



Town of Topsfield

TOPSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

Topsfield Rail Trail Committee Meeting Minutes Sept 20, 2016 – 8:30 PM

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

Guests: Dick Gandt, George Saco, Tom LeBel, Lisa LeBel, Paul Roach, Roger Roach

1. **Minutes approval:** The minutes from the June 22, 2016 meeting were approved unanimously.
2. **Masco intern wrap-up:** Roy debriefed the committee on the work this year's Masco interns did and that he was satisfied with this year's crew of high school students. He said they were very hard working and productive with the trail maintenance projects that he supervised them on.
3. **Bat House update:** Thomas LaBel received a \$400 Turi Foundation grant from UMass Lowell to fund his Eagle Scout project of building and installing 12 bat houses on the rail trail. The Friends of the Topsfield Rail Trail will invoice the Turi Foundation but not until the project and the paperwork is completed in February. Tom will also have an opportunity to present his project at the State House.
4. **Trail Signs and Picnic tables:** Paul Roach gave an update on his Eagle Scout project to fabricate and install road signs for all roads that the Rail Trail intersects with. All signs have been mounted except the one at the walking path into Pye Brook Park and that will be installed this week. Paul has also almost completed with the two picnic tables for the trail and there was much discussion on options of where to locate them. Roy offered to do several site visits on the trail this week, identify locations and send them out the committee for a vote on their preferences. The picnic tables are made of composite

materials so they won't rot and should benefit trail users for a long time. He has also incorporated a bike rack at one end of the table for convenience of trail users.

5. **Conservation Committee update:** Joe briefed the group on the Cons Comm's meeting about the Ipswich River Bridge abutment work and the proposed Route 97 parking lot. The project will require a Notice of Intent (NOI) that can include both the Ipswich River Bridge abutment work and parking lot. The project will be classified as a 'limited project' but specifics are at the discretion of the Conservation Commission. Additional conditions for the project include not allowing the use of ground up asphalt but we can appeal this because this type of surface has already been used on the other side of the road by the canoe landing. Another condition is that any machinery and hydraulic equipment must use biodegradable oil in case of a line break or spill so there'd be less soil contamination.

6. **Ipswich River Bridge bids.** Four bids were received to perform the IRB abutment work.

- Semer Marine: \$49,7000
- N.E. Infrastructure: \$95,000
- Kodiak Construction: \$64,500
- North Shore Marine: \$115,824

One additional bid came in from Joset at \$20,000 but they don't use prevailing wage. Gregg made a motion that we go with Semer Marine and Bill seconded it. Semer Marine was then unanimously selected but we are still short money so Joe reapproached the Department of Conservation and Recreation who gave an additional \$20,000 toward the project. The balance now to get the work done was \$9,330 and the Friends of the Topsfield Trail contributed \$4,000 so we have \$5,330. As a next step Dave will contact Bill Tyack of Wenham Dept of Public Works to see if the necessary machinery, equipment or trucks can access the trail from the Wenham gate at route 97.

7. **Main St. Parking Space update:** The group agreed that the best visibility of trail users at Main St. is to continue to advocate for eliminating a parking space closest to the trail. This is one the agenda for the September 26th Selectman's meeting.
8. **Trail neighbors quiet and privacy sign:** Joe had received some edits from Martha Morrison and the Committee made some additional tweaks to the specific wording for the sign. Dave offered to now get a couple of signs printed on highway sign stock.

9. **TRTC meeting frequency:** Dave mentioned that he thought setting up a more regular meeting schedule for the year would help keep us focused on our work to complete the trail with better consistency. When there is not enough on the agenda or if too many folks are traveling then we can always cancel the meeting. We agreed on scheduling 5 meetings per year – each on the first Thursday of the month in September, November, January, March and May. We will not schedule any meeting during the summer months but can call a meeting on an ad-hoc basis if needed.

Meeting adjourned: 10:00 pm

Respectfully submitted, Dave Read