



Town of Sudbury

Historical Commission

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MINUTES MARCH 3, 2021 VIRTUAL MEETING

Present: Chair Chris Hagger, Vice-Chair Diana Warren, Diana Cebra, Taryn Trexler, Jan Costa, Steve Greene, Fred Bautze

Absent: Marjorie Katz

Staff Present: Beth Suedmeyer, Environmental Planner; Beth Perry, Planning and Zoning Coordinator

Mr. Hagger opened the meeting at 7:00 PM. Mr. Hagger acknowledged Commissioners in attendance; Hagger, Warren, Cebra, Trexler, Costa, Greene and Bautze

Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) Historical and Cultural Artifacts

Present: Arnold Robinson, Regional Director of Planning for Fuss & O'Neill, Kurt Jergensen, MassDOT Cultural Resources Unit – Historic Bridge Specialist; Rick Conard, Wayland Historical Commission, railroad historian

Mr. Jergensen Presented a Cultural Resources – Section 106 Review: that the MassDOT Cultural Resource Unit is conducting a review of the MassDOT Highway project of the BFRT under Section 106 and a Programmatic Agreement with the MA SHPO and the FHWA allowing for a streamlined Section 106 process.

Mr. Jergensen said he assumed the SHC had a general understating of the Section 106 process: the Identification of APE (Area of Potential Effects), Identification of Historical Resources, Assessment of Effects, and what trigger a federal funding permit. He said that Programmatic Agreement delegated to the MassDOT the responsibility for the MassDOT to identify the APE, identify resources and assess effects. Mr. Jergensen suggested that Commissioners send comments/questions directly to him.

Ms. Warren asked Mr. Jergensen if a Reconnaissance Survey had been completed regarding the identification of historic resources in the project area. Mr. Jergensen responded that the MassDOT does not usually do a Reconnaissance Survey with boots on the ground unless there was a need. Ms. Warren asked if the linear railroad resource with different elements had been evaluated for National Register of Historic Places eligibility as a historic district. Ms. Warren commented that it is the responsibility of MassDOT to identify resources, not the Town's. Mr. Jergensen noted that it was his opinion the corridor as a whole from Lowell to Framingham in the context of railroads in Massachusetts is not particularly early or intact but is fairly desolate and not a cohesive corridor. Mr. Jergensen was speaking based on his analysis of the Northern section of the Lowell Framingham RR line (Concord and Acton) which he had assessed.

Mr. Hagger asked if Commissioners comments would also be submitted to the MA Historical Commission. Mr. Jergensen responded affirmatively. Mr. Jergensen also stated that the project will require MHC SHPO review.

Ms. Warren asked if MassDOT had made Determination of Effects. Mr. Jergensen responded not. Ms. Warren asked when a Determination would be made. Mr. Jergensen replied it would be made until after a list of RR artifacts are compiled and he assesses then with the project plans.

Ms. Suedmeyer provided detail regarding two essential timelines, one reflective of the pre-permitting process, and the other mid-March deadline dependent on determination regarding interpretive signage, historical features and infrastructure pieces to be incorporated in the Trail design. Mr. Hagger acknowledged that the Commissioners now needed to indicate which historical features should be considered. Ms. Suedmeyer stated if there were particular aspects to be addressed by the Commissioners, timely discussion of such would be important in consideration of the Section 106 process.

Ms. Warren requested the features list be updated to include all features discovered by the Sudbury Historical Commission (SHC). Ms. Suedmeyer mentioned that the diamond feature was not within the right-of-way for the project discussed at this time but was within the right of way of the MBTA corridor, which is part of the DCR and Eversource project. Ms. Suedmeyer confirmed the inventory listing was not finalized and various features would be further examined and be added to the final plans, as appropriate for review with SHC members.

Mr. Greene noted that cattle crossings had been listed in the inventory report, documented, and photographed. Mr. Robinson confirmed that such features were included.

Mr. Robinson presented the Review Process – Historical Resources within area of Potential Effect, which included:

- Historical Resources Within Area of Potential Effects – Field Survey identification; Catalog of resources; Significance
- Proposed Treatment of Historic Resources
- Bridges – Hop Brook Bridge Reconstruction, Panty Brook Bridge Replacement
- Roadway Crossings – Hudson Road Intersection – review with Sudbury Historic Districts Commission
- Interpretive Signage for Historical and Cultural Resources

Cattle Crossings

Mr. Greene noted that cattle crossings had been listed in the inventory report, documented, and photographed. Mr. Robinson confirmed that such features were included.

