

Ashland Upper Charles Trail Committee Minutes February 16, 2017 (170216) Ashland Town Hall lower level Meeting Room.

Present: Joel Arbeitman, Tony Lewis, David Rosenblum, Rob Scherer, Valerie Paul, Preston Crow, Rick Hampson, Chuck Lidz, Marty Ring

Absent:

Guests: Michael Herbert, Town Manager. Jenn Ball, asst Town Manager. Sheila Page, town planner. Maeghan Dos Anjos, Conservation agent. Doug Small, DPW Director. Jim Adams, Superintendent of Schools. Board of Selectmen: Steven Mitchell, Rob Scherer, Yolanda Greaves and Carl Hakansson. Planning Board: Preston Crow, Dale Buchanan and John Rossi. School Committee: Paul Kendall, Open Space Committee: Roberta Soolman, Marty Ring. Board of Health: Judy Margulies.

Phil Goff, Alta. Mike Cunningham, Alta. Bill Shaner, Metrowest Daily News.

Ashland residents: Jim Mahoney, Robert Agostinelli, Steve Doucette, Doug Small, Mark Dassoni.

Meeting called to order at 5:03 pm by Joel Arbeitman.

Alta Ashland Upper Charles Feasibility Study Kick-off Meeting. This is a joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board. This is Kick-Off meeting for planning the trail with Alta consulting.

Town Manager Mike Herbert welcomed us all to the meeting. He talked about the great desire in Ashland for a trail to connect within the town and to trails in neighboring towns. This includes connections to Ashland open space, downtown and neighborhoods.

Phil Goff, Project Manager from Alta, led the Kick-off meeting with a presentation. Phil introduced the Alta team: Tom Doolittle, lead planner, Charlie Creagh, planner and GIS, Mike Cunningham permitting and cost estimating. Phil said that Alta was the country's leading pedestrian/bike trail design firm. Phil talked about Alta's New England experience. Benefits of trails was presented including economic, public health, transportation and development. This includes places to eat and drink. He talked about trails increasing property values. Phil talked about town branding, including the trail. Transportation benefits include access to the MBTA station, downtown and schools. Tom talked about the Ashland trail being part of the Upper Charles Trail, a loop through Ashland, Sherborn, Holliston, Milford and Hopkinton.

Key issues were talked about:

1. Linkage to destinations
2. Gaps and on street routes with improvements
3. Alignment prioritization
4. Environmental challenges
5. Road crossings
6. Coherence of trail design
7. Neighborhood concerns and mitigation issues

Project schedule was introduced. Project taking 6 months plus. This includes 3 public meetings in late March, early May and July. Additional public outreach will include AUCT meetings, newsletter, website and two outreach events such as Farmers Market.

Members of elected boards commented and asked questions. Alta will give options for trail segments including cost. Alta may offer new options not based on AUCT plan. Trail is challenging. Fresh eyes to look at the trail. Discussed connections to other towns. Planning board said they would help with zoning issues. Linkage priorities were discussed. Linkage to town center and businesses was discussed. Structured town input including public meetings was discussed. Having trail spurs was mentioned. Linkage to Community Center was asked for. Route 126 changes for year 2020 were discussed including trail crossing. Conservation agent brought up maintenance of the trail and use of easements.

Meeting paused at 6:00pm. Meeting continued with smaller group at 6:15.

Village of the Americas buffer zone was discussed. Residents stressed “no disturb zone”. Buffer zone is 150 feet wide narrowing to 100 feet at one end. Alta suggested screening with dense vegetation and berms. Committee discussed cemetery route as preferred alternative. Rob Scherer brought up going directly through the roads in the Village of the Americas.

Bob Gaynor letter was discussed. The committee felt that we should get our plan together and have that to discuss with future developers of the property.

We discussed connecting to downtown. And discussed importance of connecting to other towns on the Upper Charles Trail.

First public meeting tentative date is March 30<sup>th</sup> 7:00-9:00pm at the Community Center. Have snacks such as cookies at the meeting. Sheila Page to get the room. Alta will create flyer for the event.

Web site options were discussed including UCT regional website and town website. It was noted that currently the Ashland Bike Club website has AUCT information.

Rob noted that Alta should work with town professionals on GIS, etc.

Public meeting #2 tentative date is May 18<sup>th</sup>. Community Center will be booked for this.

AUCT committee outdoor meeting to walk parts of the trail path with Alta will be March 16<sup>th</sup> at 4:00pm.

Joel brought up town wide awareness and publicity.

Next AUCT meeting will be March 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6:30pm.

Having AUCT and Alta on WACA TV and possibly having WACA at March 16<sup>th</sup> walk was discussed.

Branding of the trail was discussed. Preston mentioned that MAPC is using the “Metrowest Land Line” to describe trails in the area.

Motion to adjourn made by Preston, seconded by Tony. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Action Items: