

Taunton River Trail Committee

Summary of the Meeting of July 26, 2011 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, August 23rd 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.)

Present:

Richard Shafer, Taunton River Watershed Alliance
Scott MacFaden, Wildlands Trust
Sean Provencher, MA Department of Conservation and Recreation
Bill Napolitano, Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District
Carolyn LaMarre, Taunton River Watershed Alliance
Priscilla Chapman, Mass Audubon
Ronald Medeiros, landowner
Michael Horrigan, Taunton Municipal Light Plant
Craig Foley, Taunton Municipal Light Plant
Alfred Lima, Taunton River Watershed Alliance

Main Points of Discussion:

- **Report on the site visit to the southern section of the rail ROW:** Ron Medeiros, Sean Provencher and Scott MacFaden visited the two parcels owned by Ron on the southern section of the ROW near Muddy Cove. One parcel is 1.6 acres and the other is in two pieces totaling 2.8 acres. The 1.6 acre parcel includes the parking lot of the shingle building on Main Street and could be used for bike path parking. The other two pieces are permitted for a house lot.

There is a break in ownership between the southern end of the DCR rail line and the Medeiros lots; however, the DCR ROW ends at Somerset Avenue, so path users could go up Somerset Ave. to Main St., go down Second Avenue to Main St., then proceed a short distance up Main St. and get back on the ROW.

The southern end of the sections doesn't lend itself to continuing, so a logical break in the path would be at Muddy Cove Lane, where path users could quickly access Pleasant St. and continue on Pleasant into Somerset.

If Ron sold only the easement on the 2.8 acre lot, the opportunity would still remain to build a house on the lot.

- **Application to MA Recreational Trails Program:** Amanda Lewis will be leading a grant application workshop in Fall River tomorrow morning, and Al will get the information on whether DCR can apply for funds from its own grant program. We will discuss what to apply for at the August meeting.
- **Application to the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, administered by the NPS:** The application deadline is August 1st. Letters of support from three partners will be needed. TRWA, Audubon, Wildlands Trust and SRPEDD offered to send letters. The applicant will be the Taunton River Trail Committee, acting through the TRWA. Sean suggested that we contact Jeff Carter, SE sub-regional director, and Don MacKenzie, acting regional director, to let them know of the two applications.
- **Meetings with DCR officials:** The meetings with Ed Lambert and Brian Shanahan were cancelled by them. We will wait a while before we attempt to reschedule those meetings.
- **ROW owned by the Taunton Municipal Light Plant:** Mike Horrigan and Craig Foley attended for the TMLP. They noted that the TMLP owns the ROW from the Three Mile River to the Royce Aluminum site (Fifth Street). EOTC still owns an easement over this section whose dimensions are 30 feet wide by 27 feet high. The section from Fifth Street to the Weir junction is owned by EOTC. The line becomes active at the junction. The rail line was elevated in the area of Fifth Street, and bridges that spanned over Fifth, Fourth and Third Streets have since been removed. Other utilities buried in the ROW include a sewer line, a high-pressure gas line (abandoned) and the Aquaria water line to Brockton.

The recreational path would go through the middle of the TMLP plant property, therefore security issues would be paramount. The recreational path would have to be rerouted to go in front of the plant guard. Approval for using TMLP property is fairly straightforward, since it involves getting the approval only of the local TMLP board.

TMLP also owns the ROW spur that extends from the main line (just north of the Three Mile River) to Warner Boulevard. EOTC owns the rail, the trestles, the bridges and the space above the ROW.

- **NE Capital Corp. parcel on the Taunton River and the rail trail:** The attorney for the North East Capital Corporation got back in touch with Sean recently. The attorney said that the corporation does own the property, plus two other parcels in Dighton. They owe \$98,000 to the Town in back taxes and want to get out of it and take a loss. The attorney will be walking the site with a Town Assessor this week.

- **Aquaria easement:** Dick Shafer mentioned that the committee should look into the Aquaria easement that traverses the towns between its plant and the City of Brockton. The route of the water line is cleared and has an easement. Not all of it is rail trail, though.
- **Three Mile River Greenway:** Major public open space land (protected and semi-protected) exists along the Three Mile River. These sites include the Boyden Reservation, the Reid Farm, the Rocky Woods, the Mello land, a golf course and other properties. The greenway could be accessed by the rail spur owned by TMLP that extends to the edge of the Boyden Reservation at Warner Boulevard. The Three Mile River is navigable from its mouth through Taunton and into Norton. SRPEDD has been working with area towns and state agencies in studying the designation of this area as an ACEC.

Follow-up tasks:

- Al Lima will attend the grant workshop on July 27th led by Amanda Lewis to clarify whether DCR can be an applicant to the Recreational Trails Program and to get any other information relevant to the preparation of an application.
- Sean Provencher will follow up to determine if the ROW owned by Ron Medeiros is ready to be brought to the Lands Committee at its meeting in early September. He will review the issue with Jennifer Howard to determine if she likes the concept.
- Bill Napolitano will provide Sean with a copy of the 1994 report that includes a map of the trail. This will be critical in showing Ms. Howard and the Lands Committee that the Medeiros acquisition fits into a larger long-term plan.
- Al will prepare the application to the National Park Service for the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program and submit the application by the August 1st deadline. He will also get letters of support from the four agencies that agreed to provide them.
- Al will contact Jeff Carter to discuss the application to DCR's Recreational Trails Program that will be submitted in DCR's name and to get his support for the application. He will also contact Don MacKenzie about the application.
- Michael Horrigan and Craig Foley will provide the committee with copies of the plans that show the ROW owned by the TMLP.
- Sean will follow up with NE Capital following their attorney's discussion with the Town Assessors.
- Carolyn LaMarre will obtain a copy of the route of the Aquaria easement that extends from the plant to the City of Brockton for the next committee meeting.