

Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

May 6, 2021

Meeting held via Zoom

Call to Order

- The May 6th, 2021 meeting of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee (“BFRTAC”) was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by co-chair Nat Welch

Attendees

- BFRTAC Members: Nat Welch, Richard Fahlander, Adrienne Boardman, Carol Steele, John Soden, Dorcas Miller.
- Town Representatives: Marcia Rasmussen, Director of Planning and Land Management
- Members of the Public: Approximately 15 community members were present.
- Recorder: Adrienne Boardman

Approval of Meeting Minutes

- A motion was made to approve the April 1, 2021 meeting minutes and seconded
- The April 1, 2021 minutes were approved unanimously by roll call vote

Town Update Memo - Ms. Rasmussen presented the monthly project report, which is incorporated as an addendum to the meeting minutes.

- Phase 2B: Anticipated completion date of Summer 2022; bridge over Rte 2 will be installed this summer with a lot of construction activity over the next several weeks
- Phase 2C: Transportation Advisory Committee will be meeting next Wednesday to further discuss ways to alert riders that their wheels should be walked through Junction Park
- Last ½ Mile of Phase 2C: Revised 75% plan has been posted and is ready to submit to the Sudbury design consultant
 - Co-Chair Nat Welch: Asked M. Rasmussen for guidance on how long the public has to submit comments
- Deborah Ellwood (173 Stone Root Lane): Asked for clarification on the referenced delay with Sudbury; M. Rasmussen clarified that Concord’s plans are to be submitted with Sudbury so timelines need to align with regards to reviews and submissions
- Stephen Goodman (Jennie Dougan): Asking for an update on the dead trees that are supposed to be replaced along the trail; M. Rasmussen indicated that the State will not be replacing any additional trees, so she will need coordination with the Town of Concord

Committee Business

- Overview of the Nashoba Regional Greenway Project
 - Postponing for two months

- Update from the Middle School Building Committee
 - Kristen Olsen (SMMA) provided overview of the Project Goals
 - Feasibility Phase is wrapping up and the project will transition into Schematic Design, with a report out expected soon
 - Michael Dowhan (SMMA) provided an overview of the site plan and indicated that the lower fields - those adjacent to the BFRT - are not being modified as part of the project scope
 - Kristen Olsen (SMMA) walked through the project schedule
 - Question from Co-Chair Richard Fahlander: Are there any provisions to provide a paved path from the BFRT to the CMS Building?; Kristen Olsen indicated that the project scope would not include any work to the lower fields or path
 - Discussion around steep grade changes making it difficult
 - Comment from Co-Chair Nat Welch: Given the proximity of the trail to so many school it would be a shame to not look into ways to improve connectivity between the trail and schools - Asked what the process would be to understand how that could be approached; Kristen Olsen indicated that comments could be submitted on the Schematic Design and also suggested that the BFRTAC write a letter to the Building Committee to express the need to explore connectivity options
 - Pat Nelson also emphasized the impact that a letter can have
 - Committee Member Dorcas Miller also suggest that the letter could discuss connectivity to nature as part of the learning process - particularly for science classes
 - Stephen Goodman (Jennie Dougan): Explained that access from the BFRT to the school is possible so perhaps should not a priority for the project - also explained the importance of keeping the trail aesthetic as it is today and appreciates that the tennis courts idea was not pursued further
 - Co-Chair Nat Welch also suggest that a connector path does not need to be paved and that more natural materials could be used
 - Discussion around targeted timing for a site walk with SMMA
 - Motion made for Committee Member Adrienne Boardman to draft a letter to the building committee that will advocate that they explore connectivity options between the BFRT and CMS - letter to be reviewed at June meeting; motion was seconded and approved unanimously by roll call vote

- Trail Count Week
 - Only 4 people in Concord have signed up for counting so more participation is needed; Recommendation to have something sent through News and Notices in to any Concord residents who have subscribed
 - Other ideas include: NextDoor, Facebook Groups
 - Barbara Pike confirmed that sign up information was included in the Friends Spring Newsletter

- Richard Fahlander suggested that Green Thumbs could support the Trail Counts effort
- Marcia Rasmussen suggest that a handout of bicycle safety could be advantageous if tables are possible during upcoming West Concord event
- Committee Liaison Reports
 - None
- Member Questions and Comments
 - Tunnel Art Project is on hold with Alana for now given her location and availability; but Committee discussed that the project could be pursued with the Umbrella or other location organizations - further discussed at upcoming Committee meetings

Correspondence and Public Comments

- Steven Wright (137 Stone Root Lane): Referenced that the 75% plan version he reviewed showed a 50ft gap between ornamental fencing and split rail fencing and that his understanding was that it was being addressed in further edits; M. Rasmussen confirmed that the Consultant/Designer has made the correction and the update version has been reposted
- Josh Galper (65 Stone Root Lane): Asked for another site walk through with the 75% plan now updated to ensure there's an understanding of what is being submitted; M. Rasmussen is supportive of the idea but suggests that we wait for all comments to be received and the plan updated to ensure we would be reviewing the final 75% version
 - Tentatively targeting June; BFRTAC will propose a date between now and the June meeting - perhaps combined with the Natural Resources walk through
- Ann Sussman (534 Old Marlboro Road): Expressed concern about safety with car speeds down Old Marlboro Road, specifically opposite Old Rifle Range which people use as an unofficial crossing; Explained that speed studies have been done and that she feels the speed limit before the crosswalk is too high; Suggested that the BFRTAC should explore what speed limit should be before the trail crosswalk
- Kelly Roberts: Expressed support for the natural graffiti in the tunnel
- Stephen Goodman (Jennie Dougan): Safety has been a consistent focus for the BFRT and advocated that the BFRTAC should help keep the Town accountable; Co-Chair Nat Welch explained that our charge would include the cross walks, but we cannot address overall speeds on the parallel roads
 - Motion made to designate Richard Fahlander to prepare a letter on behalf of the BFRTAC to the Transportation Advisory Committee to advocate that they review the safety of BFRT crosswalks and safe access to trails; motion was seconded and approved unanimously by roll call vote
- Barbara Pike: Indicated that through a grant from the Friends all of the crosswalks in Acton are being upgraded to automatic so that when a trail user approaches the intersection the crosswalk lights are triggered by motion sensors

- Deborah Ellwood (173 Stone Root Lane): Asked for further confirmation of the transition of fencing and gap in fencing
- Josh Galper (65 Stone Root Lane): Observed that more people has led to more trash by White Pond, asked if the BFRTAC is engaged with other Town Committees about the concern of trash; Committee discussed who the appropriate party would be and it was suggested the Select Board
 - Carmen Jaquier indicated that the White Pond Advisory Committee is working with town on trash barrel options and that discussions are ongoing

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Next Meeting – Thursday, June 3, 2021 via Zoom