

Milford Upper Charles Trail Committee

Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Milford Upper Charles Trail Committee was held on Thursday, October 19, 2023. Reno DeLuzio being in the chair called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Present at the meeting were five members: Reno DeLuzio, Henry Papuga, Elaine Capuzziello, Jeff Howard, and Joseph Arcudi. Absent from the meeting were three members: Brian Murray, Frank Malangone, and Frank Pirrello. James Wheelock (1 Cunniff Ave.) was present.

Chairman DeLuzio announced that the meeting was being audio recorded and asked if anyone had objection. Hearing no objection, the meeting was recorded.

1. Approve the July 6, 2023 meeting minutes.

The July 6, 2023 meeting minutes were approved as presented.

2. Invitation to Speak: Mr. Wheelock was recognized. When asked if his remarks would be related to an agenda item, he replied in the affirmative and agreed to make them when the item is addressed.

3. Rt. 85 Connecting Path to the Bike Trail Status

Chairman DeLuzio handed out the attached Status Report. Discussion ensued regarding the Remaining Funds Status:

a) Chairman DeLuzio noted that the hydroseeding cost was a verbal quote and that he had not received an invoice. In addition, he requested Roy Landscaping provide a bag of hydroseed for the Highway Dept. to hydroseed the asphalt transition shoulders next spring. The invoice may or may not include the cost of the seed. For these reasons Mr. Papuga recommended the committee take no action until it receives the invoice. By consensus, the Committee agreed.

b) The recommended \$500 for the pedestrian bridge inspection services was questioned by Mr. Papuga since it was not an expenditure the Committee had not been previously authorized. A motion was made and seconded to authorize the expenditure. Motion passed, 4 in favor and 1 opposed.

Mr. Wheelock recommended that some remaining funds be spent on additional dog waste receptacles. Extra trash barrels were also suggested. Mr. Arcudi to report on the cost of trash barrels at the next meeting.

4. Decision to Dissolve the Committee Discussion.

Chairman DeLuzio started by presenting his views. If the Committee is to be continued it probably would have a mission statement somewhat like that of the Friends of the Milford Upper Charles Trail (a 501(c)3 non-profit organization). He noted that he has been a member of the Friends of the Trail since its inception in March 2005 which he chaired until Aug. 2006 when Margaret Myatt was elected Chair and he has attended most of their meetings. He attended the Oct. 4, 2023 Friends meeting to get a sense of where they stood on the subject.

They had no opposition to the Trail Committee being dissolved. If the Committee were to continue, he got the impression that they would welcome it because they are having difficulty maintaining interest in their organization and with meeting attendance (meetings are held remotely on line). They even voiced the possibility to dissolve their organization and join the Select Board's committee.

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If the Committee recommends the Select Board dissolves the Committee and form a new committee, he favored providing a list of candidates for the Select Board's consideration. He provided two examples of providing candidates to the appointing authority for their consideration when establishing Town Committees.

The first example is when he, as Town Planner, recommend the Select Board establish the Milford Upper Charles Trail Committee in early 1997. He provided them with a list of 7 strategically chosen candidates for their consideration.

The list consisted of :

[Himself (Town Planner), Robert Buckley (Con. Com. Chair), Frank Pirello (Civil Eng.), Mike Bresciani (Parks Director), Henry Papuga (Milford Water Co. Mgr. and a major stakeholder), Attorney Brian Murray and Carolyn Cooney (Open Space Working Group)]

The Second example is when the Citizens for Milford Town Meeting Working Group recommended the Town Meeting establish the Town Meeting Study and Improvement Committee of 9 members to be appointed by the Town Moderator. The Working Group provided 11 of its members (including himself) as candidates for his consideration.

[Note: The Committee has provided candidates for the Select Board's consideration for appointment many times over the years.

He noted that the 4 officers of the Friends would not be his choice as candidates for a core group to further develop the committee membership and manage the committee in compliance with the Open Meeting Law. Based on his experience as a member of the Friends, their effectiveness as an oversight organization has not met expectations.

Finally, Chairman DeLuzio noted that the Bike Trail has been essentially without an oversight committee for many years. Most recently, the Highway Surveyor Scott Crisafulli and the Parks and Recreation Administrator Jim Asam have been very responsive to issues brought to their attention as well as for those issues they identify. He saw no evidence for an oversight committee at this time.

Committee discussion then ensued.

