



South Hadley Bike/Walk Committee
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South Hadley Bike/Walk Committee (BWC) Minutes
February 21, 2018 | South Hadley Public Library

Present: Mariann Millard (Chair), Nancy Bozek, Larry Dubois, Doris Dubois, Lucia Foley, Marilyn Gass, Margaret Jodoin, Melissa O'Brien, Huguette Supinski

Not Present: Chevy

Guests: Hattie Finkel (Precinct D Town Meeting Member), Mary Beth O'Meara and Dennis Rochon (Property owners), Bruce Forcier and John Hine (Selectboard Members), Kenneth McKenna (District 2 Prudential Committee Chair), Paul Jahnige (Director, DCR Greenways and Trail Program), Peter Michaels (DCR CT River Valley District Ranger), Janice DeToma (Town resident), Frank DeToma (D2 Water Commission Chair)

Lithia Springs Reservoir Access: (continuation of the 1/31/2018 fact-finding meeting)

Visual aide of DCR's Interactive Property Map of Lithia Springs Reservoir and adjacent areas was used as reference point by Peter Michaels.

Hiker parking lot on Route 116 North causes confusion on how to reach Lithia Springs. Unsuspecting walkers are not aware they should not pass the chain link fence to reach Lithia Springs area. They go past the gate onto private property where the Private Property signs are not always present. Property owners and District 2 have liability concerns when walkers use their land. The currently unpublished protocol is to walk south on Rt. 116 onto Pearl Street and Lithia Springs Rd. through the open DCR gate to reach area.

Short Term Solution: Since the Hiker's Parking Lot sign issue is for the Town to resolve, Bruce Forcier and John Hine will discuss with Mike Sullivan the need for better way-finding signage on how to appropriately get to Lithia Springs.

Pete Michaels will scope out feasibility of creating a new 0.34 miles connecting trail from the Hiker parking lot on Rte. 116 to an established trail over DPW land (direction will be due north from the parking lot and first using the wide D2 dirt road). His analysis will include impacts to species and springs. Dennis Rochon will join him. In the event they need to go thru Mary Beth O'Meara property, she has given them permission to do so. Dennis stated he likes this new proposal and Mary Beth stated she would need to see the plan and discuss with her family before providing any feedback.

District 2 is not adverse to discuss selling any of their land they no longer use to DCR. Water Commission does use land for storage of scrap piping, hydrants and fill for which they would need an alternate location. Prior discussions did occur in 2009 but a sale did not materialize. Natural Heritage would need to weigh in. Transfer of D2 land to DCR would require state legislative approval.

Need to also pursue if there is a way for land to continue to be District 2's while allowing public access to the new 0.34 mile connecting trail. Paul Jahnige shared that if not charging an access fee for recreational purposes, the State Regulation Use Statute limits private owners from liability as long as there is no willful or wanton negligence.

In discussing other currently established trail routes, distance from the Notch Visitors Center via existing DCR trails and private property is 2 miles one way to the reservoir. The terrain is not that difficult except for one area that is a bit more challenging. BWC members stated that this route presents logistical challenges for length of time and trekker ability on public treks. Old Mountain Road access could also be used (although no distance was provided, everyone agreed this is a very long route and not feasible as the primary route).

Lithia Springs fact-finding segment ended at 8:10pm at which time all guest departed and the BWC continued with their other business.

Post-Lithia Springs Reservoir discussion, John Hines and Bruce Forcier remained and provided positive feedback on BWC's Toth Property project. Lots of hard work, accommodated all folks, got it passed and the trail will be built. They encouraged BWC to continue utilizing the Town's existing 2016 Bike-Ped Plan for the betterment of the Town. Mariann stated it was a team effort with BWC, Town Administration and Selectboard to getting this done. She also noted that the Toth Project was truly a learning experience.

BWC members raised their concern of working in a vacuum on bike-walk projects and ideas, and not having the opportunity to partner with other like-minded entities in town, including fully understanding the "big picture" i.e. Town Recreation Plan.

John/Bruce Action Items, as part of their follow-up with Mike Sullivan:

- Define short term and long term goals for Bike-Ped Plan
- Provide input on the next Bike-Ped Plan deliverables for BWC
- Pursue creating working group (meet quarterly?) comprised of key members, e.g. BWC, Conservation and Streets Planning to gain a better understanding where we are, finances, planning and prioritizing, etc.

Other Business:

Minutes of the January 31, 2018 meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved by a quorum of members present.

February 25th Trek at Ledges Golf Course:

Due to the lack of snow, this will be a guided walking trek on the golf paths of the course to/from the trails of the Newton-Jones-Carver Conservation Areas which are adjacent to the "back" of Ledges. BWC members will bring snacks for the post-trek socializing segment. In the event of non-enjoyable or hazardous inclement weather/conditions, the trek will be cancelled. Mariann will post notice on Town's website.

March Planned Trek:

Sidewalk Scenic Trail Loop—Senior Center through Black Stevens Conservation Area and back is scheduled for March 25 at 1pm. Details will be posted on the BWC page on the Town website.

Main Street TIP (Traffic Improvement Plan) Reconstruction Project:

Mike Sullivan requested BWC input for the Town's shovel-ready plan (Tighe & Bond schematics) that will improve Main Street for sidewalks and bike lanes. Mariann did high level review of draft maps/schematics which will be discussed in greater details at our March meeting. In preparation for the March review, BWC members are encouraged to walk/drive from the South Hadley Public Library to Beachgrounds Park then towards the Chicopee Boat Launch to gain a better assessment of the current layout.

March Meeting & Clerk:

Scheduled for March 21st @ 7:00pm at the South Hadley Public Library. Mariann will confirm Chevy's availability as clerk, Margaret is back-up.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05pm

Respectfully submitted,
Huguette Supinski