

Taunton River Trail Committee

Summary of the Meeting of August 23, 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, September 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.)

Present:

Scott MacFaden, Wildlands Trust
Craig Foley, Taunton Municipal Light Plant
Bill Napolitano, Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District
Adam Recchia, Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District
Carolyn LaMarre, Taunton River Watershed Alliance
Ronald Medeiros, landowner
Alfred Lima, Taunton River Watershed Alliance

Main Points of Discussion:

- **Application to MA Recreational Trails Program:** Al Lima reported on the workshop on this funding program given in Fall River by Amanda Lewis on July 27th. If Iron Horse is to create the soft trail, what would DCR want to apply for, what specs would be used and what would be the cost of these standardized trail features, such as signs? Would DCR prefer a soft pavement or a hard pavement? Al and Bill Napolitano will prepare the application for the October 1st deadline.
- **Application to the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, administered by the NPS:** This application was prepared by Al and submitted on August 1st. The prospects of funding are slim this year, but we nonetheless threw our hat into the ring.
- **Meeting with DCR Commissioner Lambert:** Al met with DCR Commissioner Edward Lambert on August 19th to acquaint him with the advocacy efforts of the Taunton River Trail Committee. The Commissioner was familiar with the Sweet's Knoll acquisition and had visited the site. He noted that the Sweet's Knoll/Taunton River Trail could complement the larger initiative of DCR related to forming "Blueways" along major rivers in the Commonwealth. He showed an interest in the potential of the trail/greenway to connect the Gateways cities of Fall River and Taunton. He suggested that we meet with the staff of the DCR Planning Office to discuss the Taunton River Trail initiative and to review the Recreational Trails Program application in particular. Commissioner Lambert

added that the cost of operations and maintenance was of concern to him. He asked to be informed of our efforts as we progress.

- **ROW owned by the Taunton Municipal Light Plant:** Craig Foley presented plans showing that part of the ROW owned by the TMLP. Craig said that, because of security and operational issues, the path couldn't go through the TMLP property along the ROW. However, it could possibly be routed inside the property around the plant guard station. Possible complications are potential future TMLP expansion plans on the site and also a new subdivision on the edge of the property that could limit the siting of a relocated bikepath. Wetlands are also an issue. Wetlands were delineated in the 1994 master plan; Adam Recchia will have the plan scanned so committee members will have access to it.

Craig said that the cost to the TMLP would be an issue with the board. Adam noted that the cost of a bikepath is funded by the federal government (80%); state (10%) and local government (10%).

Bill mentioned that the TMLP board was willing to work on a path on its property when the original 1994 Taunton River Trail plan was in preparation by SRPEDD. Craig and Mike Horrigan will present the idea of a bikepath to the TMLP board to get a preliminary assessment of their views on the issue.

- **NE Capital Corp. parcel on the Taunton River and the rail trail:** Shaun Provencher sent the committee an email saying that the NE Capital Corp. property is still moving along and that the probate lawyer wants to clean up this portion of the estate. Shaun is hoping to present this parcel before the DCR Lands Committee at their September 15th meeting.
- **Medeiros ROW parcels:** Shaun is also planning to submit the Medeiros parcels before the Lands Committee on September 15th.
- **Remaining ROW owned by DOT:** Committee members were uncertain who owned the section of ROW in Dighton between what DCR now owns and what the TMLP owns. Ron believed that it was all auctioned off. Scott Mc Faden will research this issue.
- **Continuing the path through Somerset:** We discussed the need to open a dialogue with the Town of Somerset related to continuing the bikepath into that community on local roads. Bill Napolitano mentioned that Dennis Latrell, Somerset Town Administrator, is very interested in the planning effort related to the new and old bridges across the Taunton River and that this planning effort (coordinated by Nancy Durfee from SRPEDD) could be an entrée into a discussion of the bike route.

Follow-up tasks:

- Al and Bill will prepare a draft of an application to the Recreational Trails Program for review at the Committee's next meeting on September 27th. Al will contact DCR to determine standards and costs of site features to be included in the application.
- Al will ask Commissioner Lambert to contact the DCR Planning Office about meeting with the Taunton River Trail Committee either at the Committee's September 27th meeting or at a special meeting in Boston.
- Craig and Michael Horrigan will meet with the Taunton Municipal Light Plant board of directors to acquaint them with the Taunton River Trail initiative and to discuss how TMLP might wish to be involved in the effort.
- Adam will scan and send the complete 1994 plan to committee members [subsequently, the plan was found to be too large to send in this manner, and Adam had it put on the SRPEDD web site for access by committee members].
- Shaun will submit the Medeiros and NE Capital parcels to the Lands Committee at their September 15th meeting.
- Scott will research who owns the section of ROW between the DCR and TMLP parcels in Dighton.
- Bill will discuss with Nancy Durfee how to integrate the trail into current planning efforts in Somerset and how to approach the town on the issue.
- Carolyn LaMarre will obtain a copy of the route of the Aquaria easement that extends from the plant to the City of Brockton.