South Hadley Bike/Walk Committee
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South Hadley, MA / Bike-Walk Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 20, 2019; 1:00 PM
South Hadley Public Library-Trustees Room

Attendees: Mariann Millard (Chair), Melissa O’Brien, Nancy Bozek, Larry DuBois, Lucia Foley, Marilyn Gass, Carol Gillis, Margaret Jodoin

Guests: Doris DuBois, Judy Gooch, Paul Dobosh

Meeting called to order at 1:00 PM and introductions were made.

The Master Plan Update presentation and discussion was led by Judy Gooch, MPIC Chair.

Judy explained the process for our input into the Plan by referring to the material titled Goals and Objectives. Each entity is to list their current activities and also what activities they would be willing to do. More than listing there needs to be a readiness to outline how these goals are relative to the Master Plan, how they can be measured for success. For example: Does walking make a difference or a positive change in the life of the town residents?

Mariann asked for comments from the members; discussion followed:

There was an emphasis regarding working as a group of committees and how to communicate with other committees. What authority does an individual committee have with regard to initiating this? Currently the BWC might be considered a Trek Club by some. BWC members expressed the belief that the MP & OSRP Updates must be fully supported by the Selectboard (SB) to be successful and do not remain “on a shelf” the way it seems to have happened with the Master Bike-Ped Plan. BWC members were firm in their belief that the SB must provide support for approving activities proposed by like-minded groups working towards the same goals. Judy was asked about SB support for the two draft plans; she stated she’ll be presenting at an upcoming SB meeting to discuss.

Judy emphasized that the Open Space and Recreation Plan as well as the Master Bike/Pedestrian Plan would be “folded” into the Master Plan (to address the MA State’s Plan for Connectivity)

Suggestion was made that a dedicated town hall staff person needs to be in place (i.e. a project or ops manager to not place this work on the TA and other overburdened town hall staff). This individual needs to be empowered for action both for operations and communications. This would alleviate the need for current town employees to add this to their workload.

Judy stated that the newly drafted Plan then would hopefully be ready for public comment in February.

One member pointed out that “Alike-Goals Groups” would need to have joint meetings.

Mariann requested that Judy obtain hard copies from the TA office of the Open Space Plan Sections 6, 7 and 8 (at least 20 pages in length) for BWC members for its December meeting to discuss and complete the required Questionnaire regarding Goals and Objectives.

Mariann and the BWC members thanked Judy for her attendance and in-depth discussion.

Following the discussion:

The October 16 Minutes were approved with a correction and a clarification:

1. The meeting date was corrected
2. The Remote Participation information that was forwarded to the TA, SB Chair and Vice-Chair prior to the 9/3 SB meeting was clarified for the date and recipients.

TREK Recap and Upcoming

November 17 TREK: Mariann congratulated all on an extremely successful Leaping Well Nature Trail (LWNT) Trek and Opening. She mentioned the various Toth Family members in attendance, the 4 SB members (2 current, 2 former) and the School Committee members. In total about 65 attendees were present. All who came had very positive feedback on the event and the trail itself. There were several children and one dog too who enjoyed the day. Adam Soltys represented the Toth family and briefly spoke to thank the Town for its efforts in creating the trail and to regale the audience with family memories of the land. He and Andrea Miles, SB Chair, participated in the ribbon cutting ceremony to officially open the trail. Post-trek, Mariann stated that she had approached Adam about possibly donating a bench to commemorate the Toth family farm heritage; he stated he would be pleased to discuss with his family and keep Mariann informed.

December 8 TREK: Mariann reminded members that she will be out of town and that Melissa and several other members (Carol, Nancy, and Margaret) will lead this trek with Marilyn stationed in the parking lot. Mariann has described this Trek as being a moderate to steep trail in sections. A recon trek to scout out the new trail is planned for 11/22 at 10:30 AM.

Mariann mentioned that she always reaches out to the schools and MHC to alert them of the treks.

Remote Participation
A recap of the 9/3 SB meeting, along with Mariann’s observations in reviewing the meeting video, was conducted. BWC members again supported the previously discussed plan for Mariann to contact Andrea Miles, SB Chair re: the 9/3 Minutes that omitted several items that the SB had discussed/decided upon, including the SB’s invitation at the meeting to Mariann to further discuss RP with them.

Open Space Recreation Plan-DRAFT
Comments need to be sent to Lucia by Friday November 22.

Other Business

The MA Trails Conference: Melissa came away from the event with the suggestion that:
1. There needs to be one person who is relentless in keeping the forward motion of plans and
2. There needs to be people in place ready to get the idea(s) to move forward.

She also mentioned that the keynote speaker from Outward Bound Adventures discussed a good way to make use of existing trails. Bus Routes to trails is an asset (Transportation accessibility is a key). Among the nearby area trails that were praised were Town of Lowell which includes a National Park and the Silvio Conte Bike/Walking Trail in Hadley which takes advantage of its nearness to the river.

Just prior to adjournment, Mariann announced that she has decided to resign from the BWC effective June 30, 2020; she will immediately submit her letter of resignation to the SB.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:30 PM.

Next Meeting: December 18 and Carol Gillis will clerk

Respectfully submitted,
Margaret Jodoin