

# Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee

## Meeting Minutes

September 21, 2021

Meeting Held via Zoom

### Call to Order

- The September 21, 2021 meeting of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee (“BFRTAC”) was called to order at 7:07PM by co-chair Nat Welch

### Attendees

- BFRTAC Members: Nat Welch, Richard Fahlander, Adrienne Boardman, Dorcas Miller, Deborah Adleman, John Soden
- Town Representatives: Marcia Rasmussen, Director of Planning and Land Management and Matt Johnson, Select Board Liaison
- Members of the Public: Approximately 10 community members joined
- Recorder: Adrienne Boardman

### Approval of Meeting Minutes

- A motion was made to approve the July 14, 2021 meeting minutes and seconded
  - The July 14, 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
  - The concrete decking on the bridge is expected to be poured at the end of September/beginning of October. Work is planned for a weekend or evening so it will not be done over an active travel lane.
  - The wildlife culvert under Rte 2 was completed; seeding will be done in the next couple of weeks
  - Final approval has been given for the informational display and the final display panel is expected to be delivered later this fall.
  - The fencing subcontractor has been working on the fencing near the Police Horse Barn and is expected to start installation of the timber rail fence later this month.
- Phase 2C
  - Concord Public Works Engineering Division staff has asked the contractor who is performing construction at the Sudbury Road/Seven Star Lane crosswalk to prepare an estimate for the curb cut at the Nashoba Brook bridge in hopes that work might be done this fall.
- Last ½ Mile of 2C

- MassDOT conducted a meeting with the design consultants from Concord and Sudbury in late August. Delia Kaye (Natural Resources Director) attended on Marcia's behalf and reported the following:
  - Minimal excavation near Powder Mill Road to achieve appropriate drainage.
  - Timber Rail note was determined to be too detailed and would conflict with the "Contractor Means and Methods"; the language would be added to the Special Provisions section of the specifications.
  - Consistency needed between the GPI plans (Concord) and the Fuss & O'Neill (Sudbury) plan sets except where there are specific differences (ex: no centerline painting in Concord).
- GPI consultant Matt Kearney on the topic of fencing/railing - restating the official position that fencing or railing will not be allowed except for the safety of trail users (reference to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) guidance "Chapter 5: Design of Shared Use Paths").
- Marcia has asked Matt to prepare a follow up letter to MassDOT requesting a formal response to the fencing/railing proposed for the Concord portion of the trail.
- Matt also noted that fencing requires a minimum 5-foot clearing behind the fence; pointed out that plants don't always grow back in these cleared areas
- Matt indicated there are some questions about the "private property" signs proposed, with the observation that such signs should be located at the property line rather than at the edge of the trail for accuracy.
- Given MassDOT's position that fencing/railing may be determined to be non-participatory, Marcia has prepared an application to the Community Preservation Committee to include a request for the BFRT in the amount of \$300,000 (the application #8).
  - Request includes \$250,000 for the fencing and railing (estimated at \$185,000 and \$65,000, respectively) plus \$50,000 for additional features along other parts of the trail (such as benches, bike racks, signage, landscaping, etc.).
  - One aspect of the CPC process is to submit letters of support, which the BFRT Advisory Committee may want to consider.
- Phase 2D Sudbury
  - The Sudbury PM reports that they are proceeding with 100% design plans, Sudbury remains on track

- Chapter 91 determination has been issued, no more permitting or licensing is required
- Community Connections Grant
  - Town requested an extension of time for completion of the equipment installation to December 31, 2021, has been granted.
 

Reasons for the delay were related to complications in getting the contract finalized, and delays in obtaining a quote/estimate from the equipment manufacturer.

