

MEMORANDUM

To: Natick Board of Selectmen
From: Josh Ostroff, Chair, Cochituate Rail Trail Advisory Committee
Date: May 21, 2018
Re: CRT Advisory Committee Charge and Composition; Upcoming Work

cc: Bill Chenard; Jamie Errickson; Jeremy Marsette; Jemma Lambert; CRT
Advisory Committee

As the CRT moves through final design, with construction expected to start in early 2019, the Board may wish to consider the composition of, and charge to the CRT Advisory Committee, as well as the issues that the Town will face as the project approaches completion.

Committee Composition

In the short term, I recommend that a member of the Board of Selectmen again be appointed to serve on the committee. I have been the Board's representative since the committee's inception, but since my resignation from the BOS in March 2016, the committee has not had a sitting member of the Board.

This may be accomplished by appointing a current BOS member to the committee. If the Board is also agreeable, I would be pleased to remain serving as an at-large member.

Jamie Errickson is now serving as the Community and Economic Development Director. Typically, town staff are assigned to committees but are not appointed members. He has indicated that he would be pleased to continue to serve as staff but not be a voting member. This would keep the membership at 9.

In addition, the project will need increased engagement by other Town staff and departments, so I would anticipate that we would require the ongoing participation of the DPW, Community Services, Police and Fire, and other Town departments as needed, along with Town Counsel services and occasional work with state agencies and the City of Framingham.

In discussing the work ahead and the makeup of the committee at a recent meeting of the CRT Advisory Committee, there was general consensus to transition the work of the group towards operational considerations, although some members have more of a focus on design issues.

Committee Charge

Currently, the charge of the committee is as follows.

The Cochituate Rail Trail Advisory Committee is charged with advice and oversight for the CRT project, including design and construction; communication and outreach to abutters and the community; regional and state collaboration; coordination with community efforts to improve, support

and maintain the trail; and recommendations for future operations, maintenance and oversight.

This relatively broad charge serves the Town's interests for now. However, there are some specific subjects that we should anticipate in the coming couple of years. Many of these are interrelated. These are in addition to engaging with construction and the interim use of the trail.

1. Provision of an **Operations and Maintenance Plan**, which would include all services related to the trail. The Committee should prepare a proposal to procure, or should be tasked with otherwise developing such a document to guide our operational practices for the trail. This would include public safety considerations, parking, vegetation management, snow and ice removal, etc.
2. A **governance** recommendation, with implications for other Town trails and assets, anticipating more unified oversight for the CRT and other trails.
3. **Connectivity**, to coordinate public and private CRT connections, including:
 - a. Working with abutters such as MathWorks, Exponent, DCR, etc.
 - b. Advising residential property owners such that there are appropriate guidelines
 - c. Planning future connections to other trails, such as alongside Pegan Cove.
 - d. Planning future connections to the parking lot at 11 Mechanic Street, LaGrange Street, and other public property
4. Engage with the Planning Board on their ongoing **Site Plan Review**, which is not required for construction but is a requirement of our bylaws; and with other Town reviews as may be needed.
5. Planning for a **Future Trail Extension** to the Natick Center MBTA Station, pending a redesign of that facility. It is important to engage in planning now so we can assure a safe, functional connection to the next T station. This will inform future redevelopment opportunities at the trail terminus.
6. Advise the Town as needed on an **Intermunicipal Agreement** with Framingham to address ownership, custody and related issues with the CRT. The municipal border is at the midpoint of the new bridge across Route 30.
7. **Coordinate with the Friends of Natick Trails** and other community groups as they undertake organized activities, sponsorships, and other work.
8. Respond to **Board, Administration and other Town agency requests and concerns** as needed.
9. Support **ongoing communications** with the public.

For reference, the CRT Advisory Committee submission to the 2017 Town Report is attached.

Thank you for your consideration.