

APPROVED AS WRITTEN 3/14/2019

Southbridge Trail Committee Meeting
Thursday, February 14, 2019
Town Hall - Evelyn Petrelli Room

Meeting called to order at 6:30pm

Attendance: Paul Van Camp, Kevin Buxton, Ken Pickren, Pat Charron

Guest: David Adams, Gus Steeves, Maureen Doyle

Motion made by Kevin, second by Paul to approve the January 10, 2019 minutes. Unanimous.

Ron San Angelo stopped in with a short update on the \$2000 Heritage Trail costs that the committee requested. Karen is on board and it is hoped to include in accounting budget that is being submitted to Town Council.

Status of QVRT - erosion is main component of funding. Ron was finally able to reach Chalita, seemed willing to do a 99-year lease at \$1 per year, paperwork to be done. Lease is needed before anything can be done; red tape is frustrating. Town Council was concerned with insurance, however, as with any town property that is used by the general public town has capital coverage with limited liability unless overt neglect.

Trail Committee needs to stress importance of trails to the Town Council: an asset to town and tourism.

Paul told guests that our committee is looking for input from them on a variety of issues and how the town would like issues dealt with.

QVRT - How to go forward

David suggested we start with an idea: what do we want it to look like? We gave a rundown of what the committee hopes to accomplish, to include:

- 10 ft wide, 5' shoulders; not necessarily asphalt surface, mostly stonedust.
- places for scenic overlooks
- benches
- kiosks
- parking areas
- historic informational kiosks/stations

Discussion ensued about options for use as well as involvement of Economic Development; promote through high school students; trail committee cannot do on own, need to utilize DPW, however, Heather has alot on plate. We somehow need to get a portion of her time.

Another element is security: drug concerns in Section 3; clean ups, lights; once accomplished these would be advantage to town.

An initial plan for the completion is required with the actual work done in phrases.

There is \$15,000 in a account from rails already removed, this can only be used for QVRT, however, could be used to create a visual presentation for promotion purposes.

Rail removal dialogue included how to go about it: someone to cut bolts, collect and count; actually cut rails (lengths?) and remove to staging area.

D&D has scale; payment is for gross ton; we may wish to have bond for this process.

Where do we begin?

Start with Town Council and community to promote project; get the dialogue started.
Site map of trail, beginning to end, of its path through town - Bay Path may be option for drawings.

What did Dudley do to get where they are, they are a lot further along than we are.
It was noted that most of their work was done by one man - Ken Butkiewicz with considerable support from the town and their DPW. Again acknowledged importance of DPW involvement. Would need an engineering study by either an outside firm or town engineer. Our consensus is that we cannot depend on town DPW.

We also need to know property lines and what kinds of issues this project may bring up with abutters.

Ken contacted CMRPC as they may have QVRT maps. He will be meeting with Rosemary on 2/15; we need to determine boundaries.

Start with rail removal which will involve evaluating boundaries, deciding best access points and determining possible issues that may require ok from Ron, assessor, town planner, etc.

Use temporary easements for the rail removal work. This will probably include finding out what the town did in the past; identify the abutting owners; lawyer(s)?; agreements with owners for necessary work as well as length of process (date to date, if possible), how they can expect property to be left, etc.

Points to consider:

- Who has conversation with abutters? (explain trail, work involved, access and cooperation, etc)
- Have meeting with abutters rather than individually?
- Sale of steel will provide funds - no cost to town folks
- Authorization from MA DOT RR Division not yet complete
- Bay Path students for draft work? Carpenters, if needed?

Kevin did up a form to use in obtaining endorsements from local business, promoting trail as a commercial benefit. Kevin offered to contact Rosemary about Business Association.
Noted there is a new bike shop going into the Big Bunny plaza.

Discussed different alternatives for bridge at rotary section of trail; Switchback options, use of Maple Street; possible high cost of sufficient bridge. Ken didn't see switchbacks as a feasible option. Ben Tully of Tully Engineering estimated a rotary bridge cost of \$400,000. Morris Street bridge base is stable enough to use for foot traffic. Does bridge need to hold an ambulance?
These is a down-the-road issues.

It was noted (based on information received from Town Manager) that the Trail committee was formed by a by-law not the town charter. It is a five-member group with no alternatives. Town Clerk said changes are more easily made with a by-law than with a more involved process for charter changes.

Paul feels that we will not accomplish what we need to do by meeting every other month. We should meet more often, either formally or informally.

In context of a bigger plan, what is the best way to do specific things?
Rail removal should not involve the DPW. It will require access points.
Ken see the following as access points: Rte 131/Golden Greek - truck/tractor

American Optical lot - truck
Behind Dunkin Donuts
Morris St - tractor
Old Woodstock Rd - tractor

Supply land owners with name of company, number of trucks, size of trucks, work dates

Meeting to start preliminary work: Tuesday, February 19th 10am Town Hall

Spring Maintenance Schedule

Do we want to have individuals oversee any given trail - they would check for issues and pick up trash as needed.

Or work as a committee on specific dates.

Decided to work a committee, Paul will establish a schedule beginning with April 28th, with Sunday as the work day. Maybe promote to kids at high school as a public service option.

Heritage Trail

As mentioned earlier, \$2000 funds request to be included in a budget to be approved by Town Council. Funds will include stone dust where needed, new kiosk, work on current kiosk, rail paint. Paul spoke to new West Street School principal for letter of recommendation.

New Committee Member

Ron interviewed Ray Arnold for our open position on February 14th. Ray's application now goes to the Planning & Development sub-committee for review and then to Town Council for final approval.

Our next regular monthly meeting is March 14, 2019