South Hadley Bike/Walk Committee (BWC) Minutes  
August 21, 2019 | South Hadley Public Library

Present:  Mariann Millard (Chair), Melissa O’Brien, Nancy Bozek, Margaret Jodoin, Marilyn Gass, Lucia Foley (7:15pm)  
Guests: Doris Dubois, Carol Gillis, Leslie Hennessey

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm. Introductions were done to welcome a prospective member, Carol Gillis, who recently moved to South Hadley from Amherst and Leslie Hennessey, the Director of the Council on Aging.

Minutes of the July 17, 2019 meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved by the members present.

**TREKS (Sundays at 1:00pm)**

**October 20, 2019 (Rain Date 10/27) — Annual Go4Life Stroll at River-to-Range Trail Loop**

The annual Go4Life Stroll event is planned for October 20, 2019 at 1pm at the River to Range Trailhead off Ferry Street. Mariann provided a brief history of this Trek, which is geared toward all ages/abilities participation and noted that several new features will be added to this year’s event. Four stations with different activities/speakers will be located at different points along the 1 mile loop: 1) Tai Chi with Denise Barry, 2) CT River History w/ Leo Lebonte, 3) Flora with Tom Clark of MHC, and 4) Bird Song/Sightings w/ Dan Ziomek of 93.9 The River and Hadley Garden Center.

- **Ceremony:** Conservation Commissioner/Planner Anne Capra will be there with a tent/banner/info. She will send out a special invitation for Conservation Corps volunteers to attend and will have some of them do the honorary ribbon cutting at the beginning of the event.
- **Snacks/Water:** Big Y has donated water, which was picked up by Mariann; grant money will be used to buy apples and popcorn. Leslie to check w/SHHS Culinary Dept. to confirm they will make granola bars again.
- **Parking:** MHC Boathouse gave permission for parking and there’s a rain date of 10/27 in case there is very heavy rain on the 20th.
- **Prize:** Leslie noted that there might be a Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Massachusetts-sponsored gift card prize to be awarded to a participant.
- **Outreach:** Mariann will contact the Town Reminder to arrange an article, and will finalize flyer and website script. Lucia will design the event flyer based on last year’s artwork. This info will be circulated in the Golden Chronicle, Loomis Village, Lathrop Place and the Senior Center. Announcements will be made at the schools and at School Committee meetings. Anne will post a flyer at the R2R kiosk and BWC members will distribute flyers throughout town at places such as MHC, Thirsty Mind, Tailgate, Gaylord/SH Public Libraries, etc.
- **Food Drive:** The goal for food pantry donations this year will be 100lbs. Leslie will follow-up with them.

**September 22, 2019 — Project Stream Trek at Mount Holyoke College (no rain date)**

Participants will walk through the boardwalk section of Project Stream for an update and overview of the work by MHC students, then continue on to the upper hill by the equestrian center. All BWC members are asked to bring snacks. Melissa, Nancy and Margaret will meet at 10:30am on Friday, September 20 at the entrance to the Kendall Center for a ‘recon’ planning trek.

**November 17, 2019 — Leaping Well Nature Trek**

The event will include a ribbon cutting, as this will mark the ‘official opening’ of South Hadley’s newest trail. Anne Capra has some technical assistance funding for how to manage the new trail.
OLD BUSINESS

Remote Meeting Participation
BWC’s request for consideration by the Selectboard to adopt the Remote Meeting Participation option available under open meeting law regulation is on the schedule for the September 3 meeting. The option offers flexibility for members with physical or other limitations. An audio connection is required (but not video), and a quorum of members must be present in the room; a member participating remotely does not count toward quorum. There should be no cost to the Town, as a cell phone on speaker should be sufficient to meet the audio requirement. The law requires adoption by the Selectboard in order for Town bodies such as BWC to use it. Once adopted, the Selectboard or any other body, can then elect to opt out of Remote Participation. Marilyn and Margaret will reach out to other communities for information on who is using Remote Participation and under what circumstances.

Lithia Springs Road lot
The Planning Board (with agreement from Conservation and the Selectboard) elected not to exercise a right of first refusal on O’Meara Lot 3 on Lithia Springs Road, which is part of a larger parcel. It was decided that the property, which is not near the trailhead, is not suitable for parking purposes.

Mass. Trails Conference
The conference will take place in Leominster from October 31 to November 2. Workshops on Thursday and Friday have not yet been announced, but registration is open for the daylong session on Saturday. Mariann announced that Mike Sullivan will make up to $600 available for BWC members who wish to attend, to cover conference fees, mileage, and hotel costs, if needed. All BWC members are invited to participate.

Falls Redevelopment Authority
The Authority will present the plan on September 5 at the South Hadley Public Library in preparation for a presentation to the Selectboard for their vote to bring the plan to Town Meeting. Mariann is the primary representative for BWC, and Lucia serves as backup; both will plan to attend.

Master Plan and Open Space & Recreation Plan Updates
Master Plan Implementation Committee chair Judy Gooch will plan to attend our next meeting on October 16 to review work to date on the plan updates. She will be first on the agenda.

MassDOT—Route 116/Newton Street Project
Mike forwarded information about the project hearing, which referenced BWC’s work. In addition to roadway resurfacing, the project will include reconstruction of sidewalks, ADA compliant ramps, new crosswalks, and a new on-road buffered bicycle lane along the majority of the Newton Street corridor from Route 202 to Kendrick Avenue.

NEW BUSINESS

Tick Education Presentation
Public Health Director Sharon Hart reached out to Mariann about setting up an hour-long public presentation on ticks. They have grant funding for the program and there is no imminent deadline for using the funds. Sharon is hoping to arrange a Trek component that would bring participants out into the woods to see tick habitat, Mariann will invite Sharon to our October meeting.

BWC Planning
Our work going forward will include building support for existing resources, including a Volunteer Corps for maintenance in partnership with Conservation. Margaret noted that we should also connect and work with Recreation. Lucia suggested defining BWC communication plan and vision for facilitating connections among stakeholders and devising a feedback system to prevent information from get lost in ‘silos’.

For example: After local residents brought safety concerns to a BWC meeting some time ago, BWC sent a letter to the Selectboard identifying a need for stop signs at North Main Street; however, without any follow-up status reports to the BWC, it lacks accurate information to share with the residents on where things stand.
ANNOUNCEMENT

Town Reminder editorial coverage
The Town Reminder published two feature stories in August by staff writer Dalton Zbierski highlighting cross-committee and department collaboration, and how the partnership between BWC and Conservation has resulted in increased public awareness through Treks and maintenance efforts. The first article, on August 2, provided an update on the Leaping Well Nature Trail and volunteer cleanup projects; a second article, on August 16, focused on the work of the Volunteer Conservation Corps. Lucia will post information and links for the stories on the BWC web page.

‘Avoiding Legal Jeopardy’ Workshop
The Town is offering a free workshop to town board/committee/commission members on open meeting laws on September 18 at 6pm in the Selectboard meeting room. BWC members who are interested should immediately inform Mariann as she needs to contact Kristin Maher ASAP as she needs a count for final room location.

Interviews for new committee and board members
The Selectboard will begin conducting interviews for new members on a three-times-per-year schedule. The next scheduled candidate review meeting will be held in October.

NEXT MEETING
The meeting was adjourned at 8:35pm. The next meeting will be held at 7:00pm on Wednesday, October 16, 2019 at the South Hadley Public Library. Melissa O’Brien will clerk. There is no meeting scheduled in September due to the chair being out of town and no meeting room available at the library.

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa O’Brien and Lucia Foley, Clerks