



Town of Topsfield

TOPSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

Rail Trail Committee

Minutes of Committee Meeting November 17, 2008 8:00 PM

Members Present: Joe Geller, Dave Read, Gregg Demers, Roy Baessler
Guests: Dick Gandt

Old Business

The minutes from September 29, 2008 meeting were approved with one change.

New Business

1. **Topsfield Night at Fair:** Many people stopped by our informational booth even with the location of the booth not being as ideal as last year's spot. We will get our request for a better booth location in earlier next year.
2. **Trail Maintenance:** The condition of the trail still continues to improve thanks to Roy's coordination of the maintenance program. The trail is almost completely clear to the Wenham line. Next the group will focus on clearing out the Japanese knotweed north of Summer St.
3. **Topsfield Station update:** The design subcommittee held their final meeting to review the drawings for the agreed upon easement and trail placement. An easement will now be filed by the MBTA with the Registry of Deeds in Salem. Beals Associates and Brian Woodland are still discussing what material the trail surface over the septic system will be made of.
4. **Next Public Forum:** The informational forum for Phase IA of the trail has been scheduled at the Gould Barn for Monday, December 8th at 8:00 PM. Katherine Carlson will send out announcements to the local papers and they'll be posted on the public access cable TV. We should have the meeting posted on the Town sign in front of the Proctor School to help get the word out about the event.
5. **Maintaining Abutter Privacy:** The group discussed ways to help maintain the privacy of several of the abutters who houses are very close to the trail - especially the Brown, Onanian and Fontaine properties. These abutters will need to let us know what mitigation measures they would like to see incorporated. Joe reminded the committee that all expenditures have to be approved by the Selectmen.

6. **Phase IB:** The survey and design to definitively determine property lines needs to be initiated soon from Main to Summer Streets since the 2006 DCR grant was for all of Phase I, which consists of both Phase IA and IB. Near the end of Park St there are two sets of tracks in some locations so 4 rails will need to be removed. There were three requests for bids sent to conduct the survey and two bids came back. A motion to recommend to the selectmen that they accept the bid of \$2,950 by Hancock Associates for Phase IB was approved. Joe will request from the DCR that the money for this will be paid from the 2007 DCR grant for Phase II. It is estimated that approximately 7 - 10 parking spaces will be lost in the Town parking lot but there is a possibility that the bus pick-up location may be changed further down Park St. and the parking lot may be redesigned allowing for more spaces. Joe will look into what is required for the design bid for this section.
7. **Redecking Ipswich River Bridge and MBTA work application:** Joe contacted Mark Boyle, head of the real estate group at the MBTA, who said we can temporarily redeck the bridge over the river and spillway to make it safer until a more permanent structure can be designed and approved. It was agreed the Rail Trail Committee had enough Phase IA issues to contend with for the remainder of the year but we would readdress a timeline for the redecking early in the new year. Joe submitted a formal notice to Transit Realty that we are commencing construction. The MBTA will have up to 180 days to determine the disposition of the rails.
8. **Trip to review similar redecked bridges:** Dave contacted a group that recently completed a 23 mile rail trail from Lebanon to Grafton, New Hampshire, including redecking many bridges on the route. The Northern Trail group invited us up to check out some of them so on October 4th Dave, Joe and Roy took a field trip up to meet with the head of that project. Dick Mackay led us on a six mile ride where the trail had ten bridges crossing back and forth over a river rushing underneath. We all agreed this was one of the most beautiful trails they had ever seen. Several of the bridges were of the same design and width as the one that crosses the Ipswich River. Lots of pictures were taken and we got some good ideas for designs for our bridge.
9. **Trail signage:** Roy discussed several sign options. The group agreed that we'd purchase 60 "No Motorized Vehicle" decals and 70 Topsfield Linear Common decals and 20 posts for the first phase of the trail. Additional posts can be ordered as needed.

Meeting adjourned: 9:55 PM

Respectfully submitted: Dave Read