



# Town of Topsfield

TOPSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

## Rail Trail Committee

### Minutes of Committee Meeting July 22, 2010 – 8:00 PM

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

1. **Old Business:** Minutes from the April 12th, 2010 meeting were approved unanimously.
2. **Regional Boarder to Boston Trail updates:** The past few of months have been very productive for several towns developing their sections of trail along the B2B right of way. May was a particularly productive month and Dave listed some of the progress just for that month including:
  - a. May 11: Boxford citizens vote at town meeting in favor of developing their section of trail and spending CPC funds to use for any needed matching grant program.
  - b. May 14-15: East Coast Greenway kiosk gets built on Old Eastern Marsh Trail in Salisbury.
  - c. May 20: Topsfield and Danvers are each awarded \$2500 in support of developing their trails.
  - d. May 21-22: A 'Swampwalk' spur is built from the B2B trail at the Danvers/Wenham line.
  - e. May 23: Opening ceremonies and ribbon cutting for the Clipper City Trail in Newburyport and the Old Eastern Marsh Trail in Salisbury.
  - f. May 25: The Merrimac Valley Planning Council to vote on funding 100% design for the towns of Boxford, Georgetown, Newbury and for the remainder of Salisbury.
3. **Strawberry Festival recap:** Joe briefly recapped another successful day for the Rail Trail Committee and Friends of the Topsfield Trails at the town's June 19<sup>th</sup> Strawberry festival. We sold lots of Topsfield Trail t-shirts, a lot of people from Boxford stopped by the booth this year to see where our trail will connect with theirs. Someone stopped by who had just bought a house on Parsonage Road in Topsfield and is very in favor of being so close to the trail. In another transaction at the booth, an abutter who was formerly opposed to the trail stopped by and bought one of our rail bookends.
4. **Iron Horse Preservation update:**
  - a. All the rails have now been pulled up on phases 2 and 3 of the trail.
  - b. A bobcat tractor arrived this week at Route 1 as the start of the equipment that's needed to start removal of the ties. The next piece of equipment expected to arrive soon is called a 'skidder'.
  - c. IHP management has committed to get a section of trail with at least the base coat of surface for an abutter, soon to be bride, who wants her bridal party to walk down the trail from St. Rose's church to the back of their family's house on the

trail where the wedding reception will take place. This section is about 1000 feet so we'll see if it can get done in time.

**5. Phase 2 update:**

- a. Roy developed a very detailed list with 28 specific tasks needed to complete phase 2 of the trail.
- b. We received an estimate from K&R construction for completing section 2 of the trail which came in at \$11,000. This does not include the soil needed for the three foot buffer on each side of the trail and the accompanying grass seed.
- c. The group discussed waiting to see what IHP may do to get the trail ready on that section, besides just removing the ties, before committing to this estimate.

**6. Knot-weed Eradication:**

- a. Gregg reported that if we wanted to spray the knotweed at some point in August, which is the optimal time for it to be effective, we need to give the town 21 days advance notice.
- b. A limited application waiver will also have to be submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture.
- c. We received an estimate of \$1,800 from a licensed sprayer to perform the work.
- d. The Committee voted unanimously in favor of an expenditure of up to \$2,000 for knotweed eradication.

**7. Storage Shed for Mower:** Roy discussed the need for us to come up with a location and build a storage shed near possibly near route 1 so the mower could be easily used on both sides of the 4 mile trail. Currently the donated rider mower is being stored at Pete Hayes house far from the trail and needs to be picked up via a trailer by whoever's section needs to be mowed that week. The group discussed what materials it could be constructed with (siding, pine, or vinyl). The committee voted unanimously to expend funds, not to exceed \$1,500 to build a storage shed.

**8. Grants update:** Joe reported the good and bad news on the funding front.

- a. Bad news: We received word that the Topsfield Trail did not receive any funding in the 2010 Dept of Conservation and Recreation Grant program. The DCR accepted 28 projects totaling \$626,400 out of the 65 proposals submitted totaling over \$2.5 million.
- b. Good news: We finally revised word that we are now allowed to expend the \$41,000 we were awarded in the 2009 DCR grant program.

**9. Highway crossing study update:** The traffic counters were installed last week across route 1 near where the trail will cross. They need to be in place at least a week to get enough data for the analysis. Bill Bent, our traffic engineer, is waiting to get going on the project.

**10. August work parties:** The group identified the weekend of August 28/29 when we'd all be in town and available to do some trail related construction and maintenance projects. Roy had been collecting names and email addresses of folks who've come forward wanting to help with the trail so we will send out a note to get more volunteer as there are several things we need to accomplish in the late summer and early fall including:

- a. Ipswich River Bridge Erosion Control barriers
- b. Brush clearing on Phase 2
- c. Erosion issue near playgrounds
- d. Build storage shed for mower
- e. Railings at School Brook
- f. Corrals on both sides of trail at Route 1

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm

Respectfully submitted, Dave Read