Mr. Hagger opined regarding the preservation of cattle crossings of the BFRT in Weston, where sections of tracks or trail were retained. Ms. Suedmeyer responded that preservation of some tracks was being considered.

Mr. Greene asked if the team was considering adding fill to any part of the rail trail. Ms. Suedmeyer responded affirmatively stating that cuts and fill would be determined as the plan advanced. Mr. Robinson added that everything would be done to avoid such cutting and fill.

Rail Rests

Mr. Hagger mentioned the omission of rail rests within the inventory, which was a feature included in the Weston and Wayland sections of the Rail Trail. Mr. Robinson stated he had not identified any rail rests when he hiked the railway, but would re-examine this aspect. Mr. Robinson commented that rail stops were not identified in Acton or Concord.

Electrical Cabinets

Mr. Hagger acknowledged that the electrical cabinets would be restored. Mr. Robinson responded that the plan was to repair and paint the electrical cabinets, in place. Ms. Trexler inquired about viewing one of the repaired electrical cabinets. Ms. Warren asked if there were available photos of all features listed by Fuss & O'Neill. Ms. Suedmeyer confirmed the team would be providing photos of features.

Signal Well/s

Mr. Hagger inquired about the abandoned signal well.

Ms. Warren asked if a protection plan would be implemented before construction began. Mr. Robinson responded in the affirmative.

Post Features

Discussion continued regarding the metal and concrete post features. Mr. Robinson mentioned that photos would help to clarify existing condition of posts. Ms. Cebra suggested that the Commissioners be provided with the dimensions of the posts in addition to photos. Mr. Robinson agreed to provide the associated specifications.

Signal Tower/s

Ms. Trexler inquired about the signal tower feature and indicated that several features many have not been included in Mr. Robinson's list. She suggested that an additional field survey with photographs and specifications would be most beneficial. Ms. Costa provided detail regarding the location of the signal posts. Mr. Hagger strongly recommended that the team document the location of the signal posts, which are prominent historical features.

Whistle Post/s

Mr. Hagger requested that several leaning posts be righted. Mr. Robinson confirmed such request. Mr. Hagger inquired about the condition of the whistle posts, asking that if needed, the whistle posts could be repaired and painted. Ms. Cebra stressed that painting of the posts would make for a more significant impact for visitors along the Trail. Mr. Greene asked if several trees impacting the whistle posts could be removed. Mr. Robinson responded that invading saplings could be removed. Ms. Suedmeyer said some trees will have to be removed to create the path, with the intention that as many trees as possible would be preserved.

Signs

Mr. Robinson suggested that feature signage be removed and reinstalled after construction, for safe keeping. Ms. Cebra asked where the signs would be stored during construction. Mr. Robinson responded that the signage would be located and secured in a documented facility. Ms. Warren asked if the signs could be secured by DPW in Sudbury. Mr. Jergensen noted that MassDOT directs contractors to keep such features within the area, usually in a type of trailer.

Stone Wall Segments

Mr. Robinson affirmed that several areas of stone wall had been identified along the route, and preventative staking of such stone wall areas would be performed. Ms. Suedmeyer noted there were additional field-stone wall segments outside of the feature list area, which would also be retained.

Rail Tie Steps

Ms. Suedmeyer explained that the tie steps were used for grade changes. Mr. Robinson indicated that the steps likely had no historic significance, and advised they not be removed in efforts to not further alter the

landscape. Mr. Bautze opined the rail tie steps served as a heavy-duty type of landscape ties. Mr. Robinson concurred.

Utility Poles

Mr. Hagger stated that some of the wooden utility poles maintained the crossbars, and several housed the glass insulators. Mr. Robinson mentioned that those utility poles in poor condition should be removed due to the liability consideration. Mr. Hagger suggested that the utility poles with glass insulators be preserved and suggested that the glass insulator could be transferred to one of the poles in better shape. Ms. Warren suggested that photos be taken of each utility pole in order to assess the condition of the poles. Mr. Bautze recommended keeping the glass insulators, but not the rotting poles. Mr. Greene supported the recommendation of Mr. Bautze, if the poles were rotted. Mr. Robinson confirmed that some of the poles might not be in good condition.

