



# TOWN OF SWAMPSCOTT

## RAIL TRAIL DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ELIHU THOMSON ADMINISTRATION BUILDING  
22 MONUMENT AVENUE, SWAMPSCOTT, MA 01907

### MEMBERS

RYAN CONNER, CHAIR  
MARCI BENSON, VICE CHAIR  
KIM NASSAR, CLERK  
MICHAEL HAMILTON  
MARY ANN O'NEILL  
ALEXIS RUNSTADLER  
RALPH SOUPPA

# NOVEMBER 20, 2017 MEETING MINUTES

**Time:** 7:00pm – 9:00 pm

**Location:** Swampscott Town Hall, First Floor Conference Room, 22 Monument Avenue

**Members Present:** R. Conner, K. Nassar, M. O'Neill, A. Runstadler, R. Souppa

**Members Absent:** M. Benson, M. Hamilton

**Others Present:** 4 public attendees (C. Tierney, S. Hepburn, J. Bombardier, A. Calamita)

Mr. Conner opened the meeting at 7:05 pm.

## REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES FROM 10/23/2017

The Committee reviewed a red-lined draft of changes provided by Ms. Nassar and agreed that with the stated revision, the minutes were reflective of the October 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting. With no other questions or comments from the Committee, Mr. Souppa made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Ms. Runstadler, and unanimously agreed to by the Committee.

## REVIEW AND DISCUSSION – DESIGN CHARRETTEs

### Feedback and Attendance Records

Mr. Conner reported that 44 people signed in at the November 7<sup>th</sup> charrette and 85 people signed in at the November 9<sup>th</sup> charrette, although these numbers aren't completely reflective of attendance as not all attendees signed in.

Ms. Nassar inquired if Stantec would be in attendance at the November 20<sup>th</sup> meeting, as discussed at the October 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting, to review preliminary results from the charrettes. Mr. Conner replied that they would not be attending, and were likely in the process of assembling the results. The Committee discussed that it would be helpful for Stantec to attend a meeting in the near future to review the charrette results with the Committee.

The Committee briefly discussed that the leaves haven't fallen yet, therefore Stantec likely wouldn't be able to perform the aerial survey work until after Thanksgiving. The wetlands were surveyed on November 20<sup>th</sup> and surveying was expected to continue on November 21<sup>st</sup>. Ms. Tierney reported visual sighting of the wetland surveyors, noting their work both within and outside of the corridor.

With respect to the Site Walk, Mr. Conner reported that the town has not yet heard back from National Grid on a mutually agreeable date for walking the corridor.

Mr. Souppa noted that the attendance at the Thursday night charrette was impressive. Mr. Conner noted that while the Tuesday night charrette was more contentious, it provided Stantec with the ability to collect substantial data, and that John Hendrickson's (Stantec/Project Manager) table was very active.

#### **Information to Post to Website**

The Committee discussed what information from the charrettes should be posted to the project website, recognizing that there wasn't a formal presentation during the charrettes. Mr. Conner suggested that Stantec provide camera-ready photos of the visual boards that were displayed during the charrette, the large map and a note regarding attendance. The Committee agreed.

Ms. Nassar suggested that the project website also include a running tally of how the \$850,000 bond is spent given resident interest. The Committee discussed that it would be helpful to provide the higher level expense rather than detailed expenses (e.g., Stantec contracted price of \$240,000 rather than each bill paid to Stantec as services are provided).

Ms. Nassar also suggested that a list of grants the town is applying for to offset construction costs be posted to the project website, noting that Mr. Kane's presentation at the Rail Trail Information Meetings in the spring included a preliminary list of potential grants. Ms. Runstadler noted that a group of volunteers with grant writing experience are helping Mr. Kane research potential grants. The Town will be responsible for dispersing any funds received through grants. In addition, there is a non-profit group that is starting to work on fundraising for construction costs, which will work similarly in that the non-profit group will provide any funds received to the Town for distribution to the project.

## **DISCUSSION – NEXT STEPS**

#### **Wetland Delineation**

As previously noted, wetland surveying occurred on November 20<sup>th</sup> and was expected to continue on November 21<sup>st</sup>.

#### **Land Survey**

Also as previously noted, the aerial land surveying cannot occur until after the leaves fall, which is likely after Thanksgiving.

## **Preliminary Design Meetings with Trail Neighbors/Timing and Format**

Mr. Conner noted that while the Committee had discussed the idea of holding preliminary design meetings with Trail Neighbors, implementation had not been discussed.

Mr. Conner reported that the first schematic design from Stantec would likely be available in mid-January. As a result, the preliminary design meetings with Trail Neighbors should be targeted for mid-January as well. Mr. Souppa noted, and Ms. O'Neill agreed, that the time-frame between receiving the design and having preliminary design meetings with Trail Neighbors was very short. Ms. O'Neill further noted that the Committee should have time to digest and understand the preliminary design before the Trail Neighbor meetings. Ms. Runstadler noted that Mr. Kane and the Board of Selectmen are still in the process of meeting with Trail Neighbors regarding their feedback. The Committee agreed that Stantec should be present at the Trail Neighbor meetings to answer questions regarding the design.

