

HOLLISTON TRAILS COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

MEETING DATE: August 6, 2014 at 7:00 PM, Holliston Town Hall

ISSUE DATE: November 19, 2014

PRESENT
VOTING MEMBERS: Marc Connelly, Martha Ellis, Ken Henderson, Matt Varrell and Robert Weidknecht

ABSENT
VOTING MEMBERS: Herb Brockert, Mark Kaplan

GUESTS: Ken Driscoll, Solect, Inc.
Miguel Linera, Solect, Inc.
Bill Dowd
Arlen Johnson
Rolf Briggs, Tree Specialists
Bobby Blair

PREPARED BY: Ken Henderson

COPIES TO: Jay Marsden, Board of Selectmen
Beth Liberty, Finance Committee
Paul LeBeau, Town Administrator
Elizabeth Greendale, Town Clerk
Karen Sherman, Town Planner

1. **Meeting Minutes.** Matt Varrell motioned to accept the minutes of July 15, 2014, Martha Ellis second and was approved 4-0-0.
2. **Fund Raising.** Arlen Johnson presented a plan to raise money for local non-profit organizations. He presented a brochure to the Committee. He is affiliated with the Masons. Our benefit would be raising awareness of our trail and raise money. The walk will be held on October 12, 2014 in Milford as an initial event. Arlen Johnson was directed to Ed Daniels, "Friends of" for fund raising events.
3. **Solect Solar.** Ken Driscoll and Miguel Linera, both from Solect, Inc. made a presentation as to the trespass tree cutting they were responsible for along the rail trail near Hopping Brook Industrial park. The goals of the solar farm were reviewed and how Solect was willing to build a parking lot and access path adjoining the Trail. On August 5, 2014 Matt Varrell met informally with Ken Driscoll and Miguel Linera on site to discuss how the Committee might proceed with mitigation resulting from Solect clear-cutting the wooded area on Trail property. The question of how the tree cutting incident occurred was explained at length by Ken Driscoll with many references of "assumptions" they made regarding property lines and the taking of trees during his explanation. Erosion control

barriers have been placed on the slope adjacent to the active trail to address the rocks that could roll onto the trail causing a hazard to trail users. Additionally, a barrier has been installed to alert equipment operators to stay away from the rail trail property. Previously, photo records and measurements were made by Robert Weidknecht shortly after the tree clearing, providing evidence for quantifying the value of trees lost. The issue of Solect posting a bond to ensure full completion of reparations was discussed and will be deferred until contact with Peter Tartakoff, building inspector is made. Each board member posed questions that clarified points already discussed. Marc Connolly voiced his distress over the loss of the total tree cover over that portion of the Trail. He also cited that the marked boundaries were very well followed until the last day of cutting along the rail trail portion. Rolf Briggs of Tree Specialists, 140 Washington St., spoke as to his experience with issues of trespassing and tree cutting on another's property making the point that these situations can be very expensive. He offered his resources to oversee the planning and assessment process, selection of species and design. He also stressed a bond as very desirable to ensure completion of the reparations. Robert Weidknecht spoke that a sub-committee will form to work with this issue. Matt Varrell shared how another tree cutting incident had been resolved as a way to give us some direction. Ken Driscoll stated that design plans will be submitted to the board as soon as possible knowing that Conservation Commission will need to approve plans near water, etc. Bill Dowd, 29 Shaw Farm Road referred to the Bullard St solar project and the lessons learned dealing with development along property lines. He pointed out that the Building Inspector could withhold the operating permit if plans weren't completed versus a bond. Ken Driscoll made further comment that a bond would be considered and concluded his remarks by stating the Solect is committed to rectifying the situation to the satisfaction of the Town of Holliston.