Mr. Hagger recommended the following features be included as interpretive elements:

Preservation of some track and railroad ties near cattle crossing/s

- Preservation of the double electrical cabinet
- Preservation of signal towers, especially one in proximity to a battery well
- Acknowledged cattle crossings would be difficult to interpret unless the route could be designed around one of the crossings. Ms. Cebra supported such design and included pictures of such design in Weston.
- Preservation of granite mileposts and whistle posts as discussed
- Preservation of other features presented earlier in this meeting, upon review of photos.

Interpretive Panels

Ms. Trexler mentioned the importance of interpretive panels, which detail the history and development of Sudbury. Mr. Greene commented that such interpretive signage could be included in the MassDOT budget. Ms. Suedmeyer agreed, noting that Commissioners input at this time was critical for such budgeting.

Ms. Warren asked about benches along the trail where interpretative panels could be located. Mr. Robinson noted that the BFRT Advisory Task Force recommended the same, with inclusion of bike racks as well. He suggested that such benching detail be included at the next SHC meeting next week.

Bridges – Pantry Brook

Mr. Robinson detailed the proposed design aspects for Pantry Brook:

- Full bridge replacement of collapsed bridge
- Proposed concrete arch
- Precast panels allow for easier constructability
- More durable than other arch types
- Ability for Town to choose façade

Ms. Suedmeyer mentioned the ability for wildlife to pass under the bridge, which follows State requirements.

Ms. Warren asked if there might be some way to use the granite abutments at a nearby bridge location or at Broadacres. Mr. Hagger asked if the team had looked at the facade plan of the bridge at the Wayside Inn. Ms. Suedmeyer confirmed that the bridge design at the Wayside Inn was being considered.

Bridges – Hop Brook

Mr. Robinson confirmed that the Hop Brook bridge would not require replacement, and listed several design options:

- Reuse existing steel superstructure
- Clean and repaint existing beams
- Replace decking with pressure treated timber

Mr. Robinson indicated the best option would be to retain the abutments as they are, remove the steel beams, install a thinner profile steel beam with nail-in plates; and inclusion of new decking and rails. Mr. Jergensen commented that such design is common along the rail trail.

Mr. Hagger presented related design considerations. The Commissioners agreed with Mr. Hagger's design recommendation.

Select Board Member Charlie Russo thanked the Commissioners for scheduling timely meetings to provide immediate attention to the BFRT Historical and Cultural Artifacts topic.

Draft ADA Self-Evaluation

Present:

Resident and Commission on Disability (COD) Member Kay Bell, asked that SHC Members submit all ADA Self-Evaluation comments to ADA@Sudbury.MA.US; and noted that such comments would be used to formulate the next stage of the transition plan.

Mr. Hagger directed Commission Members to page 4 of the "Report by Institute for Human Centered Design: Town of Sudbury Part C – Self-Evaluation Summary, "dated February 2021. Mr. Hagger addressed the section titled: "Alterations to historic properties under the ADA," and page 15 which addressed The Hosmer House and the Loring Parsonage.

Ms. Warren noted there were other historic Sudbury buildings listed in the ADA Self-Examination including: The Flynn Building, The Goodnow Library (on the National Register), and the Sudbury Town Hall. Ms. Warren recognized the importance of ADA compliance/alteration as it effects the Town historic structures, and reiterated that such modifications could be guided by historic preservation standards.

Mr. Hagger noted that SHC comments must be submitted by March 16. Commissioners referred to various related pages of the Self-Evaluation Report. Related discussion took place. Ms. Cebra agreed to provide comments regarding the Hosmer House. The Commission reviewed each item regarding Hosmer House ADA renovations.

Approval of January 5, 2021 and January 19, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Hagger stated the minutes would be reviewed at the next meeting.

Date for Next Meeting(s)

Mr. Hagger stated that the next SHC meeting was scheduled for March 9, with focus on BFRT features; and the following meeting was scheduled for March 16th with coverage of the Demolition Delay Bylaw, Eversource and historical aspects.

Adjourn

Mr. Hagger motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Warren seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous 6-0; Greene-aye, Hagger-aye, Trexler-aye, Warren-aye, Cebra-aye, Bautze-aye

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:21 p.m.