

Taunton River Trail Committee

Summary of the Meeting of October 23, 2012

Held at the Boyden Center, 1298 Cohannet Street, Taunton, MA

(Please mark your calendars: The next meeting of the Trail Committee will be held on Tuesday, November 27th, at 10:00 am at the Boyden Center. Committee meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 10:00 am at the Boyden Center.)

Discussion topics

NPS kiosk designs: Lee Steppacher said that Stephanie Williams will be the designer for the kiosks and interpretative panels for the four sites along the Taunton River Trail. Ms. Williams designed the interpretive panels for the Sudbury, Assabet and Concord River project. Preliminary designs will be available in early November, with a final selection in December.

Historic photos are needed for the panels and SRPEDD will assist the project in assembling a common map for the kiosks. Content will be prepared first, then the frame design will follow. Installation is targeted for the Spring.

This NPS \$10,000 grant (titled “Pathways to the Taunton” and an NPS Challenge Cost Share grant) will be used to design and construct four interpretive panels for four sites: (1) Riverfront Park at the Weir in Taunton; (2) Sweet’s Knoll; (3) Dighton Rock State Park; and (4) Somerset’s Waterfront Park. Grant funds will be used to retain a designer and work with the Taunton Wild and Scenic River Stewardship Council, the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Taunton River Trail Committee on the project.

Follow-up: Lee will distribute the preliminary kiosk designs to the committee members when they are received from the designer in November. Members of the committee will provide Lee with historic photos that could be used in the panels. SRPEDD will provide Lee with an electronic version of a base map that the designer can use to develop a common map for all four panels.

New grant from the US National Park Service: The Taunton River Greenway received an award of planning assistance from the US National Park Service Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA). The application was prepared by

Bill Napolitano and Don Sullivan at SRPEDD. The assistance will focus on the Slade's Ferry Landing project part of the Taunton River Trail but will include other geographic areas of the trail as well. The Taunton WSR Stewardship Council will be the advisory committee for the RTCA Slade's Ferry Project.

Charles Tracy, RTCA project manager, said that the assistance is somewhat flexible and is based on what we need. NPS especially likes the combination of blueway, land trail and greenway that are part of the Taunton River Trail and would like to work on all three goals. He would like to add strength to the efforts of the Taunton River Trail Committee in whatever area we identify so that we show progress at the end of the project term. The assistance will extend from October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2013.

Follow-up: Mr. Tracy will contact MA DCR about how to open up a walking trail on that part of the ROW owned by DCR at Sweet's Knoll. As part of this, he will discuss with DCR the possible use of a Recreational Trails Grant to fund the work (deadline for the grant is February 1, 2013). He will also investigate applying for National Recreational Trail status as a way of promoting the trail and river.

Interim Taunton River Trail on Route 138: Adam Recchia of SRPEDD noted that DOT, Region 5, will not approve Route 138 as a bike route but will allow "Share the Road" signs to be erected. We established a goal of having the Share the Road signs up in the Spring.

Follow-up: Adam will confer with the state bike coordinator on the need for bike counts and procedures.

Taunton River Trail Greenway: The updating of the landowner data base was delayed by transferring such a large file electronically. The file will need to be sent by disc.

Ariel Burgess, who is an Americorps intern working on this project through the Wildlands Trust, will also be assisting the Town of Dighton in updating the town's open space and recreation master plan as part of another project for the Wildlands Trust. However, that work will complement the TRT greenway goals.

The City of Taunton is also updating its open space plan, and it has retained technical assistance to work on the project.

Follow-up: Karen at SRPEDD will send Ariel the landowner files in a format that can be opened.

TRT brochure: The Taunton River Trail needs a glossy tri-fold brochure explaining the goals of the concept.

Follow-up: Al Lima will send a letter of inquiry to the Stewardship Council, through Bill Napolitano, requesting funding for the brochure.

Funding from the Dighton Community Preservation Committee: We have been asked by the Dighton CPC whether we wish CPA funding for the TRT project. One possibility is to apply for funding for signage for a bike route along Pleasant Street in Dighton.

Follow-up: Adam has recent cost estimates for signage from the South Coast Bikeway and will bring those estimates to the next meeting.

TRWA annual meeting: The annual meeting of the Taunton River Watershed Alliance will include a presentation on the Taunton River Trail by Bill and Al. The annual meeting will be held on Saturday, November 10th from 4:00 to 6:30 pm at Bristol Aggie. A walking tour of Sweet's Knoll will be conducted beginning at 3:00. All are welcome to attend the annual meeting.

Follow-up: Dick Shafer will contact Ron Medeiros to ask if he will lead the tour of Sweet's Knoll.

Legislator's forum: This is tentatively planned for February. Adam suggested incorporating the Taunton River Trail into the South Coast Bikeway forum that will be held in February.