

Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

March 30, 2023

Hybrid Meeting (141 Keyes Rd & Zoom)

Call to Order

- March 30, 2023 meeting of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee (“BFRTAC”) was called to order at 7:01PM by co-chair Nat Welch

Attendees

- BFRTAC Members: Nat Welch, Adrienne Boardman, Richard Fahlander, Dorcas Miller, John Soden, Mary Beth Barker, Sam Stearns
- Town Representatives: Marcia Rasmussen, Director of Planning and Land Management
- Members of the Public: 5 members of the community joined
- Recorder: Adrienne Boardman

Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Minutes from January 26, 2023 will be reviewed and voted for approval at the April meeting

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

- Phase 2A-2D: Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail held a follow up meeting of BFRT community representatives to review plans for signs; consensus on the language and graphics, but differences of opinion on the size needed in different communities given existing conditions in the various communities - the four locations in Concord where these rules will need to be replaced: 1) Commonwealth Ave parking lot; 2) Nashoba Brook bridge parking lot; 3) south side of the Main Street and Commonwealth Ave. intersection; and, 4) Powder Mill Road serpentine path.
- Phase 2B: Completion date has been extended to end of July 2023 to address remaining items; MDOT may be unwilling to host a formal opening of the bridge until the contractor has completed all required work, however will be revisited in April
- Phase 2C: A formal “canvas” of the proposed short-term site improvements to Junction Park by MBTA staff is required; application with supporting documentation was submitted to the MBTA this week. (See addendum for more updates)
- Last ½ Mile & Phase 2D Sudbury: Progress continues.
- Discussion around quantity and location of planters needed in Junction Park; Marcia reminded of the location and purpose of each; anything unneeded can be relocated to Nashoba Brook Bridge area

- Discussion around delay in Phase 2B completion; appropriate next steps for planning an official opening ceremony
- Richard Fahlander shared that there was another site visit for the work to be done for the prison cemetery; group is working together on a proposal
- Plans underway for June 1st Service Day for Willard

Committee Business

West Concord Cultural District Sign Update

- Ann Sussman (from West Concord Advisory Committee) shared the proposal for a West Concord Cultural District sign to be posted in two locations
- Ms. Sussman provided background including: West Concord became a cultural district in 2017; 4 signs have been posted to date on roads coming into town; the signs posted on BFRT would be smaller versions of those road signs (near Nashoba Brook Bridge to the North and near repair kiosk to the South)
- Motion to approve the two West Concord Cultural District signs as outlined; seconded
 - Motion passes unanimously by roll call vote

Member & Committee Structure Update

- Terms of members expire at the end of the month of Town Meeting; 3 of 5 are being resubmitted for a second term including: Nat Welch, Adrienne Boardman, and Dorcas Miller
 - Tracey Hansen is moving out of town; John Soden has already completed two terms, and Richard Fahlander will not be continuing for a second term
- Nat Welch provided an overview of the approaches being considered with the Select Board including the idea to lower the total number of members required on the Committee from 9 to 7 or 5
- Richard Fahlander revisited the idea to fold the BFRTAC into the Transportation Advisory Committee; Mary Beth Barker supported the idea to lower the number to 7 (preferred over 5) and suggested that we continue to pursue the connect to the TAC in the future; John Soden indicated that the Committee used to have 5 members and it worked well
- Nat Welch referenced that the Committee Charge is long and outdated; some editing and simplification would be beneficial
 - Nat presented some drafted responsibilities for an updated Charge
 - Richard Fahlander asked about referencing Community Preservation funds
 - Mary Beth Baker wonders if it might be easier to recruit members with a simplified charge

Other Member Business

Correspondence and Public Comments

- Barbara Pike (118 Border Road): Suggested that yellow, rubber flags be added to the islands as they are in other Towns; Rule sign at Powder Mill Road is at the bottom of the ramp and asked if it can be relocated to the top of the ramp so BFRT users can review before entering the trail; Mural unveiling is scheduled for May 20
 - M. Rasmussen said that the suggestions for the rubber flags was forwarded to Public Works and Traffic Management and all agreed that they would not be installed; but they will explore painting the outside of the islands to call attention to their presence; the suggestion regarding the safety sign will be forwarded for consideration by the Town
- Stephan Bader (7 River Street): Asked for clarification on the current status of e-bikes being allowed on the trail; M. Rasmussen said that they are not currently allowed, but acknowledged the Town recognizes they are being used - further discussions are required to revisit the regulations; Committee members discussed the need to revisit conversations this year
- Barbara Pike (118 Border Road): Indicated that in Acton the interior of the islands are painted to look like bricks to help them stand out (perhaps a more subtle approach to a bold border); M. Rasmussen explained that Concord's island are granite so they will not be painted
- Mary Beth Barker raised a safety issue around the location of the crossing button when exiting Junction Park and crossing the road towards Powder Mill; the button isn't reachable/accessible when in a wheelchair or mobility device; M. Rasmussen explained there are unfortunately limitations given the placement of gas lines and underground utilities; Nat Welch referenced an extended panel he has seen in Cambridge to help improve accessibility of the crosswalk button

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13PM.

Next meeting on Thursday, April 27 @ 7:00PM