

**COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
TOWN OF NEEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS**

**Minutes of Meeting
Public Hearing
March 12 2014**

PRESENT: Janet Bernardo – Chair, Lita Young - Vice Chair, Robert Boder, Gary Crossen, Reg Foster, Mark Gluesing, Mike Retzky, Sam Bass Warner

STAFF: Patricia Carey, Staff Liaison

GUESTS: Connie Barr – School Committee Liaison, Lisa Standley – Conservation Chair, Tedi Eaton – Town Clerk, Ed Olsen – Parks and Forestry Superintendent, Jeff Kristeller, John Crimmings, Arthur Walitt

Ms. Bernardo called the meeting and the public hearing to order at 7:30 PM in the Selectmen's Chambers at Town Hall.

Chairman's Comments: None Presented.

Public Hearing on Proposals:

FY2014-5 Vital Records: Mr. Foster, the project liaison, introduced the Town Clerk Tedi Eaton. Mrs. Eaton explained that this is phase two of a restoration project, and she had examples of the first phase finished items. The new set of records are birth, marriage, death certificates and miscellaneous documents from 1899-1917. All records after that date are bound and each current year is bound annually. The records will be washed, dehumidified, and de-acified prior to binding them. The information is also put on CD and microfilm. Needham resident Arthur Walitt asked what makes records vital? Mrs. Eaton explained that birth, marriage and death certificates are legally considered vital. Other records are considered archival. Mr. Walitt asked if the records could just be kept electronically. Mr. Warner explained that methods of reading electronic information change frequently, so there is no guarantee that electronic records can be viewed in the future. Needham resident Jeff Kristeller asked if the documents could be made easily accessible to the public on the Internet. Mrs. Eaton explained that records prior to 1930 can be made available, but nothing legally beyond that date. The Commonwealth is one of the final states to electronically store records, so they can be viewed by other Town/City clerks, but these records will only go back to 1980. Ms. Young asked if a copy of the CD or the microfilm could also be made available at the Library, and Mrs. Eaton will review that option. Mr. Boder asked if there was enough storage space, and Mrs. Eaton indicated that the recent renovation of Town Hall provided appropriate and adequate space. She also noted that the cost of the project may be lower than expected, and Ms. Bernardo stated that the full request would be considered for funding, and if approved, any funds not used for the project will then be returned to the CPC.

FY2014-1 Ridge Hill Boardwalk and Bridge Replacement: Mr. Gluesing, liaison to the project, introduced Chairman of the Conservation Commission Lisa Standley. Ms. Standley gave a presentation on the project, which is attached to these minutes as Attachment A. Needham resident John Crimmings asked if the Fuller Trail will be accessible. Ms. Standley explained that the majority of the path is not accessible so that the boardwalk will not be. She noted that funds have been appropriated to design an accessible trail around the Reservoir. Mr. Walitt noted this project had been on the fall Special Town Meeting warrant. Ms. Standley stated that the project was not completely ready to be presented to Town Meeting for a vote, so it was withdrawn so the remaining work could be completed. Ms. Bernardo noted that the project is fully permitted now, so it is ready for construction.

FY2014-3 Town Common: Mr. Warner, liaison to the project, introduced Parks and Forestry Superintendent Ed Olsen. Mr. Olsen explained that the request was for design funds, to evaluate and plan for the pathways and hardscape, restoration of soils and sod, and landscape improvements. The design and construction would be coordinated with the Downtown Improvements study. Ms. Bernardo noted that the Town Common is on the historic register. Mr. Olsen stated that the Historic Commission representative on the Downtown project has been kept up-to-date on the streetscape improvements and will remain involved for this project. Mr. Walitt asked if the Blue Tree had historic significance. Mr. Gluesing explained that the Common and Town Hall were on the national registry and that the Blue Tree had an historical connection to the Town Common. Mr. Foster asked what the construction timeline would be, and what the estimated construction cost would be. Mr. Olsen stated that the procurement process would be followed, but it is hoped that construction would coincide with the Downtown improvements. He anticipates the construction costs to be about \$200,000. Mr. Walitt asked if the turf would be improved to handle the heavy uses. Mr. Olsen stated that a much stronger turf would be recommended to replace the existing sod. Mr. Boder asked if the current events would be allowed to continue after the renovation. Mr. Olsen stated that the design choices would take all those events into account, so they would be able to continue with less damage to the Common.

