

Rail Trail Advisory Committee
Weston Town Hall
February 25, 2019

Committee Member Attendees: Paul Penfield, Chris Stix, Gail Palmer, Phyllis Halpern, Mark Horowitz, Anne Benning, Mike McCarthy, Eli Mather, Eric Rosenthal (via phone)

Not Attending: Meg Kelly, Ellen Freeman Roth

Guests: Chris Fitzgerald (Recreation department), Ed Recka, Isabella Jancourtz

- 1) Approval of Jan 28 minutes: approved
- 2) **Citizens Comments:** Ed Recka, tree advisory committee representative. Interested in item #4 on agenda. Concern about our plantings and Eversource potentially clear cutting vegetation in the future. Doesn't make sense if Eversource comes along and kills off everything every 20 years. Paul P said he was not aware of clear cutting, only select vegetation (such as trees above a certain height). Ed said apparently there is mention of herbicide use in the Eversource letter but committee was not aware of the intention behind the use of the herbicide. Mark H suggested we contact DCR to understand intention of herbicide use. Q: about watering – Paul clarified that planting is good for one year from planting, notwithstanding potential draught. Isabella Jancourtz suggested planting wild flowers. Will discuss later in agenda. Eli will follow up with DCR about use of herbicide.
- 3) **Report and discussion on benches** – Mark reported that the granite benches were shared with the abutters at both trailheads. Want to get placement of benches in the bid package and get feedback from trailhead neighbors, before going to greater public. Neighbors have approved of suggested benches and placement. Nina Danforth suggested arbor-like living bench, and Isabella Jancourtz suggested alternatives to granite. Isabella – shared examples of benches made from 100+ year old oaks that are in use at Walden Pond. Other example suggested by Ellen Freeman Roth from NY High Line using reclaimed teak. Isabella also suggested in the Gun Club Road area multiple benches that are situated to encourage conversation/community. Also suggested having a port-a-potty that could be placed at Gun Club Road triangle. Weston 300 has talked about using paving stones instead of engraved on the benches. ChrisF (recreation) clarified that the only thing specified in the bid package is providing the concrete pad and could include installation of benches but benches themselves to be provided by outside source (RTAC/Weston 300 etc). EricR – there has been a lot of back and forth with recreation committee regarding type of benches. Wood may require more maintenance over time. Q: regarding reclaimed oak logs – can they be cut to size, cost etc. Chris F said Weston 300 is strongly interested in using granite benches. If we decide not to use granite we should include them in the discussion. MarkH will call to find out approximate cost of reclaimed oak logs, as well as ask Paul Jahnige at DCR about style that might be different from Wayland/Waltham. There was discussion about preference of consistent style of benches along Weston portion of trail vs different style benches throughout the trail. Generally there was a preference for the oak bench over the High Line teak (perhaps too modern). ChrisF – need to coordinate with RTAC/Weston 300 bench committee about potential of alternative benches before moving ahead with granite conceptual plans.

- 4) **Update on screening and Eversource vegetation clearing** – PaulP – DCR modified the planting plans that we submitted, without discussion with us. DCR created a new planting plan, same intention although differences in plant selection and placement. Changes included slightly smaller plants and fewer plants. DCR is fine with doing early summer planting vs spring planting. DCR will probably want to spend their money in this fiscal year but could roll our money into next fiscal year. Mark suggested we see the invoices of the money that is being spent in order to confirm that we are getting value out of the money that we are contributing.
- 5) **Update on trailheads at Concord and Church** – bids have been announced and will be opened March 20th. Mtg in early March to allow contractors to ask questions. MarkH hopes to attend that meeting. Tom Cullen of DPW will take over management of contract once contractor has been identified. Portions of the Church Street work will be delayed until Conant Road underpass is completed because access at Church Street is needed for heavy equipment.
- 6) **Policing issues** – Anne has scheduled a meeting for Friday 3/1 with Police Chief & Animal Control Officer to discuss issues that have come to our attention to date and clarify/confirm best channel of communication. Q: ask what their preference is for how to field complaints that may come through to RTAC, how can we best communicate that channel for complaints to the public. Do they have a plan in place? Has the Chief been in touch with other towns to see how they are planning on managing the process/complaints? What about night time use and policing. Bollards at Gun Club and Plain Road? There should be some kind of back and forth communication so that we are aware if they are getting complaints directly. Find out more about Bark Patrol that is being created by Animal Control Office and ConCom. ACO is responsible for animal control on town land (need to clarify that). Neighbors would like to know what safety/policing plans are in place (for those anticipating issues, and how to manage such issues if/when they occur). Does police know about cell reception along trail in case of emergency? Anne and Gail will attend that meeting and report back in next RTAC meeting.
- 7) **Update on signs and kiosks** – Anne reached out to Emily at ConCom. MichelleG confirmed they are looking at updated signage around town. Moving away from kiosks is the trend due to maintenance issues. She provided examples of alternatives. More permanent example could include: a map, if issues call X, bathrooms can be found X, QR code to scan for additional information etc. Discussed language on what to do, vs what not to do. Michelle suggested not adding additional dog signs at trail signs. Placement of signs could be further within trail on approach to trail (similar to where the temporary signs are now). Would be nice to have signage available at time of completion of the two trailheads this summer, if possible.
- 8) **Other new business** – Paul talked about the town clean up in April around Earth Day. Suggested RTAC get involved to help along the trail and get volunteers to help. Gail and Eli offered to help Paul with the initiative.
- 9) **Confirm mtgs. Next mtg. March 11th and will leave March 25th open TBD if needed.**
- 10) Motion to adjourn