



**South Hadley Bike/Walk Committee**  
**Southhadleyma.gov/bikewalk**  
**Email: [bikewaksouthhadley@gmail.com](mailto:bikewaksouthhadley@gmail.com)**

**South Hadley Bike/Walk Committee (BWC) Minutes**  
**Wednesday, May 16, 2018; South Hadley Public Library-Trustees Room**

**Present:** Margaret Jodoin, Mariann Millard, Huguette Supinsky, Lucia Foley, Chevy, Nancy Bozek, Melissa O'Brien  
**Guests:** Anne Capra (Conservation), Jeff Cyr (Selectboard) and Jim Canning (Conservation)  
**Absent:** Marilyn Gass and Larry Dubois

Meeting commenced at 7pm.

**Conservation Administrator/Planner Anne Capra**

Conservation Administrator/Planner Anne Capra was present to talk about the Conservation Department's goals and public outreach efforts.

The main directive she highlighted was the department's goal to better manage the town's existing conservation areas. SH has 1,000 acres of conservation land and she is in the process of assessing the land by creating baseline reports of current characteristics/conditions to use as a basis for developing a management plan for each of them.

- Initial findings to date: Most (if not all) have deferred maintenance issues.
- How to better care for these lands; would like SH to become a model for other towns of how to effectively care for and manage Open Space
- Would like to develop high-quality trail systems and networks for recreation and education use
- A small parcel like Bagg-Pierce is greatly appreciated by the community as demonstrated with the BWC recent spring trek whereby 60 people attended — how do we care for this parcel (and others in town) in a cost effective manner? Some ideas include:
  - Partnering with Town entities such as the BWC to promote awareness. The BWC is already doing this through its monthly treks but it could be expanded upon with Anne (or another Conservation representative) providing information on the property's ecological resources.
  - Establishing easy ways for the public to help. Such as outreach like that of Black Stevens Cleanup Day on June 13th, reaching out to abutters with a letter notifying them and asking if they wish to help. She has received 7 responses to date for Black Stevens. She would appreciate BWC help with the volunteering effort.
  - Involving the schools: She spoke with the HS principal and they are looking at ways to that the HS students could be involved in helping the town care for its conservation properties. Trash on the border of Black Stevens is terrible so the 9th graders will be helping to pick it up after their MCAS exams; she would like this to become an annual event. They have an Environmental Club at the school which is always looking for projects to work on.
  - Similar to Black Stevens, a cleanup effort can also be organized for the LeBlanc property where trash thrown out of cars is abundant.
  - Overall, outreach will assist with changing ethic, awareness and behavior.

The primary objective is to develop a network of volunteers that can support and care for our conservation areas.

- Conservation is already doing this with CT River Conservation Watershed Awareness program in September. A 'stream team' will be developed; a source to sea cleanup effort of Buttery Brook and Newton Smith Brook (another tributary of the CT River) which will look at the full stretch of the waterway in SH.
- Question: Is Conservation advocating for this to become part of school curriculum? Anne responded that it has long-term potential.
- Question: Is Conservation partnering with other town-related entities (besides BWC and Schools)? Anne - not yet; need to rev up marketing, publicity, awareness to get others involved.
- The group brainstormed ideas to spread awareness: Chan 15, KYT, Town Reminder, Senior Center, etc. The goal is to gather momentum to move forward.
- Anne indicated that she/Conservation could participate in treks as a public awareness opportunity. BWC mentioned that the next trek in Sept. is our low vision/low mobility trek at the R2R trail at which point should/could also promote the Bachelor Brook trails.
- Anne, with the help of the MHC summer intern, will be doing a management plan over the summer for the R2R trail; wants to organize work parties that people can sign up for to help. Mariann wondered if Phase II of the trail will be finished by October or November so we could host another trek to showcase the trail expansion.

Other:

- BWC reiterated the dire need for the creation of maps of the Conservation lands outlining the trails, etc. BWC is constantly asked for such maps and having them online would be a huge benefit for all. Anne indicated that she hopes the MHC intern will help with/finalize this effort. She will be working with Conservation for 6 weeks, starting in July - using GIS to develop such maps. A discussion regarding that it's best for the town to host the map info rather than an outside entity, which is very expensive.
- Black Stevens publicity: Anne would appreciate if any BWC members could volunteer for the June 13th Cleanup Day to help lead the students and do a blast to its email list; Jeff Cyr indicated that he'll announce it at the SB meeting on June 5th. Suggestions were made for Anne to reach out to the Tree Committee and Martha Terry.

### **SB Member Jeff Cyr**

SB Member Jeff Cyr was invited to attend the meeting as the town's newest SB member and the BWC wanted to share its current efforts concerning biking/walking in town as well as hearing from Jeff about his views, concerns, etc.

Mariann explained how despite the town's funding and work on a very extensive Bike-Ped Master Plan, not much is being done with it at the moment (per BWC's knowledge). BWC would like to reach out to other town-related entities to work on using the plan and prioritizing its many recommendations; would also like the town's input on safety and awareness.

