

Friends of Columbia Greenway Rail Trail, Inc.

Meeting Minutes

Oct. 17, 2017

Meeting called to order at 6:30 pm by Sandy.

Present: Sandy Sorel, Eric Bressler, Chris Steger, Bob Pac, George Hart, Alice Flyte, Ashely Eaton, Bengt-Olaf Schneider, Mark Cressotti, Eric Hall

Guests: Madison Babula (in lieu of Joe Camerilli), Harry Rock – Westfield 350th, Christie – Southwick Rail Trail

Mark Cressotti/Westfield Engineering Dept.

Discussion about central phase of rail trail including lighting for the trail. Mark presented a map showing approximate locations for lights. Update on the current plans for the central section was presented along with a discussion on what to do with the extra space that will be on the Elm.

Treasurer's Report

Balance sheet presented. Discussion about the need to form a finance committee. Eric will send an email out to see who is interested in being on the committee. Sandy to send Eric an updated email list.

Chair/Vice Chair Report

Joe G. is planning to return to chair by Jan., 2018 after his medical leave. Discussion about how to split Chair and Vice Chair duties to lighten the responsibilities for each. FOCGRT table at the PumpkinFest went very well! There are grant opportunities available (walking, etc.) to fund trail improvements.

Director of Planning and Resources Report

Update provided on attendance at the moving together conference. Example was presented on how North Adams started building a bike culture by having a group of bicyclists traveling every week on the same road to raise awareness. There is a potential grant opportunity from the group America Walks (\$1500) for next rotation.

Directors of Maintenance

September trail count presented, including a comparison with Southwick's count done on the same day. Shows opportunity to have people continue north on the trail (higher numbers of trail users in Southwick than Westfield). Maintenance report submitted for review. Stickers removed from sign and broken glass found behind Hedges Street bridge. Discussion about bicycle repair station and how to make it vandalism resistant. Farmington Valley Rail Trail group has standardized on a robust station that seems to be holding up. Eric Hall reminded board members to make sure to contact Westfield PD about trail vandalism.

Director of Education and Research

Madison Babula reviewed the survey questions to be used to research Westfield residents feelings about the rail trail. The survey questions have been submitted for approval.

Director of Membership

Glow walk on trail was a great success. Attended a pizza party at WSU and met a contact who has access to possible student volunteers. Pumpkinfest was a great success with a lot of positive feedback from the community. A FOCGRT membership list been obtained and will be working with Bob Burch to develop a plan.

Westfield 350 Committee Chair

Harry Rock spoke about the 350th year Westfield celebration event planned in 2019. Events will be family focused and there is a desire to bring a focus on the rail trail on the Birthday weekend (May 16 – 19th, 2019). The 350 Committee is asking if the FOCGRT will support (i.e., run the event) a family centric bicycle ride and associated activities on the rail trail on Saturday morning, May 18th, 2019? The hope is to have family event on the Rail Trail (bike safety, healthy community, for all family members to interact together) to promote the Rail Trail as a city asset. The FOCGRT board agreed to consider the offer and get back to Harry in short order. Item will be added to the November agenda.

New Business

Sandy noted that we need a Nominating Committee for a Director of Resource Development since this board position is open (no other board members are up for renewal). She will send an email to board members requesting nominations. Please remember to bring your Westfield 350 event ideas to the next meeting. Try to bring a volunteer (interested party who just wants minimal commitment) to our next meeting.

Old Business

Community Days booklets available from Sandy, sell for \$5 and proceeds go to FOCGRT. The coupon books are free to us and can only be used Wednesday Nov. 8th – Saturday Nov. 11th. Discussion occurred concerning the FOCGRT taking over running the Great River Ride. General agreement was the board does not have the resources to properly run the bike ride. Chris to communicate that to Don Podolski and Mary.

Next meeting is Tuesday, November 14, 2017 at Stella's Tap Room (next door to RE/Max), 10 Elm Street, Westfield, MA. Take the elevator up to the 3rd floor-you can access it through the door on your left when you enter the restaurant.

Motion made to adjourn meeting by Bob Pac, second by Bengt, motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:29

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Steger