

Taunton River Trail Committee

Summary of the Meeting of September 25th, 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, October 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.)

Discussion topics

NPS kiosk designs: Lee Steppacher sent us alternative designs from various designers. Based on our feedback, she will recommend Stephanie Williams to design the interpretative panels for the four sites along the Taunton River Trail. Lee is aiming for having the text and photos together for the panels in late October so we can work with the designer during November.

This NPS \$10,000 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.

DOT and Interim Taunton River Trail on Route 138: Adam Recchia of SRPEDD researched, prepared and submitted to the regional office of DOT a request for an Interim Taunton River Trail on Route 138, according to DOT's Policy Directive P-98-003: Bicycle Route and Share the Road Signing Policy. The stretch of 138 in question is principally in Dighton, along that area of 138 that has not been reconstructed.

Based principally on the narrow shoulder width of Route 138 in Dighton (which varies down to 2 feet), DOT said that 138 in this area cannot be designated a bike route. DOT also did not approve using the Taunton River Trail signs on 138. The DOT regs also require bicycle rider counts, but those are not available. Adam will continue to work with DOT on at least placing "share the road" signs along 138.

Once the off-road bike path is built on DCR and TMLP rights-of-way, bicycle traffic would be able to be diverted from most of 138. (Hint: Let's move the bikepath along to get kids off of 138!).

Advancing the Taunton River Trail Greenway concept: Scott MacFaden introduced Ariel Burgess, a member of Americorps who is working with the Wildlands Trust and who will be assisting the TRT Committee in advancing the Taunton River Trail Greenway concept. Ariel will (1) update the landowner database for a core area one-half mile from the river, extending from Somerset to Taunton; (2) conduct outreach to landowners; and (3) make presentations in the three towns and follow-up as necessary. Welcome, Ariel; we look forward to working with you.

Slade's Ferry Project and the Taunton River Trail bikepath: Senator Michael Rodrigues and Representative Patricia Haddad have put \$800,000 in the Transportation Bond Bill for transportation-related improvements that would be part of Somerset's Slade's Ferry Landing project. This could include a bikepath. The Slade's Ferry Landing project will be at the important intersection of the Providence to Provincetown Bikepath and the Taunton to Newport Bikepath.

TRT brochure: The Taunton River Trail needs a glossy marketing brochure that describes the initiative in an attractive format, especially now that Ariel will be contacting landowners and would need the brochure to include in introductory correspondence. Bill Napolitano will approach the Taunton River Stewardship Council about obtaining funding for the brochure.

TRWA annual meeting: The annual meeting of the Taunton River Watershed Alliance will include a presentation on the Taunton River Trail by Bill Napolitano and Al Lima. The annual meeting will be held on Saturday, November 10th from 4:00 to 6:00 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.