4. **Bogastow Brook Viaduct.** Mary Greendale, Roy Avenue, presented a plan for getting the Bogastow Brook Viaduct (aka 8-Arch Bridge) registered as an historic site. Grants are more available if a site has this designation. There aren't strict restrictions imposed on the landmarks but it does preserve them for the future. It was suggested that the tunnel under Highland St be added to the process since the tunnel has issues that need repair/restoration as well. With an August 15, 2014 due date for filing the application, Mary requested that any information (photos, etc) be forwarded to her. A motion was made by Ken Henderson to support Mary Greendale's efforts to acquire historic designations of the Bogastow Brook Viaduct and Highland Street Tunnel. Seconded by Martha Ellis, approved 5-0-0.
5. **Eagle Scout Project.** Chris Kerstgens, Eagle Scout project that included the removal of railroad ties near Hopping Brook and the addition of a picnic table near Little Folk Farm is completed. Marc Connolly will send a letter of thanks to Chris.
6. **Downtown Visioning.** Mary Greendale's Downtown Visioning Study results were reviewed. They included many positive items regarding the rail trail.
7. **Storm Damage.** A micro-burst occurred on July 28, 2014 and affected the trail surface, including ruts along the trail near the Highway Department ramp. Smoothing of the surface was suggested to fix that area.
8. **Transportation Improvement Program.** Robert Weidknecht is meeting with Mass DOT on August 27, 2014 to discuss how funding may be re-allocated to the Trail project.

9. **Environmental Bond Bill.** The Environmental Bond Bill will go to the Governor for action this legislative session with our hopes that the money is released (\$1.2 million) for further land acquisition of the rail bed from CSX.
10. **Stone Pillars.** P.J. Kilkelly was given the go-ahead to continue the stone wall construction work at the Cross Street Trail entrance.
11. **DCR 2012 grant .** South Street to the Milford line will be completed with stone dust surface soon. A work party is needed (Herb Brockert's request) to reinstall a fence at Zain Circle that was removed for the Trail construction. Also, railings are to be installed along the bridge near South Street and Herb Brockert will set the time table for this.
12. **DCR 2014 grant.** More information was requested regarding the protection of historical sites along the Trail.
13. **Community Preservation Act funding.** The Trails Committee is planning to seek CPA funding before the fall town meeting to request \$660,000 to purchase the rail bed from Cross St to Hopping Brook. We may also receive a PARC grant of \$400,000 this fall that could offset the amount needed from the town. It was decided to propose the full request of CPA funds (\$660,000) since the PARC grant is not definite. Matt Varrell suggested asking for more than \$660,000 since there are other unfunded projects that we need to address as well. After discussion, Robert will approach the Community Preservation Committee about which proposal would have the greatest support from the CPC.
14. **Phipps Tunnel Drainage.** The Highland Street tunnel will need 125 feet of drainage pipe to improve conditions through the tunnel to alleviate ground water accumulation and this needs to be done this fall. No date was set.
15. **South Street to Milford Construction.** Leaf blowing is needed along the stretch from South Street to Milford before grading can occur. Marc Connolly volunteered to spend some time on this project.
16. **Celebrate Holliston.** The Trails Committee agreed to have a booth at Celebrate Holliston, September 20, 2014 at Goodwill Park.
17. **Chris the King Lutheran Church Cleanup.** Chris the King Lutheran Church offered to do a clean-up along the Trail. Robert Weidknecht will discuss this further with the group.
18. **Solect Solar Tree Cutting.** Returning to the Solect tree cutting issue, Marc Connolly asked if Rolf Briggs would help establish a true dollar value and damages along the Trail. An escrow account was also raised as another way to secure the money that will be needed from Solect for reparations of the Trail and adjoining property.
19. **Site Meeting.** Matt Varrell proposed an additional trails meeting for Friday, August 15, 2014, at 6 PM at Hopping Brook Road to begin a punch list of needed items to be completed and paid for along the Solect section of Trail.

20. **Following Meeting.** Next meeting is set for September 2, 2014, 7PM
Motion to adjourn at 9:43 – Robert, seconded Marc C, motion approved 5-0-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'RW', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Robert Weidknecht, Chair