Jeff indicated that his main concern was that the town's Conservation lands are not being properly maintained, e.g., Bynan with illegal ATV use, paintball and cars. Mariann agreed that it's a problem. The area is so large that most people are not aware of the many existing trails that run through it. As such, outreach and promoting awareness will help prevent illegal uses as there will be more people using the property correctly to keep the illegal behavior in check.

A question directed to Anne — Will the mapping effort include blazing the trails? This is important to do. Anne wants to do this plus mark Conservation land boundaries; which will prioritize passive recreation.

Another member indicated that such goals and priorities should be reflected in the town's Community Life Plan (if resurrected) or OS plan.

Jeff mentioned how the town has discussed, for a while now, creating hiking trails at the Ledges Golf Course. Mariann pointed out that the Bike-Ped Master Plan looks at that very issue and recommends an intriguing way to resolve the

potential conflict with hiking and flying golf balls: creation of an easement via the abutting Lauzier Farm property which could be hooked up with the Newton-Carver-Jones Conservation lands at the far end of the golf course.

Jeff asked: How does SH compare to neighboring towns in terms of walking/hiking trails? A member cited Amherst's goal of having a hiking trail within 0.5 miles of every residence in town. Another member cited the impressive efforts in Northampton led by Wayne Fiedan. Huguette mentioned her brilliant BWC Sidewalk Scenic Trail program which supplements Conservation land hikes by connecting them to sidewalk loops to increase mileage. Jeff mentioned that the Water Dept. maintains a trail in Bynan that could be part of scenic trail network.

Lucia raised the importance of the signage needed in all of our Conservation areas. The town needs to identify our resources and make it easy to find online and on the ground with kiosks, maps, etc.

Jeff recalled that a percentage of the revenue from each round of golf went/still goes (?) to Conservation land; perhaps this was used by in part to help Steve McCray to obtain his APR? Anne has no knowledge of this and will inquire.

Mariann discussed the notion of asking local businesses to sponsor benches and or other hiker amenities at Conservation lands. People around the table brainstormed that businesses such as Swenson Granite, Beers & Story, Environmental Integrity, Waste Management, Northern Tree Services, Levesque Assoc., Tighe & Bond could potentially be good to contact. Anne mentioned that Ashfield Stone often donates stone to communities for such purposes and does not require a name plate.

Jeff asked if there was any plan to install a sidewalk on Lathrop Street. Mariann mentioned that the Complete Streets Plan was just submitted to the State by Richard Harris (Planning), Jim Reidy (DPW) and PVPC and they hope to have shovel-ready projects in case funding becomes available to do some of the projects. Hopefully Lathrop Street sidewalk is included in this Plan.

Valley Bike Share Grand Opening Ceremony is happening on June 28th - occurring in Northampton.

Jeff suggested that the BWC look at the Leaping Well Reservoir (which is maintained by the D1 Water Department) to connect to other properties/sidewalk trails as well as the power line properties near East Street. He would be happy to give us a tour of the properties if we'd like; although summer is not recommended given the deer fly problem.

### **Remainder of Meeting:**

Nancy moved to accept the April 18th minutes as presented and Lucia seconded the motion. They were unanimously approved.

June meeting guests are all confirmed except for Ken and Rick Constant of Water District 2. Mike Sullivan, Bruce Forcier, Frank DeToma, DCR (Peter Michaels) and Kestrel all confirmed attendance to discuss Lithia Springs access. Mariann to ask Larry to bring video equipment. Mariann has asked Peter Michaels for the map he used for his walk-through and to give BWC members an opportunity to do a walk-through to understand his alternative trail idea; she has not heard back. Dennis Rochon, abutter, has agreed to walk with the BWC to investigate potential trail options from the hiker parking lot. This will be scheduled by Mariann for the second week in June.

Lucia has agreed to clerk for the June meeting.

Margaret indicated that Anne C. should also use Andy Rogers' email list for publicity.

BWC members should arrive to the June meeting by 6:40 to set up Trustees room (big room unavailable).

Huguette updated the group on the MACOA Walking Grant. She will lead folks on bi-weekly walks through the summer to build up to a 30 minute walk. The Mayo Clinic recommends that you start out doing 15 min on week 1 and increase the walk by 2 minutes each week and by September, folks will be able to do 30 minutes for the statewide Social Strollers

Senior Walk. She will hold these on Tues and Fridays at 9:30am and needs some help from other BWC members to lead the walks when she is out of town. The grant money will provide t-shirts for walkers, bags, raffles.

Melissa provided a brief update on Route 202 which will be paved with TIP funding this year. According to PB member, Larry Butler, who attended the MassDOT public input session for this project, sidewalks and bike lanes will be installed on both sides of 202 from five corners to the Route 33 intersection. This is great news!

Huguette will make another prototype of an armband with elastic (vs. velcro) for the next meeting to see how the BWC wants to proceed with these.

Margret moved to adjourn and Chevy seconded the motion.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:00PM.

Minutes submitted by Melissa O'Brien