Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Rail Trails Advisory Committee (RTAC)
Meeting Minutes – April 10, 2025
Whitcomb Hall, Main Street, Swanzey, NH

CALL TO ORDER:
The meeting of the Swanzey Rail Trails Advisory Committee (RTAC) was called to order at 6:34 pm by Chair Mike Kowalczyk. The meeting was held at Whitcomb Hall.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike Kowalczyk, Alan Gross, Rob Hart, Cindy Kordys
ABSENT: Bruce Bohannon, Stephon Mehu, Assistant Town Planner
OTHERS PRESENT: None

MINUTES:
The Minutes of March 6, 2025 were considered. **Motion** was made by Kowalczyk to approve the minutes of March 6, 2025. There was a second by Gross and no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed**.

PUBLIC INPUT: None

OLD BUSINESS:
Funding
Swanzey RTP Grant Update – Kowalczyk reported that surface work on the Cheshire RT (from Joslin Station Road to Seventh Day Adventist Church) will be done by DPW in July.

MAST Grant—Matthews Road Crossings – Grant was awarded and will be implemented this year. DPW will install the crossing signs. Further updates will be provided by Mehu.

Town Ballot Warrant Article 9 Passed – it included rail trail funding of $10,000. Will discuss where/how to use at next meeting.

Monthly Cleanup Events/Maintenance Strategy
Ashuelot River Truss Bridge (located south of Sawyers Crossing Road) – Clean up leftover lumber; No update.

Ash Swamp Brook Bridge (located near Riley Conservation Area) -- RTAC approved the purchase of the lumber at a cost of $3,000. The Keene Sno-Riders were informed and will do the work this year.

Ashuelot RT Maintenance (south of Riley Conservation Area) – Kowalczyk reported that 3 culverts all have completely rusted bottoms and need to be replaced. Kowalczyk and DiRusso, DPW will look at the area. RTAC can purchase new 18-20" diameter PVC culvert pipe and DPW can install.

Benches – Gross reported that Hamshaw Lumber doesn't sell benches. Bob McClure, who made the benches for Mt. Caesar, will make the rail trail benches for free. Lumber is available from trail maintenance. Kowalczyk and Gross will scout locations for the benches.

Kiosks – there was discussion about installing 2 sided kiosks on both rail trails. Kowalczyk knows someone who will make the kiosk frames using the lumber from the trail maintenance, but the lumber needs to be milled. Kordys will contact Lake House Portable Sawmill about milling the lumber.

Ashuelot RT Washout Status

Fix the two most northern washouts -- Jeremy Evans expects to complete the work in May.

Remaining 5 Washouts on Ashuelot RT

Holbrook to Holbrook Washouts will be TAP Grant funded and the TAP Grant process requires an engineering study. The engineering study developed by Hoyle Tanner was accepted as submitted by RTAC. NH DOT will pay 80% of the cost. The Swanzey Board of Selectmen approved the 20% matching funds. Work to be done in 2027.

Eversource Washout (by substation) – In 2026, the existing Christian Hill Bridge will be re-used to repair that washout. The project will be funded by the NH DOT.

Ashuelot RT Detour Signs – Joe DiRusso, DPW will order the signs and posts and install them as soon as the ground thaws.

Promotional and Outreach

Brochure/Rack Card inventory update status – Kordys reported that the brochure supply is low. Gem Graphics needs 7 to 10 business days to print another order.

Promotional Brochure design status – Bohannon will provide update at next meeting

Outreach – Gross will contact Alan Rumrill, Cheshire Historical Society, about speaking at an event about railroad history.

2025 Earth Day – Earth Day is April 26th and Kowalczyk is organizing a booth in Keene. The Bike Alliance is sponsoring Tour de NH on May 31st.

Other

Westmoreland, Surry, Marlborough and Troy – Westmoreland section had trees removed to improve trail drainage. Surry section has hard pack material. Marlborough's 2.5 mile section is a work in progress. Marlborough/Troy line to Troy Depot section work will begin in July or August with tree removal. A RTP Grant is being considered for the Fort Hill area in Hinsdale.

Regional Rail Trail Map Availability – Maps are done. Kowalczyk handed out copies.

State Rail Trail Funding Bill Status SB-274-FN – Bill passed the NH Senate Transportation Committee but funding was reduced from $7.2 million to $500,000. The bill will be considered by the NH Senate Finance Committee with mention that the rail trails generate revenue via tourism.

Next Meeting: May 1, 2025

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Kowalczyk to adjourn the meeting. There was a second by Gross and no further discussion. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Cindy Kordys CK