



# Town of Topsfield

TOPSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

## Rail Trail Committee

### Minutes of Committee Meeting July 6, 2011 – 8:30 PM

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

*Selectmen present:* Laura Powers and Dick Gandt

*Guests:* Pete Hayes, Bill Rossiter, Steve Powers

1. **Minutes approval:** the minutes of the March 28<sup>th</sup> and April 19<sup>th</sup> meetings were approved unanimously.
2. **Committee elections:** Joe was nominated to serve another year as our chairman of the Topsfield Rail Trail Committee and Dave was nominated to serve another year as secretary. Both were voted in by the committee unanimously.
3. **Old Business:**
  - a. **Grant updates:**
    - i. **First grant:** The Rail Trail Committee has applied for reimbursement to the town for expenditures of \$18,118 which was the cost for Phase 2 (Summer St. to Route 1) and building materials for the decking the Ipswich River Bridge including safety railings. Joe also sent in documentation of the matching, in-kind contributions of \$5743.
    - ii. **Second grant:** The Rail Trail Committee has applied for reimbursement to the town for \$16,511. Joe also sent in the matching grant, in kind documentation of \$2,499. The Friends of the Topsfield Rail Trail also donated \$1,463 and Joe Geller donated \$184 in volunteer time to the trail effort.
  - b. **Mower storage:** The mower will be stored in the Town Garage so there is no need for a storage shed to be built saving us these funds. The Town Administrator wants us to use the 3<sup>rd</sup> bay. Joe and Roy will discuss further with the town.
  - c. **Route 97 crossing:** Iron Horse Preservation Society carved out the new path as previously staked out between the road and the yellow swinging railing. This new section of trail also needs stone dust compacted on it. We also need to find more boulders to protect trail users in the approximately 100ft that the rail will parallel Route 97.
  - d. **Strawberry Festival:** This year's event was a very wet affair but there were still a lot of interested and supportive people who stopped by our booth.
4. **Iron Horse Preservation Society update:** They have removed all the RR ties from Maple St. to the Wenham line and stacked them outside the resource areas. Last Tuesday they had a flatbed truck come to take a load of ties away from Park St.. Within two weeks

all the ties should be gone. After all of the ties leave Topsfield we will get 'Bill of Ladingn' which will state the number of ties and where in Pennsylvania they were delivered and disposed of properly. Before the crew of IHPS is to do any work in Conservation Commission jurisdictional, our wetlands consultant, Bill Manuell needs to be contacted for pre-construction meetings. This has not been done in every case and Joe will remind them to do so.

5. **ConsComm Enforcement Order:** Lana Spillman, Holger Luther and Bill Manuell walked the trail recently to inspect IHPS' work and issued an Enforcement order to make sure the soil was cleaned up that improperly pushed into the resource area during the removal of the ties. The Enforcement Order states that to avoid similar situations on the future that we need to clearly mark the 14 ft width (8ft wide trail with 3 ft of grass on either side) of the trail every 25 feet with flags to the Wenham town line so all future work including putting down stone dust stayed within the 14ft. corridor. We also need to make sure the flood plain stakes are re-exposed and sightlines are not blocked by any vegetation. The Cons Comm specified that all of this needs to be completed by Sunday, July 10<sup>th</sup>.

As soon as the Enforcement order was issued IHPS went to work and remediated the areas noted in the EO. Bill Manuell went out to view the work and reported that all were done except one small area that requires some shoveling of dirt back onto the trail. On all edges where dirt had been exposed we also need to plant grass seed to protect against erosion. Once we've completed the work Bill Manuel will let Lana know that the trail can be reinspected. The group all agreed we would meet the deadline and we will gather the troops for a work party on Saturday morning at 7:30 and stay until the work was completed. Roy offered to go out and buy the flags. IHPS will be responsible for installing additional siltation controls as specified in the EO.

6. **Final layer of trail – stone dust:** For the next major step in the trail's development, we need to purchase enough stone dust to put down from Route 1 to the Wenham line. In most cases along the trail the ground base is solid and IHPS will put it down using a paving spreader. There was some discussion if we should buy enough stone dust for a 3 or 4 inch layer and the cost of each was compared. Discussion ended with Gregg making a motion to purchase up to \$15,000 in stone dust. This equates to approximately 3.5 inches of material. The motion passed unanimously.
7. **IRB Access Project:** Approximately a year ago when requesting approval to re-deck the Ipswich River Bridge with railings that the Conservation Commission wanted to ensure that when the project was completed the fisherman who regularly use the bridge would still have access to the riverbanks. Dave recently designed a plan for the steps and built a mock-up of how they would look using clamps. The approval of this design is on the agenda for the July 13<sup>th</sup> Conservation Commission meeting.
8. **Fencing:** Further fencing may be required, per the Massachusetts Highway manual, due to some steep drop-offs, along the trail just south of the Fairgrounds. We agreed to build the trail first and then assess the situation.
9. **Discussion at July 5<sup>th</sup> Selectmen's meeting:** Before the Rail Trail meeting adjourned Dick Gandt wanted the Rail Trail Committee to know that at the prior evening's Selectmen's meeting he broached with the other Selectmen, the possibility of "cutting our ties" (we were sure no pun was intended) with Iron Horse Preservation Society given all the delays and the recent ConsComm enforcement order. He recommended that going

forward we might have to use an alternative contractor if compliance does not improve.  
No action was taken at this time.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 PM

Respectfully submitted: Dave Read