

Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

June 3, 2021

Meeting held via Zoom

Call to Order

- The June 3rd, 2021 meeting of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee (“BFRTAC”) was called to order at 7:02 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 and Terri Ackerman, Select Board Liaison
- Members of the Public: Approximately 10 community members were present.
- Recorder: Adrienne Boardman

Approval of Meeting Minutes

- A motion was made to approve the April 22, 2021 meeting minutes and seconded
 - The April 22, 2021 minutes were approved unanimously by roll call vote
- A motion was made to approve the May 6, 2021 meeting minutes and seconded
 - The May 6, 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
 - Construction continues; the next construction meeting is expected to be held on June 17th.
- Phase 2C
 - The Transportation Advisory Committee met on May 12th to discuss additional signage and pavement markings that would be located around Junction Park to inform cyclists and others on wheels to walk their wheels through Junction Park. Concord Public Works is following up.
 - Co-Chair Richard Fahlander attended the Commission on Disability meeting on May 20th to hear their concerns regarding the need for more rest stops along the BFRT and questions about the lack of a ramp at the parking area south of the Nashoba Brook bridge.
 - Renovations will be needed; it was determined that the plans were misread during construction and there was indeed supposed to be a walkway
 - Co-Chair Richard Fahlander asked for confirmation that M. Rasmussen would inform the Commission on Disability; confirmation received
- Last ½ Mile of 2C

- The revised 75% design plans were sent by Greenman-Pedersen (Concord's designer) to Fuss & O'Neill (Sudbury's designers) for submission to MassDOT in May 2021.
- Notice of intent was filed with the Natural Resource Commission; meeting on June 16th to discuss
- Community Connections Grant
 - Once a firm delivery date is available the state will consider an extension to the original grant timeframe

Committee Business

- Review of Trail Counting Events
 - Thanks to all those who participated; over 5 days and 3 locations all of the time slots were filled and staffed as planned
 - Next trail count event is planned for October
 - Committee discussion around observations during trail counting timeslots; including ways to educate the public about the BFRT during the next round of trail counts
 - Ellen Quackenbush: Participated in the BFRT counting as well as observations at Junction Park to view the numbers of people who dismounted their wheels vs continued to ride through - an estimated $\frac{2}{3}$ continued to ride through.
 - Co-Chair Nat Welch mentioned that the Transportation Advisory Committee is working on the issue
 - Deborah Adleman (1 Abbott Lane): Asked if once the counts are in, is there a benchmark conducted? Expressed surprise at the number of e-bikes that were on the trail.
 - Co-Chair Nat Welch explained that once the data is gathered it will be presented to the BFRTAC and we can have a discussion around ways to review and use the data further
 - Committee received an email from one of the counters who was located by PowderMill who noted that 37 people came from the tunnel, of which 65% came through with beach gear (seemingly coming from / going to White Pond)
 - Discussion around current signage in the area; and question around whether these individuals might be local or parking somewhere and using the tunnel to access the cove
 - Steve Wright (173 Stone Root Lane): Question around signage plans for the last $\frac{1}{2}$ mile plan and what can be posted now (ex: No Trespassing)
 - Greg Mueller (95 Stone Root Lane): Raised the concern that any signage posted is often removed; Suggested that individuals may be parking on PowderMill or at Willard School; Concern that individuals are ending up on the Trust beach
 - Ellen Glendon (64 Stone Root Lane): Noticed that cars are parking on PowderMill, just beyond the culvert (by the last "No Parking" sign).
- Committee Liaison Report

- Select Board has started to address the topic of the Reformatory Branch Trail; being discussed with the Transportation Advisory Committee
 - Reminder that Town Meeting is on Sunday, June 13 at 1:00PM
- Draft of Letter to the Middle School Building Committee
 - A motion was made to approve the draft letter to the Middle School Building Committee which addresses the need for accessibility to/from the BFRT and the new Concord Middle School site
 - The letter was approved unanimously by roll call vote
- E-Bikes
 - Co-Chair Richard Fahlander advised that Concord needs to obtain a comprehensive view of current regulations and should not put rules into place that are Concord-specific
 - M. Rasmussen also support the approach that Concord should look to broader regulations and compile what is known
 - Barbara Pike: Discussed that there are 3 categories of e-bikes (low powered pedal assist bicycle to ones that have throttles and can go up to 28 mph); Recreation Dept in Action referenced that they do allow e-bikes on the trail in Acton
 - Deborah Adleman: Expressed willingness to help gather information and raised the concern of safety needing to be a priority
 - Jim Coutre: Indicated that the assumption that e-bikes should be allowed on the BFRT is not accurate; there is serious safety implications
 - Co-Chair Richard Fahlander: asked if someone doesn't adhere to rules on BFRT now, what enforcement options exist?
 - Terri Ackerman: Question around town rules vs state rules and how much Concord can enforce
 - M. Rasmussen offered to discuss the topic of enforcement with the Concord Police Chief and create a white paper to provide an overview of the topic and current regulations; discussion around "who makes the rules" and the role of Public Works, Select Board, etc.
- Member Questions and Comments
 - Carol Steele's tenure with the Committee is coming to an end; the Committee expressed appreciation for her contributions
 - Potential change to July meeting date due to Committee member availability; will poll availability and schedule a new date

Correspondence and Public Comments

- Deborah Werneburg: Presented that First Connections has received a grant for a series of "Story Walks" and would like to consider BFRT for a Back-to-School story walk in August

- Adrienne Boardman: supportive of the idea, especially given the proximity to daycares, preschools, and Concord schools; a great way to further encourage families to explore the trail
- Dorcas Miller: expressed hesitancy given the disruption to the natural environment and a slow down of pedestrian traffic on the trail
- M. Rasmussen proposed that the the area past the Commonwealth Bridge might be a good location given quieter foot traffic and more ample parking
- Deborah Adleman: Proposed that Battle Road might be a possible location for the Story Walk display
- A motion was made to recommend that the Town support the Story Walk between Commonwealth Ave and the Brook and seconded
 - The motion was approved 5 to 1 by roll call vote
- Deborah Ellwood: Raised question about signage and fencing for the last ½ mile plans
- Jim Coutre: Asked for a sense of when MassDOT might have feedback on the 75% plan; M. Rasmussen explained that previous phases of planning was around 6 months, but will reach out for status updates along the way
- Terri Ackerman: E-Bike issue is an important one; Transportation Advisory Committee working on Junction Park and Reformatory Branch Trail and will advise Select Board
 - Story Walk: Suggested that Marcia confirm the right next steps and perhaps Select Board review isn't required
 - Confirmation on # of Members needed on the BFRRAC
Nat is working with Town Clerk

The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Next Meeting – Thursday, July 1, 2021 via Zoom (to likely be rescheduled)