



Town of Topsfield

TOPSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

Topsfield Rail Trail Committee Meeting Minutes March 16, 2016 – 8:30 PM

Members Present: Joe Geller (chair), Dave Read, Roy Beassler, Gregg Demers and Bill Rossiter

Guests: Dick Gandt, Jackson Campbell, Wesley Hooven, Brendan Wightman, Malina Posescu, Truda Popescu, George Saco, Tom LeBel, Lisa LeBel

1. **Masco Internship program:** We will have 7 interns this year who have selected the trail for their high school senior community service project – this is the most students who have ever selected the trail as their project. Roy reviewed a list of maintenance and trail beautification projects that the interns could work on during their time with us. For the trail beautification ones, we are going to have some flowers donated for planting. This year the interns will be ‘self supervised’ with one student taking the lead for the group each week. Dave and Bill reminded our group of students present to leave their cell-phones at home as past groups would spend more time on their phones than working on their internship project.
2. **Eagle Scout projects:**
 - a. Tom LeBel presented a plan to build and place bat houses along the rail trail to help keep the insect population down. Tom brought a prototype of his bat house when was approx 18” high and 18” wide. These would need to be placed 15 to 20 feet high on trees located along the trail. He anticipates building 10 – 12 of these to be placed along our 4 miles trail. The committee agreed this would be a worthwhile project and the next step would be for Tom to present to the Selectmen. Joe offered to work on a date for that.

- b. Paul Roach's trail signage project with picnic tables. Paul was unable to attend this rail trail meeting but he has presented at previous meetings and Gregg and Dave have been working with him as the projects progresses. The trail signage project involves developing small signs for streets that cross the trail. This will help trail users know where they are in the case of an emergency. Paul sent along a draft of two version of the signs – one horizontal and one vertical, The committee thought the vertical ones would work best as they could be fastened to posts without sticking out too much like horizontal ones would. Paul also sent a drawing of his proposed picnic table that also includes a creative bike rack on one end of the table.
3. **Minutes of November 3, 2015 meeting:** were approved unanimously with minor edits.
4. **Comcast Cares Day:** Last year Comcast Care Day involved installing 5 kiosks in 4 towns along the Border to Boston Trail including Topsfield. To prepare for possible projects for the upcoming April 30th, 2016 event, the committee reviewed the maintenance project list that Roy keeps. The next step is that Joe and Dave will meet with Kate Day of Danvers and Steve Surdham of Comcast on March 25th to determine how many volunteers we'll have this year and how we'll share the group with our Danvers trail partners.
5. **DCR grant update:** The deadline for our latest Dept of Conservation and Recreation grant has been extended to the end of the calendar year.
6. **Route 97 Parking Area:** The Conservation Commission is generally in support of developing parking where the rail trail crosses route 97 across from the canoe landing. Cars would be parked diagonally to get them off the shoulders of route 97.
7. **Ipswich River Bridge Wing Wall status:** Gregg will work on the Notice of Intent (NOI) for this project. The project will have to be listed on the state's Central Register to go out to bid.
8. **Phase IV status:** The selectmen unanimously approved moving forward with sending the construction plans to National Grid at their February 22nd meeting. The initial letter has gone to National Grid with the wire heights.

9. **Main St. Parking Spot Removal and Safer Cross Walk Painting:** Selectman Boyd Jackson spoke with Chief Hagland but he still needs to speak with Dave Bond who is the other co-chair of the Safety Committee. Boyd suggested that the space be made a handicapped spot as people rarely park there. Roy thought this was not a good compromise and one that would result in a less safe situation when there was someone parked in the spot. Roy made a motion to send the issue back to the Selectmen indicating that the Handicapped Spot solution would not adequately protect Trail Users. Dave seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4 -1.

10. **Senior Golf Cart rides for seniors:** Holly Vose of the Renaissance in Haverhill is looking for golf carts to be able to give seniors rides on the trail. The golf carts would be battery powered electric and not considered motorized vehicles. The committee members did not know of any locals carts available but will keep a look-out for some.

11. **Earth Day Celebrations:** Zillie Bhujy is organizing an Earth Day celebration at the Proctor School on Friday April 29th from 4 – 6 pm. She inquired if the Rail Trail Committee would like to have a booth or presence at the event. The committee was very supportive of this event but given the time of day is during working hours for most committee members and that ComCast Cares Day was the following day we felt we could not participate this year. Joe would let her know.

12. **Trail Neighbor Complaint:** one of the Selectman received a complaint from a trail neighbor about noise from trail users, dogs on the trail, and off hours trail use. Joe then spoke to Chief Hagland who said there is not much that can be done as there is no law prohibiting trail use at night. Dave recommended that we develop a sign to make trail users aware of trail rules and noise issues on certain sections of trail. He offered to work on the first draft of the sign and bring it to the next Committee meeting for review. Joe will send him the TLC logo for him to start.

Meeting adjourned at 10:20 PM

Respectfully submitted, Dave Read