The current lead time is about 8-10 weeks, so delivery of this equipment is expected the end of September/early October. Concord Public Works staff will be able to schedule the installation of this equipment this fall once it has been delivered; with installation expected by end of this year.
- Adrienne Boardman: Seeking confirmation that the request to CPC is for the remaining of fencing not deemed approved from MassDOT, not the fencing plan in its entirety; Marcia confirmed and also indicated CPC has funded BRFT related items in the past
- Nat Welch: Outlined 3 possible pathways ahead including: Path 1: MassDOT approves the plan as currently documented, Path 2: Additional fencing is viewed as non-conforming by MassDOT so they will only install what is “required”, so CPC funding is used for full plan; Path 3: MassDOT and CPC both decline requests
- Steve Wright (137 Stone Root Lane): Seeking clarification if portions of the western side were deemed appropriate to be fenced for safety concerns; M. Rassmussen: Believes only one location on the western side (near the vernal pools) would meet the requirements for safety
  - Marcia suggested abutters could also write letter of support prior to CPC public hearing and encouraged participation at forums and Town Meeting
- Deborah Ellwood (173 Stone Root Lane): Asked if CPC dollars could be used to upgrade the fencing if MassDOT chooses to only install a 3-rail fence; Marcia explained it will be a question of what resources are available at the time that the project commences
- Jim Coutre (114 Stone Root Lane): Asked if the MassDOT determination/response has been posted for public record; Marcia indicated it is not yet received but will be posted once available

### **Committee Business**

- Committee Liaison Reports
  - Richard Fahlander attended disability commission meeting; Junction Park was a topic of discussion and a letter has been sent; also the issue of tubing on the bike

repair station was raised might need to be extended so it can reach all types of bikes on the trail

- Community Preservation Committee Application Discussion
  - Discussion around content of the letter that the BFRTAC should send to the CPC; reference can be made to a letter from 2014, as well as summarizing the Committee discussions and discussion with abutters that has taken place
  - Discussion around how to approach the CPC request given that we are still awaiting a formal response/decision from MassDOT; Marcia advised we should pursue both so there are no delays
  - A motion was made to authorize Richard Fahlander to draft and send a letter on behalf of the BFRTAC to the CPC in support of the \$300,000 grant; approved unanimously by roll call vote
- “Envision Concord Bridge to 2030”
  - Matt Johnson (Select Board) provided context on the objectives and approach and walked through the template that Committees are being asked to complete
  - Approach discussed was that one member of the Committee would review the plan and pull-out the items applicable to the BFRT and send to the Committee members to respond and compile
    - Decided that Marcia will review the plan and send to the full Committee the areas requiring input/attention; members to come to next meeting with ideas for discussion
- Plowing the BFRT During Winter
  - Marcia provided a brief background on the Towns perspective; has been previously discussed under the topic of maintenance but in general the Committee has not supported plowing; however discussion likely warranted around the Concord Depot and Rte 2 bridge; however currently no vehicles would be available for plowing or budget allocated to support plowing
  - Committee discussion around benefits and drawbacks
  - Barbara Pike (118 Border Road): one of the promotions with the trail was around commuter access to the train station; if the Rte 2 bridge is being plowed then would need to coordinate with Acton
  - Matt Johnson (21 Winthrop St): Rail trail is a fantastic resource for cross country skiers; paved road crossings are an aggravation to skiers
  - No further action taken at this time
- Member Questions and Comments
  - Concord Middle School Building Committee: BFRTAC had sent letter to support the idea for an accessible path; no updates yet regarding plans and/or site walk however Nat Welch is in contact with Pat Nelson

- Trail Counts: Discussion around whether BFRTAC should pursue an Oct trail count
  - Discussion around dates to target in October and whether to maintain the scale previously complicated or reduce
  - Nat Welch to start the process (including dates and sign up process) and will inform previous volunteers and seek BFRTAC support to fill slots
  - Barbara Pike (118 Border Road): Mentioned that we should consider including the Pedal Power location again to help with forecasting of those who are traveling towards Concord

### **Correspondence and Public Comments**

- Barbara Pike (118 Border Road): Referenced the map that Jill Moonheron had made and asked if when 2B is completed the intent was to update the existing map that includes that section, or whether a separate map would be needed; Marcia indicated that as the section is completed the existing maps will be updated by Jill and that the Friends could print/distribute
- Jim Coutre (114 Stone Root Lane): Pointed out that sun comes up on east side (White Pond) and wants to ensure that meeting minutes correctly reference the correct side of the trail being referenced in the fencing discussion
- Richard Fahlander: Mention that that BFRTAC is still looking for additional members and anyone interested to complete the volunteer card on the Town website.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25PM

Next Meeting – Thursday, October 7th at 7:00PM