

Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

May 25, 2023

Hybrid Meeting (141 Keyes Rd & Zoom)

Call to Order

- May 25, 2023 meeting of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee (“BFRTAC”) was called to order at 7:12PM by co-chair Nat Welch

Attendees

- BFRTAC Members: Nat Welch, Adrienne Boardman, Mary Beth Barker, Dorcas Miller, Sam Stearns
- Town Representatives: Marcia Rasmussen, Director of Planning and Land Management; Erin Stevens, Transportation Manager
- 3 members of the community joined
- Recorder: Adrienne Boardman

Approval of Meeting Minutes

- A motion was made to approve the April 27, 2023 meeting minutes with an added clarification to the “no bids” mention to specify it is in reference to prison space; motion was seconded and approved by roll call vote

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

- Erin Stevens was introduced as the new Concord staff liaison as Ms. Rasmussen is retiring as of the end of May
- Phase 2A-2D: No further updates from Friends regarding the new signage
- Phase 2B: Paving completed on May 9th and a final site walk was conducted on May 16th; a compiled list will be distributed the week of May 22nd; pending finalization of a few small items before officially being completed and open
- Phase 2C: The order for planters was delayed due to sizing concerns but are now on order; Documentation was submitted to MBTA today (5/25/2023) to review the proposal plan for Junction Park (including planters, signage - anything within 30-ft of rail line is subject to MBTA review); Meeting scheduled for next Tuesday with Town Counsel to discuss the proposal for the contemplative space near to the prison cemetery; 14 trees located near Williams Road will be replaced as part of the Fall 2023 planting program; Willard 5th grade service day is being held on June 1st; West Concord Junction Cultural District mural has been unveiled; Town Manager’s office has received several

complaints about abutters to the trail dumping leaves in the BFRT right-of-way - a letter is being prepared and will be sent out to all trail abutters in early June

- Nat Welch asked if signage was indeed going to be moved to the top of the Powder Mill serpentine trail; Marcia confirmed
 - Nat Welch indicated that former BFRTAC member Richard Fahlander (399 Old Bedford Road) is interested in helping coordinate a bridge opening event; Richard indicated he's spoken with Kyle Stapleton (aid for Rep. Simon Catalado) to coordinate with other public figures to attend an opening; date is pending
 - Barbara Pike (Border Road) shared that the State gave 7 days notice for the groundbreaking in Sudbury and the site location changed several days later; Peter Sutton from MassDOT was the Emcee. Barbara suggested the Friends might be able to provide a cake if requested
- Last ½ mile of Phase 2C & Phase 2D in Sudbury: Groundbreaking ceremony was held on Saturday, May 20th; interpretive panels for White Pond and the Vernal Pool are being created and BFRTAC members were asked to review and provide comments

Committee Business

Nomination & Voting New Chairs

- Motion was made to appoint Nat Welch and Adrienne Boardman as co-chairs of the Committee; seconded and approved unanimously by roll call vote

Recap from Select Board Meeting on Updated Charge

- Nat Welch attended the Select Board meeting on May 22 and recapped the discussion and the three main topics were discussed: 1) remove "wildlife" from the purpose, 2) suggestion that committee membership should include at least one member who is not an "active cyclist", 3) add wording "enabling passive recreation and the enjoyment of nature" to background section
- Mary Beth Barker suggested slight change to wording where "disabled" is referenced; Nat Welch took note of the change
- Discussion around "non cyclist" and how instead to include that the members should represent all groups of users as defined in the purpose
- Motion to approve the updated draft to be recommended to the Select Board; seconded and approved unanimously by roll call vote

Junction Park Update

- Once planters arrive there will be a site walk scheduled for stakeholders to discuss placement; cannot be scheduled until planters arrive

Other Member Business

- Nat Welch described an incident which was brought forward where a gentleman's wheelchair got stuck in the rail trail crossing; an email has been sent to the Town Manager and Select Board
 - Mary Beth Barker indicated that she would look into a crossing device on the tracks to improve safety
- Nat Welch recapped a safety issue that was raised on Nextdoor regarding gardening tools intentionally being placed in Junction Park; he indicated Green Thumbs leadership has been made aware
- Dorcas Miller raised disappointment in how the Town has handled Jerrow Park; Marcia Rasmussen shared that limited information can be shared given ongoing litigation, but indicated that information has been shared to the CPC website indicated that the project is 80% completed and the timeline for completion is unknown
 - Nat Welch suggested that he would connect with our Select Board liaison as a starting point

Public Comments

- Barbara Pike (Border Road) encouraged the Committee to remain focused on inclusion and improving access to the Trail and raised parking challenges, bench shortages, and lack of bathroom access; Barbara also asked for an update around the safety of the islands
 - Committee supported the suggestion and Marcia Rasmussen mentioned that the land opposite the serpentine path by Powder Mill is municipal land and could theoretically be the site of a small parking area; also mentioned that an update was pending from Aaron (Public Works) regarding the islands

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17PM.

Next meeting on Thursday, June 22 @ 7:00PM