Mr. Wheelock was recognized. He complimented ("super admirable") the Committee on its fine work. He also noted that the Friends are not up to the task or meaningfully overseeing the existing network. He favored a whole new committee with new people and new energies to do the work. The existing format of the Committee might be revivable. He further commented that he is a big fan of the trail and does not think Parks Department or the Highway Dept. are looking out for this very specific project that the citizenry is highly motivated to care about.

Chairman DeLuzio thanked Mr. Wheelock for his comments and did not disagree with any. However, He stated his intention to step down as Chairman when the final report is completed and if any member decides to stay on with the continuation of the Committee, or join a new committee, they are free to do so.

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Mr. Howard's general concern was not having some sort of entity that has a vested interest and commitment to the successful operation and oversight of the trail, and to coordinate with the Park Dept. and Highway Dept.

More discussion ensued regarding the potential of the appointment of Friends as the core group for a new committee.

Mr. Papuga felt uncomfortable about expressing an opinion about the Friends since he is not familiar with their activities. The Friends organization should have no effect on what this Committee does. He noted that creation of the Friends was the right thing to do. However, he would never be in favor of dissolving it or recommend who the Select Board should or should not appoint.

Chairman DeLuzio interrupted stating that he is not recommending the Select Board take any action regarding the Friends. In fact, they cannot because the Friends are an independent 501(c)3 organization and the Town has no jurisdiction. He would also never recommend the Select Board not consider appointing a member of the Friends to the new committee. His earlier remark regarding the Friends as the group to form the core of the new committee was only his opinion.

Mr. Papuga continued. He is not in favor of dissolving the Committee. He is in favor of getting the final report to the Select Board. He favors the Committee continue and expand its mission into developing other areas (e.g., a trail along the easterly shoreline of Milford Pond) which should be included in the final report. Let the Select Board decide whether to dissolve the Committee.

Mr. Howard commented that the Committee is at a point to put a stake in the ground and put a bow on this phase. There is a lot of opportunity going forward but the Committee needs a reincarnation.

Mr. Papuga commented that the final report should say we believe the Committee should continue and recommend specific area to look at for expanding the trail. He believes more people will become interested in joining the Committee.

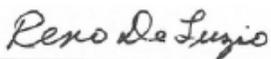
Mrs. Capuzziello suggested the reconstituted Committee should be publicized.

Mr. Arcudi agrees there needs to be a final report. We should not get involved with the Friends issues. His experience over 20 years in working with various town entities is that people do not want to get involved. Finish the final report with the recommendations discussed and submit it to the Select Board for them to decide what to do. He raised the question of how do we market/advertise this. He suggested giving this report to the May 2024 Town Meeting [*Members*] to get some exposure, with a request to apply for membership to the Committee [*assuming the Select Board decides the Committee continues*]. He thinks this is an important Committee and that it should not be dissolved.

Mr. Papuga concurred with Mr. Arcudi.

Motion was made and seconded that the Committee not be dissolved but continued. Motion passed unanimously.

Submitted



Reno DeLuzio, Chairman

Date: 11/25/23

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Rt. 85 Connecting Path to the Bike Trail Status (10-18-23)

Completed

Site preparation (i.e., tree cutting, erosion control, subgrade preparation), bridge procurement, bridge concrete support pads formed and poured, two bridge footers fabricated and installation, bridge installation, stone dust application, bollard sleeve installation, two asphalt transitions, shoulders loamed (except asphalt transition shoulders), hydroseeding (except asphalt transition shoulders), the first 3 bridge deck boards on each end removed.

Remaining Work

1. Grade loam along the asphalt transition shoulders (Rt. 85 transition - 24 ft., Trail transition - 13 ft.)
[M. Tuttle Excavating or Walden Woods Volunteers for Bike Trail Access]
1. Hydroseed asphalt transition shoulders. [Highway Dept.]
2. Rework and reinstall the first 3 bridge deck boards on each end. [Reno]

MUCT Committee Remaining Funds Status:

Account Bal. (10-16-23)	\$3,067
Pending Invoice (Roy Landscaping)	\$1,400 (hydroseeding except asphalt transition shoulders)
Bal.	\$1,667
Recommended Expenditure	\$ 500 (Pedestrian Bridge Inspector for Building Permit)
Bal.	\$1,067

Note:

With loam from the Highway Dept. stockpile on Asylum St., Roy landscaping quoted \$4,500 to loam and hydroseed the path shoulders. M. Tuttle Excavating offered to loam the shoulders at no increase in fee.