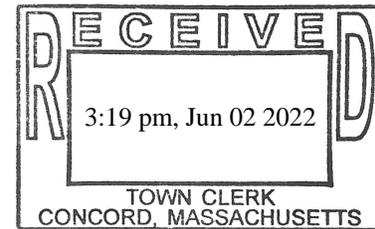


Commission on Disability Special Meeting
January 20, 2022, 5:00 p.m.



Present: Jean Goldsberry (Chair), Marybeth Barker, Susan Bates, Jennifer Brooke, Karen Young

Guest: Delia Kaye, Director, Division of Natural Resources

The special meeting was called to discuss access and design of a proposed trail along the Assabet River Bluff.

Following brief introductions, Delia presented an overview of the plan. The Town is working with housing and land trust interests, including the Concord Housing Development Corporation, Concord Land Conservation Trust, the Concord Housing Foundation, and the Sudbury Valley Trustees to acquire two parcels of land adjacent to the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (406 Old Marlboro Road and 2B Upland Road) and for housing and conservation purposes. She is preparing a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant application to fund a portion of the open space acquisition, and would like to include information on steps that we might take to improve accessibility for all users. There are existing trails on the site, including a lovely Assabet River Bluff trail. Delia is considering that a stable trail, graded to meet ADA requirements, would be a wonderful addition, with access off the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and a viewing area overlooking the Assabet River. The goal is to create a loop trail with benches and signage and she asked what other amenities should also be considered?

The discussion that followed included both ideas and concerns to consider in the early planning stages. Delia asked how can we make this trail interesting, appealing, and make it a meaningful experience. There will be no parking adjacent to the trail and ideally the trail will be designed to discourage bike riders.

Among the suggestions offered:

Install bike racks at the intersection of the BFRT and the accessory trail.

Add benches and/or possibly a deck with an overlook and handrail.

Add signage in Braille which could include descriptions of nature/wildlife, or even reference to materials used for benches and how these relate to the surroundings.

Width of the trail should be 5 feet which would allow for 2 persons to pass each other.

Grading must meet ADA requirements

Surface of trail is extremely critical. Possible options to consider include a boardwalk, packed earth and pine dust, and shredded bark mulch, among others. The surface material should be carefully researched and well thought out for durability, maintenance, etc.

Make the trail a sensory experience, a place where users can experience the woodland environment at a different speed and scale, an intimate place to sit, listen and appreciate the view.

Take into consideration any disruption to wildlife as this is currently a sanctuary for birds and animals and should continue to serve as an oasis for the living creatures who inhabit this land.

Jean expressed her deep appreciation for being asked to contribute at this very early stage of planning. Delia thanked the members for the many recommendations and contributions, many of which she would like to incorporate into the grant proposal. The most immediate issue is the acquisition of the property and she urged us to follow developments and especially consider contributing to fund raising efforts.

Meeting adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Young
Member, Commission on Disability