phase 2 construction can be started.
10. **Route 1 crossing:** Joe is thinking ahead to ways to get trail users safely across route 1. We may be able to use the route 1 traffic survey that was recently completed for the English Commons project. We may also be able to use data from the Topsfield Police speed detector. These could save us some funds as traffic studies can cost about \$5,000. Joe is also going to look at the Cross Alert System which is a solar powered system where approaching trail users see a red flashing light and the perpendicular approaching vehicles on the road see an orange or amber flashing signal to warn them of users on the approaching trail. These system are made in Rhode Island and there is one on Cape Cod in Eastham that we will check out at some point.

Meeting adjourned at 10:35 PM

Respectfully submitted, Dave Read