Mr. Souppa suggested the Senior Center might be a good meeting place, and also suggested flexibility with the proposed mid-January date.

Ms. Runstadler suggested organizing the neighborhoods by topography as each section has its own set of concerns. The Committee agreed, and discussed organizing the trail into 4 sections:

1. Train station to Walker Road
2. Walker Road to the Jr. High School
3. Jr. High School to Humphrey Street
4. Humphrey Street to Marblehead line

Noting that sections 1 and 4 cover the largest number of homes/Trail Neighbors, the Committee discussed holding two sessions for those sections.

Ms. Tierney asked the Committee about the purpose of the design meetings. Mr. Conner responded that Stantec will bring a first pass of their proposed design schematic to the meetings and that there would be discussion between the Trail Neighbors and Stantec regarding feedback on the proposed design.

The Committee discussed potential dates and time frames for the preliminary design meetings, with Ms. Nassar noting that an hour is not enough time for adequate discussion with Trail Neighbors. The Committee agreed on two, two-hour sessions, between 4:00pm-6:00pm, and 6:00pm-8:00pm for the larger sections of the trail (1 and 4).

Mr. Souppa suggested that all Trail Neighbors be invited to one session, with stations for each neighborhood. Mr. Conner noted that Stantec, particularly John and Aleece, need to be available to Trail Neighbors for discussion and that one session wouldn't be conducive to those discussions. Additionally, Stantec will be able to answer technical questions which the Committee likely won't be able to answer. Mr. Conner also noted that the preliminary schematic design should also include the proposed intersection solutions.

The Committee generally discussed the format of these sessions, with Mr. Conner noting there would be a neighborhood specific presentation for each section. Ms. O'Neill noted that it would be helpful for participants to see the overall look of the trail, and Ms. Runstadler agreed that the whole trail should be shown. Ms. Nassar cautioned that the presentation of the whole trail not take time away from the opportunity for Trail Neighbors to provide feedback.

The Committee discussed potential dates for the preliminary design meetings, and agreed on January 23, 25, 30 and February 1<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Souppa noted that he heard from several charrette attendees that they were interested in privacy screening and masking, particularly that which would prevent people from cutting through backyards. It is expected that Stantec's landscape architect will provide options/solutions on this front. Mr. Conner noted that National Grid has specifications regarding plantings that will need to be considered.

## OTHER BUSINESS

In response to a Committee member question, Mr. Conner reported that the Town's contract with Stantec has not been signed.

Mr. Souppa noted that residents have asked him when the trail will be built, and will it be built all at once, or year by year? Mr. Conner replied that he believes it will be built as funds are available to proceed. Mr. Souppa further noted that if the trail is to be built piecemeal, that it needs to make sense, which Mr. Conner agreed, suggesting it is likely that the trail will be built from road to road for continuity. Mr. Conner also noted that the trail is to be ADA accessible.

## NEXT MEETING

The Committee's next scheduled meeting is December 18<sup>th</sup>.

There being no further business before the Committee, Ms. Runstadler made a motion for the Committee to adjourn, which was seconded by Ms. O'Neill and unanimously agreed to by the Committee.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.

Following the meeting's adjournment, Mr. Conner asked for any resident comments. Ms. Tierney engaged the Committee in discussion about the wetlands, including the purpose of the wetland delineation, and noting that flooding is a major concern on Nason Road due to existing vernal springs which bring water up through the ground. Mr. Conner noted that for any schematic design you would need to know the location of wetlands.

Ms. Tierney also inquired if it would be possible to have a discussion about re-routing the trail to One Salem Street; Mr. Conner suggested discussing this with Stantec. Ms. Runstadler noted that the wetlands are mapped by the state, so they are in known locations. Ms. Tierney expressed concern that a Board of Selectman had suggested filling in some of the wetlands. Mr. Souppa mentioned that he has experience as a drainage engineer, and that there are a few options with respect to wetlands, including replicating them (i.e., building a new one in a different area) or building a boardwalk over them. With respect to reducing flooding, building a detention basin might be a helpful measure.

Ms. Tierney also expressed concern that Trail Neighbors would only have one opportunity to review the design before it is finalized, and questioned the process in situations where a Trail Neighbor has substantive feedback on the design which Stantec implements – would the Trail Neighbor have an additional opportunity to review the design to confirm the implemented changes accurately reflect the feedback? Mr. Conner responded that the design charrette was the first time for feedback, the "living room" meetings were the second time, and the preliminary design meetings are the third.

Ms. Nassar suggested that the Committee should have the ability to suggest another round of review if necessary. Ms. Calamita noted that she requested a “living room” meeting, but has not been contacted. Ms. Calamita also mentioned that a man was arrested off the Marblehead Rail Trail with unknown chemicals, and that security is a concern, noting that trail users with good intention are not a problem.

Ms. Tierney inquired as to how construction easements are implemented when a Trail Neighbor’s fence is involved, and Mr. Conner noted such expenses would be included in the trail’s construction fees.

K. Nassar  
Clerk, Rail Trail Design and Construction Advisory Committee