Ashland Upper Charles Trail Committee Minutes March 18, 2021 (210318) Zoom meeting

Present: Joel ArbeItman, Tony Lewis, David Rosenblum, Marty Ring, Preston Crow, Chuck Lidz

Absent: Valerie Paul, Rob Scherer

Guests: Jenn Ball, Bill Paille from BSC, Peter Matchak town planner, Barbara Wright from the Pine Lake community

Meeting called to order at 7:03 pm.

Joel updated us on the Pine Lake trail segment planning. Joel, Tony and Doug Costello (Pine Lake resident) visited the site yesterday. They have a good idea of the best route. It might have slope, wetlands, etc. issues. A detailed plan of the route is needed (detailed, but not engineering plans). On site visit, Joel and Tony thought that trustees should be invited to a future site visit.

Jenn updated us on the Trolley Brook Trail (TBT) project. The town has looked at pictures from the bidding steel bridge company. Marty asked if the Order of Conditions were a problem for the project. Jenn said that plantings were in the mitigation requirements and were on the newest plans. Bill shared his screen and updated us. The low bid for the bridge was from Pioneer Bridge with a steel bridge with a bid of $27,316. Pioneer is on the MassDOT list and meets the bid requirements. The road surface is pressure treated southern pine. The metal is primed. Joel asked about 10 foot width and bicycles. Bill said the 10 foot width would work. Bill said that the primed metal did not need paint over it. Preston and others thought that the prime paint looked great. Chuck asked about the cost of a timber bridge. He prefers wood for environmental reasons. Bill said that the timber bridge that was bid was about twice the cost of the steel bridge and that timber requires a lot of maintenance. Tony asked Peter about bridges used on Danvers trails. Joel asked about traction on wet bridge. Peter said he will ask the manufacturer about this. Bill explained that the bridge met H5 loading requirements that could handle a police car, ambulance or pickup truck. The consensus of the committee is that the steel bridge is a good choice.
Bill pointed out order of conditions plantings on the plan. The current plan does go over YMCA land to connect to the MBTA road. The town is working with the YMCA to get an easement for this, but Bill showed us an alternate route that would not be on YMCA land. Marty said he hoped that the easement works out and we can use the original plan. Preston liked the zig-zag in the original plan as the trail approaches the MBTA road.

The conservation commission has reviewed the order of conditions mitigation including shrubs, trees and wild flowers in the solar array access area. Benches and interpretive panels are also shown in the plans. There is an 8 foot vegetative buffer on the side slope on the pond side of the trail. Joel asked about allowing for a deck over the pond in the future. Bill explained that the long term project will have invasive plant control covered. Joel asked about having benches and interpretive signs done by volunteer groups in the town. Jenn said that these can be taken out of the contractor’s project later. Tony asked about root barriers. Bill said he would add this to the specifications.

Joel raised the following issues regarding the TBT design:
1. Wider flat area approaching Memorial Drive (currently only 15 feet)
2. Possible use of evergreens instead of maples to block view of solar array
3. Some plantings are not on town-owned land (near end of Megunko Rd)
4. Planting to protect slopes above pond must be adequate to restrain bicyclists or fencing should be used
5. Deck location should be specified on plan before plantings are installed
6. Edge of paved trail must be higher or equal height to paved surface for bicyclist safety.

Bill Paille said all of these items could be incorporated once work begins.

Jenn is going to follow up with the EPA for their comments. Trail maintenance can be done by the town DPW department or volunteers. Tony brought up have signage across the MTBA road from the trail. Jenn said the schedule is about a month later than what was said at the previous meeting. Joel asked Jenn for support in designing the Pine Lake part of the trail. Some Pine Lake trustees wanted to look at routes with an engineer.

Joel said that Rob told him about the over five million dollars the town is receiving from the federal American Rescue Act. Joel thought we should seek funding for
segments of the Ashland Upper Charles Trail. The committee decided on these 3 projects:

1. Pine Lake – gives access to Ashland State Park
2. Megunko Road to Stone Park – connecting to the Trolley Brook Trail
3. Access to rail transit district from High St through the Morrisette property

Marty asked how to proceed with this. A letter highlighting the 3 items was considered. Tony asked about using a complete streets grant for Megunko Road to Stone Park segment. Joel thought that complete streets funding was being used elsewhere in town. Marty offered to help write the letter. Preston said that Cold Spring Brook was a key segment of the trail. Others agreed, but thought we were not far enough along on that segment. Preston made a motion that the AUCT committee request funding for the 3 (numbered 1, 2, 3) projects described above. Seconded by Chuck. Passed 6-0.

Motion to approve minutes of March 10, 2021 meeting as amended made by Marty, seconded by Preston. Passed 6-0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:28 pm. Motion by Chuck, seconded by Preston, 6-0.

List of Documents discussed:
BSC PowerPoint presentation
Trolley Brook Trail plans