Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Rail Trails Advisory Committee (RTAC)
Meeting Minutes – May 1, 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 6:05 pm by Chair Mike Kowalczyk. The meeting was held at Whitcomb Hall.

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

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

PUBLIC INPUT: None

OLD BUSINESS:
Funding
Swanzey RTP Grant Update – Mehu reported that he received an email from Brianna and the Governor's Council will approve in June or July.

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

Monthly Cleanup Events/Maintenance Strategy
Ashuelot River Truss Bridge (located south of Sawyers Crossing Road) – Clean up leftover lumber; Bohannon reported that he has contacted snowmobile club to remove.

Ashuelot RT Maintenance (south of Riley Conservation Area) – Kowalczyk reported that 2 culverts have completely rusted bottoms and 1 is partially rusted and all need to be replaced. The rail bed is also eroding. Kowalczyk and DiRusso, DPW will look at the area. RTAC can purchase new 18-20" diameter PVC culvert pipe and material to build up the rail bed. DPW can do the work. Will check with DES if state approval is needed. DES Shoreline Permit By Notification costs $200. **Motion** was made by Kowalczyk to use RTAC funds to pay $200 for the permit. There was a second by Kordys and all were in favor. **Motion passed.** Bureau of Trails Special Use Permit costs $100. **Motion** was made by Kowalczyk to use RTAC funds to pay $100 for the permit. There was a second by Gross and all were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Ashuelot RT – Bohannon reported that 3 loads of debris including a tent and motorcycle were cleaned out from a homeless encampment.

Benches – Bob McClure, who made the benches for Mt. Caesar, will make the rail trail benches for free. Gross showed pictures of the benches on Mt. Caesar. Lumber is available from trail maintenance and DPW can help move it. 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. Kordys contacted Lake House Portable Sawmill about milling the lumber but they are no longer in business. DPW can mill 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. Mehu will get clarification on the bridge at the next BOS meeting.

Ashuelot RT Detour Signs – Kowalczyk will find out if DiRusso, DPW has the signs.

Promotional and Outreach

Brochure/Rack Card inventory update status – Kordys reported that the brochure supply is low. Riley Conservation Area and Cresson Bridge (Sawyers Crossing) need to be restocked.

Promotional Brochure design status – Bohannon reported that he met with Larry. They discussed changing a picture, adjusting the mileage figures and adding the ART detour detail to the map. The changes will take additional time so best to order more of the current brochure version.

2025 Bike Event – Possibly later this year on the CRT.

Swanzey Old Home Day – scheduled for July 19th. Gross will register RTAC for the parade.

Other

Westmoreland, Surry, Marlborough,Troy,Fitzwilliam,Hinsdale – Westmoreland section had surface work done. Surry section had a washout fixed. Marlborough's 2.5 mile section is a work in progress and some ditch clearing was done. Marlborough/Troy work will begin in July or August with tree removal. A RTP Grant is being considered for Fitzwilliam and the Fort Hill area in Hinsdale. An American Trail Grant was awarded to Keene with work to begin in July on CRT from Eastern Ave to Route 101.

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.

2025 Earth Day – scheduled for April 26th was rained out.

Tour de NH – sponsored by The Bike Walk Alliance on May 31st. It will start at Margaritas on Gilboa Ave and continue to Summit Winery.

Monadnock Rail Trail Challenge – work in progress

Swanzey Factory Road Bridge – Keene DPW is helping to organize a Community capital campaign for the project

Next Meeting: June 5, 2025

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Gross to adjourn the meeting. There was a second by Bohannon and no further discussion. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Kordys