



Town of Topsfield

TOPSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

Rail Trail Committee

Minutes of Committee Meeting November 1, 2010 – 9:00 PM

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

Guests: Dick Gandt (Selectman) and Bill Rositier

1. **Old Business:** Minutes from the September 1st meeting were approved unanimously with no changes.
2. **Open meeting law:** Joe reviewed the Massachusetts Open meeting law and all members present signed the necessary acknowledgement forms that will be kept on file at town hall.
3. **FEMA grant to repair IRB:** Due to the erosion that has occurred on the abutments of the Ipswich River Bridge, we should not drive any trucks over the bridge until repaired. Dave Bond of the highway department will be in charge of the repair. In order to access the money awarded by FEMA the town needs to contribute a 20% match. Ginna Wilder said she would talk to the state about getting a possible grant for the match. Joe and Gregg will solicit other agencies and Joe will check with FEMA to see if it can be a soft match. The next step is an engineering design before the project can go out to bid.
4. **Knotweed eradication:** Katherine reported that at route 1 that the knotweed eradication was about three-quarters completed but that it will need another application this summer. She is working on the state required documentation to approve further treatment.
5. **Erosion control at trail near playgrounds:** Gregg reported that the washed out area has significantly improved after the last application of gravel and stone dust.
6. **Street crossing signs:** Roy showed examples of street crossings with more visible crossing signs. The committee agreed these would be needed at Summer St. and at the Route 97 crossing and voted unanimously to purchase them under the condition that the Traffic Committee approves the signs which is the next step.
7. **Fairgrounds update:** The Topsfield Green Community/Renewable Energy Committee is discussing putting in solar panels next to the rail trail behind the Fairgrounds parking lot. Joe met with Bob Levita of Transit Realty after contacting Mark Boyle of the MBTA. They support the installation of solar panels on the leased right of way so long as the benefit of the electricity is realized by the town and not a private entity such as the Fairgrounds without the MBTA getting some financial benefit.
8. **Traffic study at route 1:** Bill Bent, our traffic consultant, reported that the study data showed the average speed of cars and trucks going by the trail intersection was 45 mph. The Division 4 office in Arlington said they might approve a Cross Alert System for this location.
9. **DCR grant updates:** We received an extension on spending our second \$50k grant and we applied for the 2011 grant last Friday.

10. **Iron Horse Preservation Society update:** Joe spoke with Joe Hartup and all the ties should be pulled up and gone from Topsfield within 2 weeks.
11. **Phase 2 construction discussion:** The next step is for IHPS to pay K&R Construction to finish the stone dust on phase 2 of the trail. The committee also voted unanimously to expend grant funds up to \$1,000 for topsoil as needed to cover the excavated material from Phase 2 that was brought to Pye Brook Park.
12. **Phase 3 construction discussion:** Dave and Roy want to add the necessary stone dust to the approaches at the Ipswich River bridge and spillway so the trail is more usable. Gregg confirmed that we do not need any further Conservation Commission approvals to get more trail on the ground in Phase 3 but we do need to work with Bill Manuell, or wetlands consultant. In the end it was decided to wait to see if IHPS will be taking up the rail ties on Phase 3.
13. **Maintenance equipment discussion:** The trail is will be of sufficient length by spring that the volunteer maintenance crew needs a new mower as the donated one is breaking down and not sufficient for the long term. Joe gave more details on purchasing equipment via DCR grants: we have to ask permission but can buy equipment related to the project with good justification and we will be required to report on the equipment for the next 5 years. Roy will form a subcommittee of some of his trail maintenance crew to look at various types of mowers and come back to the Rail Trail Committee with a recommendation for the type of equipment needed.
14. **OcC Compliance:** Iron Horse Preservation Society can work to remove the ties outside of the resource area but so long as the Conservation Commission findings and Order of Conditions for the resource area are adhered to. In the resource area any contractor needs to have a spill kit present where there is any construction equipment working on the trail.
15. **Election of Officers:** Joe was nominated by several members to continue as Chairman of the Topsfield Rail Trail Committee for the next year and the committee approved unanimously. Joe accepted.

Meeting adjourned at 10:40 pm

Respectfully submitted, Dave Read