

**RAIL TRAIL CONVERSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Town of Sudbury, Massachusetts  
Minutes of Meeting on April 24, 2008**

**Present:** Pat Brown, Betty Foley, Madeleine Gelsinon, Bob Hall, Bridget Hanson, Nancy Powers, Dick Williamson

**Absent:** Debbie Dineen (ex officio), Dennis Mannone (ex officio), Chris McClure, Jennifer Pincus, Bill Place (ex officio), Eric Poch, Carole Wolfe

**Also Present:** Resident Jim Nigrelli.

**Community Input:** Mr. Nigrelli had no comments at this time.

**The Meeting was convened at 7:35 P.M.**

**Past Minutes:** The minutes of the meeting on March 27, 2008 were approved following the deletion of a few question marks where things had not been clear.

**Old Business**

***Updates***

*CPC Project Status* Pat Brown talked briefly about the failure of Atlantic Engineering to request permission to cut vegetation within 100 feet of wetlands. A cease and desist order had been issued to Atlantic Engineering when it was discovered they were in violation of the town and state bylaws. Debbie Dineen, the Conservation Coordinator, and Bill Place, the Town's contact with the surveyor, said that the consultant had been informed of that requirement. The matter has not yet been resolved to the best of Pat's knowledge, but the surveying continues. Pat circulated a copy of questions Bridget Hanson had asked of Debbie in an email message, which also included Debbie's responses. Debbie confirmed that she will be the Conservation Commission's contact with Call of the Wild, the wildlife consultant, who will probably be ready to present findings around the second week of May. Debbie also confirmed that Bill Place is the Town's contact with the survey and wetlands delineation by Atlantic Engineering.

Chris McClure was to check with Debbie Dineen about the files on the Bike Path Committee, but he was not present, and it was not known whether he did or not. Later in the meeting the question arose as to the present status of the Title Search, which Town Counsel had indicated last fall was sufficiently complete to allow work on the other two CPC projects to move forward. No one present knew whether in fact that project has been formally completed. Pat will inquire if it has been.

Pat called attention to the article in the Metro West Daily News of April 18, 2008 concerning "Sweeping changes for open meeting laws in the works". The major change would add "electronic convening" to the kinds of meetings that must be open to the public, e.g. emailing, video conferences, instant messaging. None of the proposed changes would alter the way the RTCAC has been operating, as the Committee makes no attempt to convene through electronic media.

*Meeting with the Board of Selectmen (BOS):* Pat asked if there was anything else beside the progress on the Notebook that she should present at that meeting. Later in the present meeting a draft of a "press release" prepared by Bridget Hanson was reviewed and considered appropriate

for the presentation that will take place on May 13. The document is an update on what has been happening in the last year concerning the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail in Sudbury. It is not intended specifically for the selectmen, but rather for residents attending the meeting who have not kept abreast of the many developments. Members have been asked to review it carefully and suggest changes they think would improve the report. Several members will accompany Pat to that meeting to provide assistance should she require it.

Pat has set up a training session on April 29 with Mark Thompson, the Information Services Administrator, to learn how to post documents directly from her own computer to the Committee's website. This should make the postings much more efficient and give the Committee much more control over the Notebook, its formatting and continual updating. Pat will ask the Town Clerk if she must be notified about all of the postings.

Pat also reminded those present that there is a scheduled meeting of the MassHighway Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Coordinating Committee on May 7 in Arlington. She will attend and invited other members to join her.

Dick Williamson noted that the 25% design for Phase 2a of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) has been approved by the towns of Acton, Westford and Carlisle and sent to Mass Highway.

Pat also noted that Concord Town Meeting will consider four warrant articles about the BFRT beginning at 7:00 P.M. on Tuesday, April 29. Three of the articles present different 25% design alternatives. Apparently they were scheduled early in the meeting because the issues surrounding the design have been extremely contentious.

### ***Project Tracking for the Notebook***

Eric Poch was again unable to attend the meeting so there was no report.

## **Subcommittee Reports**

### ***Commercial/Agricultural Subcommittee***

Madeleine Gelsinon reported that she had sent inquiries to four of Sudbury's farmers but had not yet received replies from any of them, not surprisingly as this is the farmers' very busy time of year. The remarks at Town Meeting by John Donovan, co-chair of the Agricultural Commission, were noted with satisfaction. Mr. Donovan proposed that perhaps the Commission could serve as a mediator in resolving difficulties for the farmers arising from development of the trail.

### ***Conservation Subcommittee***

This subcommittee has not met since the last RTCAC meeting. As noted above, however, Bridget learned from Debbie Dineen that Call of the Wild will be submitting a written report in the next few weeks. Bridget asked Debbie if a public hearing would be useful. Debbie will ask Diane Boretos, the principal investigator, her thoughts on the question, but it will be up to the town manager to decide if a public meeting will be held. Nancy Powers was of the opinion that a public hearing might not be necessary but a press release describing the progress could be useful.

The Discussion turned again to Atlantic Engineering's violation of the conservation bylaws. Bridget said that the company, which should have known better, had not yet met with the Conservation Commission to determine what action was necessary, but she thought that the violation was not a particularly egregious one. (*Debbie commented in her review of the Minutes that, "This is not the position of the Conservation Commission".*) Bridget noted in passing that she had also talked with Jody Kablack, town planner, about making sure that there is

coordination between the rail- trail and town-center planning groups. Jody assured her there would be. Specifically, they talked about the possibility of engineering the traffic signal at the trail crossing on Hudson road as a slave to the signal at the intersection of Concord and Hudson roads so that it would not impede traffic on Hudson road when trail users are crossing.

### **Submission of Items for the Notebook**

The assignments made at the March meeting listed below were confirmed. There were no new ones.

Assabet River Rail Trail: Bridget Hanson

Minuteman Bikeway: Dick Williamson and Betty Foley

Nashua River Rail Trail: Jennifer Pincus and Nancy Powers

Wachusett Greenway: Chris McClure and Carole Wolfe

### ***Public Information on Other Trails***

Bridget had circulated a report based on a telephone conversation she had with Michele Ciccolo, the assistant town manager in Hudson, on July 7, 2007 and on the Assabet River Rail Trail's website . Several changes were made in her report, and the Committee then approved its inclusion in the Notebook. She also indicated that some of the information requested by the BOS, such as mission statements, might not be available in public sources,. She asked for a clarification of some questions, which several members remembered as originating with Dennis Mannone upon request by the BOS. Bridget will talk with Dennis about the list to see how it might be improved. Bridget also wondered why the conservation items she had prepared for the Notebook were not yet posted on the website. Pat replied that she was waiting until she learned how to post documents from her home computer, which should be very soon.

### **The Meeting was Adjourned at 8:42 P.M.**

### **Community Input**

Mr. Nigrelli had no comments.

Submitted by Bob Hall on May 5, 2008

Resubmitted on May 20, 2008

Approved May 22, 2008