FY2014-4 Memorial Park: Mr. Crossen, liaison to the project, introduced Parks and Forestry Superintendent Ed Olsen. Mr. Olsen explained that since the Fields of Dreams project had concluded, there were multiple heavy storms. They bring large volumes of water down the hill from the High School onto Memorial Park, by-passing the drainage system, passing over the synthetic turf, and crossing the 90' diamond leaving the field in poor condition, and then rushing down the two sets of stairs to Highland Avenue. This project would allow the field to hold more of that water, below the playing surface. After discussions with the CPC, and input from the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee, Mr. Olsen has suggested that the CPC consider providing design funds, only, anticipated to be \$35,000 or less, so that construction funds would be requested after a full design has been vetted. Ms. Young noted that the Finance Committee also suggested that the design show how the remaining storm water would be connected to the storm drain system.

Public Hearing on Draft Needham CPC Plan: Ms. Bernardo explained that the CPC reviews their plan annually, and had made changes to the Plan based on the updates to the CPA legislation voted and approved in July 2012. Ms. Carey reminded meeting attendees that comments can still be sent to the

CPC through her office. Mr. Walitt asked if there would be changes to funding, including the 2% surcharge. Ms. Bernardo explained that Needham voters had approved the 2% surcharge. The state contribution is set by formula, but a vote in July 2012 had provided additional funding at the end of FY 12, so Needham received almost double the amount it had anticipated. This will require Town Meeting, on the May Special Town Meeting warrant, to adjust two of the “buckets” to insure that the required 10% is appropriated in FY’14.

Mr. Gluesing made a motion to close the Public Hearing at 8:20 PM. Mr. Retzky seconded the motion and the Public Hearing for the proposals and the draft plan was closed at 8:20 PM.

Minutes: February 26, 2014: Mr. Retzky made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 26, 2014 meeting, and the motion was seconded by Mr. Gluesing. The minutes were approved, with Ms. Young, Mr. Foster and Mr. Crossen abstaining from the vote.

Adjournment: Mr. Crossen made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 PM. Mr. Gluesing seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 8:22 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Carey,
Staff Liaison

Conservation Commission

Ridge Hill Bridge Restoration

Ridge Hill Reservation

- 352 acres
 - Original Bradley Estate
 - Foster property south of Charles River Street
 - McIntosh, Hueg and Stare properties to the north (33 acres, added in 1989),
 - Wiswall property extending to Cartwright Road (18 acres, added 2000).
 - Beard property on Grove Street
 - Easements held by the Corps of Engineers.
- More than 8 miles of trails

Ridge Hill Reservation

Ridge Hill Reservation together with surrounding undeveloped lands (the Nike Site, the WGBH Towers, the Tennis Club, the Eastman Conservation Area at the Newman School, the Ann Volante Conservation Area, the former town Landfill, and the Jacob Wildlife Sanctuary) is the largest contiguous unfragmented, undeveloped land (forested, meadow, wetland) in Needham west of I-95 - nearly 1,000 acres of wildlife habitat.

The size of this largely intact natural area provides many significant values to the town - flood storage and flood damage protection, water quality protection, groundwater recharge of the town's aquifer, wildlife habitat, and educational values.

2008 Trails Master Plan

Trails are as much a resource for traveling as they are a destination for exercise, having fun, exploring nature, and observing the natural environment. Needham's citizens walk their dogs, go birding, cross-country skiing, and simply enjoy the community in which they live, work and play

Open spaces provide them with an enhanced quality of life

Needham Open Space and Recreation Plan

Needham's municipal officials and residents are committed to balancing continued pressure for development with the need to protect our natural resources and provide recreational opportunities^U and facilities for people of all ages.

