Ashland Upper Charles Trail Committee Minutes April 1, 2021 (210401) Zoom meeting

Present: Joel Arbeitman, Tony Lewis, David Rosenblum, Marty Ring, Preston Crow, Chuck Lidz, Rob Scherer

Absent: Valerie Paul

Guests: Jenn Ball, Doug Costello

Meeting called to order at 7:03 pm.

Jenn updated us on the Trolley Brook Trail (TBT) project. Jenn is working on Notice of Award for Pioneer Bridge. This should be done by Monday. Jenn is also working on Invitation for Bid for the construction of the full TBT. The YMCA has agreed in principle to an easement to route the end of the TBT through a corner of the YMCA property. Town Counsel is working on an agreement and Town Meeting will need to vote on the easement. EPA and DEP do have questions about the TBT. They are waiting on a map from Bill Paille of BSC. Jenn hopes to resolve this by next week. The EPA has asked that the town wait for feedback from them before the town proceeds with the procurement process. Joel brought up using the YMCA parking lot and a sidewalk on the YMCA side of Memorial Drive which should be useful. Rob said that the YMCA must be concerned with connection to the trail. Jenn said she is concerned about spending the grant money in the time period that it is available. She said that BSC will be billing more as work continues. Jenn is in contact with the grant manager. BSC engineering cost is about $32,000 and part of the bridge can be paid for. The order of conditions with DEP has a 10 day appeal period.

We discussed the Pine Lake trail segment. Joel said that the trustees want to do a site walk with us and an engineer. Rob asked if BSC was involved with the Pine Lake section. Jenn said that they were not involved now, but possibly could be if funds were left over from the TBT project. Marty said that a scaled drawing is needed for Pine Lake section. Rob said that he had sent the town manager an email about needing technical help. Joel said that a graded engineering drawing was not needed. Tony said that the town has a town engineer who works for the DPW. Marty said that in his opinion surveying and engineering is needed to have a real route.
Joel thanked Jenn for her efforts and we all agreed with that. Jenn left the meeting at 7:31pm.

Rob said that he sent the town manager and town planner an email about the two possible routes around the Pine Lake community and asked for help contacting the Presidents Row management. Rob has not been able to connect with them. Doug, Joel and Tony did a site visit at Pine Lake and said there are 2 routes, the “road route” and the “stream route” going around Pine Lake community. Preston said that the road route along edge of Presidents Row looked like the easiest easement. Preston said he would get site plan for 46 West Union building from the town.

We discussed federal funding opportunities with potential funding from the American Rescue Plan Act. Rob told us that Mike Herbert said we can use the “paper road” across from Whittemore on High St. This is an alternative to the 54 High Street property. Joel brought up going around the Cirrus apartments on the north side on the Cirrus property. Preston thought they would be cooperative. Joel noted that the town owns a strip of land along Whittemore Rd that might be useable for the trail and that the road right of way is 50 feet.

Priorities for possible American Rescue Plan Act funding were discussed. The Fenwal property and the back of the Fafard property, where the public safety building is going, were thought of as high priorities. Joel thought that adding these to the letter he wrote listing three properties would dilute the list. Marty asked if we were looking to fund acquisition or engineering and building. Marty made a motion to add Fafard property to the list, seconded by Preston. The route through the Fafard property connects to DCR property. The idea of changing priority from getting to the state parks to priority of getting easements was brought up. Chuck suggested a budget for easement and acquisition. Rob said that he had briefed the town manager informally about our priorities. Preston said that we have to control easements and that the Fafard property was in play. Preston mentioned that bike trails are part of President Biden’s proposed infrastructure bill. Marty said that all the easements were important. Rob asked Preston to rewrite the letter. Preston did this and sent it to us during the meeting. Marty, with Preston’s approval withdrew his motion.
Rob said that he hoped that the town would take up Pine Lake route planning with the town planner working with our committee.

The open position on the Upper Charles Trail Committee was discussed. Joel told us about Doug Costello’s help with the Pine Lake trail route. Doug told us about his interest in the outdoors and wanted to be more involved with the town. Preston made a motion that the Upper Charles Trail Committee recommend to the Select Board that Doug Costello be the next member of the AUCT committee, seconded by Tony. Motion passed 6-0-1.

Motion to approve minutes of March 18, 2021 meeting as amended made by Marty, seconded by Preston. Passed 6-0-1.

Concerning federal funding, Rob said that he had been in contact with Galen Mook, Executive Director of MassBike, about bicycle trail earmarks from our Congresswoman, Katherine Clark. Rob said we should open up a dialogue about this funding. Joel thought this would help with next year’s budget. We all agreed that this was a good connection. Joel suggested a regional plan with other towns.

Meeting adjourned at 9:28 pm. Motion by Chuck, seconded by Preston, 7-0.

List of Documents discussed:
Routes around Pine Lake Community
American Rescue Plan Act 2021 letter
American Rescue Plan Act 2021 letter- Draft 2