

Friends of Columbia Greenway Rail Trail, Inc.
Meeting Minutes
April 17, 2018

Meeting called to order at 6:35 p.m.

Present: Chris Steger, Bob Pac, George Hart, Alice Flyte, Ashley Eaton, Mike Young, Don Podolski, Bengt-Olaf Schneider, Carmel Steger, John Tassinari, Dan Call, Mark Cressotti, Carolyn Cacolice

Guests: none

Joe Giffune was unable to attend, so the meeting was chaired by Chris Steger, minutes were taken by Mike Young.

Previous meeting minutes: Dan Call noted that the minutes should've shown the next meeting as today, not May 15 and, with that correction, moved to approve, seconded by Don. Motion passed.

Mark Cressotti/Westfield Engineering Dept.

CPC approved additional monies for design of the central section from next year's funds. City Council approval will be sought at their first meeting in July. We may be going back to them for another ~\$100K for the final phase in 2019. Project will be handed off to the state for bidding, scheduling of construction, which could start by late summer 2019, with completion approximately 2 years later.

Group encouraged to make the counter data visible to public officials. Suggestion was made to collect information on how many trail users are local versus out-of-the-area.

Western Ave: Meeting with WSU president seeking temporary easements for work on University property; other temporary and permanent easements will be done by eminent domain. Alternative funding sources have proven to be non-existent, so Lloyd's Hill work is being removed from phase 1, but still included in the overall project.

Bridge work won't be complete by May 12 for the Mayor's Ride, but a "sneak peak" may be possible.

Chair/Vice Chair Report (Chris Steger)

Noted that Eric Hall (Westfield Police) hasn't attended these meetings in some time, perhaps because of his promotion. Suggestion that we ask him if there might be an appropriate alternate.

Treasurer's Report (Eric Bressler)

No report submitted.

Director of Planning and Resources Report (Ashley Eaton)

Signage design completed, but not sent out for fabrication. Ashley will email the final design to the Board. Ashley worked a table at the WRWA symposium and had positive interactions with students, suggests that we work on developing that relationship (student attending our meetings, perhaps?)

Director of Maintenance (Bob Pac/George Hart)

Purchased two shade maples at WalMart, Westfield Technical Academy will help with planting near Hedges ramp after April break. George is donating the replacement container for doggie bags at East Silver St (Eric should process the donation and send a thank you letter). Doggie bags were replaced April 14 (roughly 200 bags used in previous 3 weeks!).

John T. reported that data will be collected from the counters around the first of each month. He plans to share the data with the City Council in May (we'll have Bob's manual count data from last Saturday to compare with). Exchanging data with Granby would be interesting. Six bricks have been engraved and will be brought for display at the Mayor's Ride.

Dan C. distributed a packet he'd put together for the CPC on the rail trail and how it meets the city's Open Space and Recreation Plan goals. Also shared a MA DOT spreadsheet, noting that the Greenway Project is in good shape and that 3.5 miles of trail in Southampton (from Easthampton to Rt. 10) has appeared on the TIP for the first time. Suggestion was made that we communicate with Southampton about a future meeting of the trails in the two towns (PVRR is planning to store cars on the northern portion of its line in Westfield, so conversion of that section to trail isn't looking good).

Bob P. attended two Parks & Rec meetings (they're fine with the replacement of the trees on Hedges), a DPW meeting (noted a vandalism issue, has been dealt with), and the CPC meeting (shared counter data for March). A tree fell along the trail (removed by P&R), damaging fencing (repaired by DPW). Manual count was done on April 14 from 11-2, with a "historic high" of 281 trail users during that time. Bob expects the statewide count to be done on May 19 (volunteers needed), with May 20 as a likely rain date (Bob not available on the 20th, will need someone to organize).

Director of Membership (Alice Flyte)

The nominating committee proposes Carmel Steger to fill the vacant Vice Chair position, and Carolyn Cacolice to fill a vacant At Large position on the Board. Motion by Alice and seconded by Dan C. Motion approved. There is also a possible candidate for the Resource Development position – Rob Atkocaitis (a candidate for City Council last fall) – to be considered next time. Alice is working on updating job descriptions for the board, particularly that for the Vice Chair. Leaders are needed for the Mayor's Ride on May 12 (from City Hall to the bridge). Alice will email a request for help with that. Ashley suggested paying to boost this event on Facebook. In the event of rain, it'll be a walk to the Esplanade.

Westfield 350 (George Hart)

We're committing to an event on the trail and one at the Esplanade (same time?) on May 19, 2019. The committee (George, Carmel, Ashley) is working to arrange a meeting in May or June.

Old Business:

1. John has lost access to PayPal (Eric or Joe must've changed the password), but needs to be able to reconcile payments. Website payment page is now encrypted. Board recommends deleting the letter generated before the donation goes through. John agrees to do that.

New Business:

1. Mayor's cleanup and WRWA cleanup are both on April 21.
2. Alice has gotten some suggestions for possible corporate members – send more if you have them!
3. Dan C. passed around info on the Golden Spike conference July 27-28 in Northampton.

Next meeting is Tuesday, May 15 at the YMCA.

Motion made to adjourn meeting by Dan, second by Ashley, motion passed.
Meeting adjourned.