Open Space and Recreation Plan Vision

- Broad mix of permanently protected open spaces that ... provide opportunities for passive recreation
- A well-documented interconnected network of trails is available
- Recreational resources are maintained and expanded in a manner that is consistent with the needs and interests of the community

Ridge Hill Values

- Outdoor recreational space
- Healthy activities
- Nature connection
- Outdoor educational space

Ridge Hill Users

- Walkers
- Dog Walkers
- Families
- Cross-country Skiers
- Seniors
- Park & Recreation Programs
- Conservation Commission Programs

Focus on Ridge Hill

- Volunteer Trail Stewards
- Trail signs
- New kiosks
- Ecological Management Plan
- Cartwright Road gate
- Stone wall repair
- Monthly trail walks
- Esker Trail loop completed (Thank you, Exchange Club!)

Ridge Hill Walks

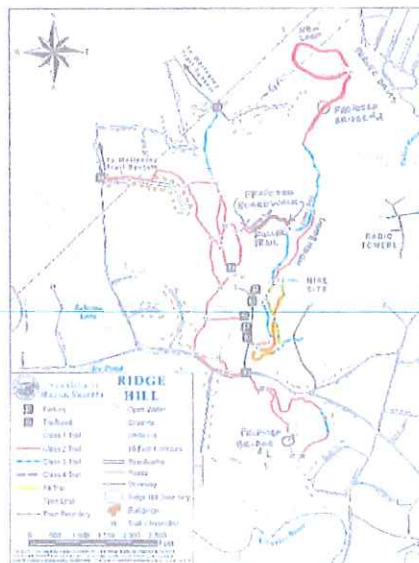


Project Summary

- Replace Fuller Trail Bridge
 - 1,000 feet long
 - 3-4 feet wide
 - Connect Esker Trail (east system) with Chestnut Trail (west system)
- Replace Charles River Trail Bridge
 - 18 feet long
 - 5 feet wide
 - Key link on south trail system

Ridge Hill

- Esker Trail loop
- Fuller Trail
- Charles River Trail



Importance of the Fuller Trail

- Passive/active recreation - connects East and West Trail Systems
- Education – schools, scouts, summer programs
- Unique access – heart of Ridge Hill wetlands. The only way to bring school groups into a wetland and teach wetland values

Chronology

- Town approved \$56,000 CPC funds 2006
- Hired design consultant Fall 2012
- Design and cost estimate completed summer 2013
- Ready to build

Old Fuller Trail Bridge



Old Fuller Trail Bridge



Old Fuller Trail Bridge



River Trail Bridge



Fuller Trail Layout



Changes to Design since 2006

- Extended project – originally 200-foot bridge replacement, now boardwalk entire trail
- Design as bridge + boardwalk
- Use innovative helical pile supports to avoid damage to wetland

Alternatives

- At-Grade Bog Bridge
 - Lowest Cost
 - Least Durable
 - Terrain unsuitable
 - Water too deep



Alternatives

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cast-in-place concrete piles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Moderate cost ■ High durability ■ Boring equipment would damage wetlands ■ Very difficult to bring in concrete | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Timber Piles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Low cost ■ Low durability ■ Pile-driving equipment would damage wetlands, require trees cut ■ Would require wetland mitigation, add to cost, not feasible |
|---|--|

Cost-Saving Measures

- Low above-ground height = no railings needed
- Minimum width
- Pressure-treated wood (not composite)

Preferred Structural Support

- Helical Piles
- Long-lasting steel
- Easy to install with no damage to wetlands
- Widely used
 - DCR – Alewife
 - Charles River School
 - MassAudubon



Helical Pile Installation



Pile-Supported Boardwalk



Pile-Supported Boardwalk



Pile-Supported Boardwalk



Budget

Conservation Trust Fund Contribution	100,000
2006 Funds Remaining	15,500
CPC Funding Request	183,279

Schedule

- Hire Designer ✓
- Complete design ✓
- Obtain permits – late 2013 ✓
- Hire contractor – mid-2014
- Construct -2014
- Re-Open Fuller Trail – fall, 2014

Our Vision

- All trails open and usable
- East and west sides of Ridge Hill connected
- Safe trail system
- Eliminate damage to wetland
- Improved educational use and access

Thank you!

