



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

SEPTEMBER 25, 2017 MEETING MINUTES

Time: 7:05pm – 8:24 pm
Location: Swampscott Town Hall, First Floor Conference Room, 22 Monument Avenue
Members Present: R. Conner, M. Benson, K. Nassar, M. Hamilton, M. O'Neill, A. Runstadler, R. Souppa
Members Absent: None
Others Present: Pete Kane (Director of Community Development), Peter Spellios (Liaison of the Selectmen), Nick Weinand (resident), Trish Malphrus (Commission on Disability), Nico Flannery-Pitcher (Commission on Disability), "citizen" (wouldn't provide name)

Prior to opening the meeting, Pete Kane handed out copies of the Conflict of Interest Law and Open Meeting Law information packets from the Town Clerk and asked that all Committee members (after receiving the packets) sign the acknowledgement form that they had received the documents.

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

INTRODUCTIONS & WELCOME

The meeting started with everyone introducing themselves and providing some background.

Peter Spellios then provided some background as to how the Board of Selectmen liaisons (himself and Laura Spathanas) can help the Committee by providing them assistance to make sure the project moves forward. The charge given by the BOS is that the committee acts as support and a check of the consulting team. He noted that the rail trail project has been a long, hard discussion in the community, and this Committee includes people from both sides. Mr. Spellios pointed out that there's still political posturing that's happening even now, but the BOS is here to help make sure that doesn't make the Committee members uncomfortable. The Town (Selectmen, Town Administrator, and Director of Community Development) have met with and will continue to meet with neighbors to the rail trail in order to provide Stantec a property-by-property collection of concerns.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Mr. Kane handed out and went through a brief project overview. He explained that the future Swampscott Rail Trail is a nearly 2-mile linear park that will run on the National Grid utility corridor, the former Boston & Maine railroad branch to Marblehead. The trail will be a stone dust, 10-foot wide easement as recommended in the 2003 study report.

Mr. Kane explained that the Town released a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) in August that resulted in nine responses from project teams interested in handling the design & engineering of the trail. This was an amazing response for a project of this scale. Based on the evaluations and the interviews, he said that the Board of Selectmen had authorized the Town Administrator about a week ago to enter into negotiations with Stantec to provide those design and engineering services. He noted that tonight's meeting is meant more for the Committee to get together and kick-off their project but that Stantec will join them for the next meeting. Kim Nassar asked if Stantec will be at all future Committee meetings. Mr. Kane responded that it may depend on the specifics of the contract but the Town hopes to have Stantec available as often as possible.

MISSION OF THE COMMITTEE

Mr. Kane then moved the discussion into the mission of the Committee. He pointed out the charge that the BOS had given when they appointed the Committee, but said that the mission can be formulated by the Committee itself. Committee members were asked to think about "mission" ideas and bring those to the next meeting. At the next meeting, the Committee will finalize their desired mission which will then be submitted to the BOS for confirmation/approval.

ACTION: Committee members to bring mission ideas to next meeting.

COMMITTEE ROLES

Mr. Kane said that another important step for a new committee is to establish the roles of chair, vice chair, and secretary. He gave an overview responsibility of each role and then asked if anyone was interested in a specific role and to give a short reason why they would work well in that role.

Vice Chair – Marci Benson stated that's she's done large transportation projects like this in the past. She ran the community outreach element of those projects as well as management.

Chair – Ryan Conner owns a design firm and been in design/construction world for about 30 years. He most often project manages and works with engineers daily.

Secretary – Kim Nassar said she is a person that likes to take notes and writes.

MOTION: by Michael Hamilton to appoint Mr. Conner as Chair, Ms. Benson as Vice Chair, and Ms. Nassar as Secretary. Seconded by Ralph Souppa. Unanimous.

ACTION: Mr. Kane to provide Robert's Rules to Committee members and to provide Ms. Nassar with Committee letterhead and meeting minutes template.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Although not all Committee members had a chance to review Stantec's proposal, Mr. Kane asked Committee members if there were specific community engagement elements that they as residents thought would be helpful to keep the public informed and involved in the project.

- Mr. Conner would like a case study to know how Stantec handled and worked with the community on difficult topics (bridges, conservation lands).
- Ms. Benson suggested a project website.
- Ms. Nassar would prefer that we talk about ways to mitigate concerns rather than just show positive outcomes from other projects. She wanted abutter-specific meetings (street-by-street or neighborhood). Abutters should be heard earlier in the process.
- Mr. Spellios wants to make sure Stantec doesn't try to "sell" the project but instead to listen to concerns, evaluate them, and implement options.
- Nick Weinand suggested social media where people are already engaged (such as Facebook, the Patch).
- Committee members felt it would be important to have methods for collecting information outside of meetings.

SCOPE OF WORK

Since the contract with Stantec hasn't been signed yet, Mr. Kane also wanted feedback on the scope of work so that it may be incorporated into the contract (including the notes regarding community engagement).

- Mr. Souppa suggested surveying of the portion from Stetson Ave to train station (for future use, not for designing current trail).
- Mr. Souppa wanted to make sure they will deliver the easement documents.
- Ms. Nassar was concerned that wetland mapping is scheduled for Nov when vernal pools aren't viewable.

NEXT MEETING

The Committee then discussed the potential of a regularly-scheduled meeting but decided it would be best to determine that after their first meeting with Stantec.

Ms. Nassar asked that Stantec meet with Committee before contract is signed. Mr. Conner asked that a surveyor be available for that meeting if possible.

Committee members then reviewed their schedules and determined that Wed Oct 11 would work for everyone.

ACTION: Mr. Kane to send out meeting invitation to Committee members.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Hamilton @ 8:24p, seconded by Alexis Runstadler, unanimous.

S. Peter Kane
Director of Community Development