



Town of Topsfield

TOPSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

Rail Trail Committee

Minutes of Committee Meeting April 12, 2010 – 8:00 PM

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

Guests: Dick Gandt (Selectman) and Sam Wagner (Eagle Scout candidate)

1. **Old Business:** Minutes from the February 25th, 2010 meeting were approved with minor revisions.
2. **Eagle Scout project:** Sam Warner, an Eagle Scout candidate, presented his proposal to connect the Tot-lot to the Proctor school playground by building a stone dust path through the woods and across the rail trail. Currently children of all ages and families traveling between the two playgrounds must traverse through the parking lot by the tennis courts which can be dangerous with all the cars entering/leaving and parking. The Rail Trail Committee supported the idea and the Committee agreed to provide the stone dust for the project. As a next step, Sam was to stake out the exact area where the path would go and before it was started a member of the trail committee would go out and confirm the location. Roy also offered to help Sam properly dispose of any dirt removed from the site. The Committee voted unanimously to support Sam's project and the next steps were for him to get final approval at an upcoming Selectman's meeting and from the Park and Cemetery Commission.
3. **Iron Horse Preservation Update:** IHP will be back in town on Wednesday, April 14th to start working on Phase 2 of the trail which has dried out nicely after all the rains.
4. **Fairground update:** The piles of dirt have been moved off the tracks to avail Iron Horse Preservation access to the rails underneath. The dirt piles are still on town-leased land but this initial step was viewed as progress with the Fairgrounds management.
5. **Thompson-clean-up:** Joe wrote a letter to Dickie asking him to remove his dirt piles at least 10 foot from the center of the tracks by April 21st. He responded that he would comply and Gregg reported that he has already started working on it.
6. **Conservation Commission:** The conditions for our RDA indicated we could not add any material to the trail as Danvers was able to on their sections of trail because of the 'washboard' surface that is created when the ties are removed. The Topsfield Rail Trail Committee will now request that in low areas that we be allowed to add processed gravel then stone dust as a topcoat to bring the surface back to grade in those select areas. The Committee voted unanimously for this proposal to be submitted to the conservation commission.
7. **Traffic Study for Route 1:** The traffic counter will shortly be placed on Route 1 shortly per Bill Bent, the Mass Highway engineer stationed in Beverly.
8. **Erosion Control at Proctor School.** Gregg proposed we put a pipe in to drain the water off so it does not erode the stone dust on that short section of trail. Roy offered a counter

- proposal that we pave a short section to the trail in that area. No vote was taken and the committee agreed to study the area during and immediately after the next heavy rain.
9. **Trail Signage:** Kat offered to look into additional trail signage that will remind people not to litter. She is also looking into a plaque acknowledging the Essex County Trails Assn. donation of materials for the Ipswich River Bridge deck materials donation.
 10. **Knotweed mitigation:** Katherine briefly reviewed the plan for long-term knotweed mitigation which may take five years. Joe reminded any plan will need to be filed with the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture. A licensed state applicator will need to apply the glyphophate. Lana Spillman, the Cons Comm administrator, has offered to help us with the application. As a next step on Sunday, April 18th the group agreed to meet for a knotweed pulling party at the intersection of the trail and Route 1.
 11. **Trail Maintenance Equipment:** The Friends of the Topsfield Trail have received a donation of a used rider mower that needs some work. Roy is working on getting it running and in good working condition. Joe said one of the trail abutters on Pemberton Road has offered us use of his property to store any trail-related maintenance equipment and access his property whenever we need it. The other alternative for storage is the old Topsfield highway department garage. Another piece of equipment we'll eventually need to acquire is a good quality string trimmer. The group will check the ratings in Consumer Reports magazine to make sure we get a good one.
 12. **Dept Conservation recreation Grants status:**
 - a. 2007 DCR grant: we have at least \$14,000 that needs to be spent by June 30th, 2010 but we can apply for a 90 day extension if needed.
 - b. 2008 DCR grant: we may hear more within the next month
 - c. 2009 DCR grant: winners of the grants will be announced later in the spring.
 13. **Regional Trail Progress:**
 - a. **Danvers:** Iron Horse Preservation met with the Danvers Selectmen on April 6th about the plan to continue removing all the rails between Wenham and Peabody very soon.
 - b. **Wenham:** They are still looking at ways to bridge the breach in the trail just south of the Topsfield line near Route 97. Options include installing abutments and a bridge vs. installing large pipes topped with fill. The breach in the trail is about 35 feet wide.
 - c. **Boxford:** Their section of the Border to Boston trail will be voted on at the upcoming May town meeting. They are requesting to use available CPC funds to fund the needed 20% match to be eligible for a share of the Border to Boston congressional earmark to get their trail to the 100% design stage.
 - d. **Newburyport and Salisbury:** A combined opening celebration for the Clipper City Trail and Old Eastern Trail will take place on Sunday, May 23rd. There will be food from local restaurants and music along the trails. A boat will also take people across the Merrimac between the two trails during the celebration. The Coastal Trails Coalition and Essex National Heritage Commission will be sending out invitations and they expect a well attended event.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 pm

Respectfully submitted, Dave Read