



TOWN OF NORTH HAMPTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
NORTH HAMPTON SELECT RAIL TRAIL COMMITTEE

December 7, 2022

NORTH HAMPTON TOWN HALL

DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman James Sununu, Secretary Joe Manzi, Tom Argue, Carrie Becker, Vice-Chair Cindy Henry

ALSO, PRESENT: Town Administrator Michael Tully

- 1.) **Chairman Sununu called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.**
- 2.) **Chairman Sununu asked for a motion to approve the May 2021 minutes.** The motion was made by Tom Argue and seconded by Jeff Latimer. All voted to approve.
- 3.) **Review of DOT update and public meeting.** Chairman Sununu explained that Department of Transportation presented to the Board of Selectmen and gave an overview of where they are in the design and construction process of the trail. The process has gone a bit slower than anticipated part of that driven by what DOT found when they surveyed the trail in particular south into Hampton where they have found a lot of storm water issues, and a lot of undocumented drainage structures. DOT has divided the project into four phases. The first phase "**Phase 1A**" goes from the North Hampton/Hampton line and heads south to Portsmouth, approximately an eight-mile stretch. They are in the final process of design and obtaining permits and expect Phase 1A to go out to bid this winter with construction beginning in 2023 with and expected to be completed in 2024. **Phase 1B** is the Hampton section going south 1.6 miles to the traffic interchange where Routes 1 and 101 meet. This is an area where they have encountered some of the drainage issues mentioned, they expect construction to begin in 2024 and it is unclear when it would be completed. Phase 1A and 1B are full funded. **Phase 2** is 2.4 miles in Seabrook heading North. It is in the 10-year highway plan for 2030 for funding. **Phase 3** goes from Seabrook to Hampton falls. Phase 3 is in the 10-year highway plan for 2032. There is some hope to move phase 3 and 4 dates up through grant funding or otherwise. This past fall DOT held a public meeting at North Hampton School where they laid out all the designs.

All the Towns involved have an agreement with the state Department of Transportation that DOT will construct the trails and then the individual towns will be responsible for them.

4.) **Review of RPC/NPS Community Connections Workshop.** RCP is working to establish a non-profit. Jeff Latimer explained that the “Seacoast Greenway Alliance” has filed all of their paperwork to become “not for profit”. The thought is that all of the towns will become part of the Seacoast Greenway alliance to better facilitate projects and share resources. The RPC through their grants with the National Park Service also held several community connections workshops in Portsmouth and North Hampton to help with ideas around use and access points. The October 21<sup>st</sup> North Hampton meeting is available to view.

5.) **Discussion of:**

**Potential North Hampton trail access points**

**Potential signage sponsorships**

**Other community efforts**

Michael Tully said that he was approached by a business owner regarding the plans, and Mike Tully wanted to make clear that the sketches are ideas only and not set in stone. Chairman Sununu also stated that a lot of these connections are not town owned and agreements would have to be reached with the state and/or private owners, example the Lafayette Crossing Shopping center. Mike Tully also stated that a business owner was concerned that if the Town did not have a good infrastructure in place that his business would be used for parking. Cindy Henry asked if that was not a part of the overall state responsibilities. James Sununu stated that that is not a part of the state responsibilities, but that Rockingham planning commission is working with the towns to assist in planning and grant acquisition. Mike Tully stated it was a good start to work together with towns as we may be sharing and acquiring together moving forward.

James Sununu also stated that there was further information about signage plans and having a consistent signage design throughout the Trail. James also talked about the access points at Lafayette Crossing and the spot near “Joe’s Meat Shoppe” which is a plot of land that is owned by the state. The Town would have first refusal if the State were to sell. While not a spot for parking due to its sight lines, it would make for nice landscaped “pocket park” for rest and information along the trail. Chairman Sununu would like to see that spot be a point of emphasis for the town as a local community spot. Town Administrator Tully said that the Heritage Commission would also be involved, and they are also working on the part at North Road as a historical part of the trail. Mr. Tully also explained that he has confirmed with the state that the Town would have first refusal on any state owned pieces that would go up for sale. Jeff Latimer said there is a booklet titled the “Trail Towns Concept” that explains ways to execute a lot of these ideas and he can provide the committee with a copy. Mr. Sununu agreed that would be a good idea. Mr. Tully said that regarding maintenance help will be needed. Carrie Becker stated that that is where we can get sponsorship and business help. Mr. Latimer said that the challenge that is faced is that the state expects the money to come to that as it is state owned land. Mr. Tully suggested starting a revolving account. Tom Argue asked about the current status of reaching out to businesses. Mr. Sununu said nothing definite yet as we try to work out the time tables of when things will be ready. Joe Manzi asked Mr. Latimer if with the money first going to the state would that be under a 503 C. Mr. Latimer replied it’s a good question and that there is a lot to work out even with a revolving account as to who would get the funds. Mr. Argue asked if there was any protocol for right of way access. Mr. Tully

answered that there is no current property that he is aware of that has a legal easement or access.

Resident John Sillay asked what current uses are permitted, and once the “ribbon is cut” what are the uses. Mr. Sununu stated that for the second part of the question it is anything non-motorized and possibly non equestrian. All the towns signed a memorandum to these allowances. Michael Tully stated that current use is that the rail trail is private property of the state and use is not allowed. That said the state has taken the approach that they are not going to say anything if it is being used in a positive manner. Jeff Latimer stated that motor vehicles that are maintenance vehicle’s will be allowed. John Sillay said he had heard about bridges possibly being dismantled and asked if this was part of the first stage. Mr. Sununu said that not as part of the Trail project but there are bridge work projects separate. Mike Tully stated that bridge work will have to leave the area trail accessible.

Resident Deb Sillay asked about the rail trail going through toxic water and what North Hampton is doing about that. James Sununu said that the water is runoff but its being investigated to see if it is harmful. Mr. Sununu also said that the engineers are aware that there is a lot of water to manage and expect elevation and storm water management. Mr. Tully stated there are two issues storm water and the water at Coakley. The Committee discussed that educational signage and possibly fencing could be used to ensure safety in the Coakley area.

#### **6.) Any other Business**

Carrie Becker asked about using QR codes. Mike Tully said that it has been discussed. Mr. Sununu stated that QR codes could also be used to educate people on businesses and stops. Mike Tully also stated that we can the North Hampton Business Association on this as well. Joe Manzi asked if staffing issues are being addressed. Mr. Sununu stated that we don’t know at this time. Mr. Tully said that if the facilities are on place people generally do the right thing. Mr. Latimer said that those who have concerns about vandalism etc. that having the trail and people doing the right thing on the trail actually reduces these types of behaviors. James reviewed “take aways” from the meeting

Meeting adjourned 7:33 PM

***Disclaimer-These minutes are prepared by the Recording Secretary within five (5) business days as required by NH RSA 91-A:2,11. They will not be finalized until approved by majority vote of the Rail Trail Committee.***

***A recording of this meeting can be found at***

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Respectfully Submitted,

Joe Manzi, Secretary Rail Trail Committee

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