

**MERRYMEETING TRAIL
MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JANUARY 11, 2010 AT 11:00 A.M
BOWDOINHAM TOWN OFFICE**

Present:

Amanda Bunker, Wright-Pierce
Andy Hendrickson, Kennebec River Rail Trail Board
Ben Long, Bowdoinham Walking, Biking, Paddling Committee
Burnham Martin, National Park Service
Dan Stewart, MaineDOT
Darryl Sterling, Town of Richmond
Dave Wood, East Coast Greenway
Jeff Sneddon,
Rich Rothe, Midcoast
Josh Platt, Soil and Water Conservation District
Lloyd Ferris, Richmond resident
Lynne Sanford, Bowdoinham resident
Nicole Briand, Bowdoinham Planner
Rich Rothe, Midcoast Council of Governments
Rod Melanson, Topsham planner
Steve Musica, Richmond resident
Susie Reinheimer, Bowdoinham
Victor Langelo, Topsham resident

1. Grants and Funding

Rich Rothe reported on the status of funding for the feasibility study:

- \$20,000 from State Planning Office Challenge Grant – committed; being processed
- \$1,000 from Topsham - committed
- \$1,000 from Bowdoinham - committed
- \$1,000 from Richmond - committed
- \$1,000 from Gardiner – committed
- \$1,000 from Friends of Kennebec Rail Trail – committed
- \$10,000 from MaineDOT – committed; being processed

Nicole is completing an application to the Maine Community Foundation for \$10,000.

2. Presentation by Dan Stewart, MaineDOT Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator

Dan Stewart provided an overview of bicycle/pedestrian initiatives in various parts of the State. The Mountain Division rail corridor extends 45 miles from Portland to Fryeburg. It took a few years to get a feasibility study. Initial construction includes the first 5-mile segment between Windham and Standish. The Kennebec Rail Trail is 7 miles long. It took 14 years and three funding cycles to build. The Eastern Tail includes 7 miles between Saco and Old Orchard Beach. Pedestrian/bicycle trails are typically 10 feet wide.

For the Meerymeeting Trail, MaineDOT owns the land and is willing to let the trail go in. It

should be possible to complete a feasibility study for \$40,000. MCOG already has \$20,000 from SPO and \$5,000 from communities and the Kennebec Rail Trail. MaineDOT is working to add another \$10,000, up to \$10,000 from MaineDOT's existing contract with MCOG.

Dan suggested the feasibility study focus on discreet sections. We need to think of various sections as transportation corridors connecting specific origin and destination points. Costs typically run about \$500,000 per mile. The feasibility study will provide ballpark estimates. The study will tell you what isn't feasible (e.g., you can't fill a mile of wetlands). MaineDOT funding would include design and construction costs.

MaineDOT has about \$8 million every two years for trails which sounds like a lot, but there are a lot of applicants. There is an 80/20 match; if you ask for \$1 million, you need a match of \$200,000. This match requirement does not apply to Trails of Statewide Significance. Such trails include the Eastern Trail, the Mountain Division, and the Calais Branch. We might be able to build a case that the Merrymeeting Trail is a Trail of Statewide Significance after the feasibility study is completed.

You can apply for funding without a feasibility study, but it's better to have one. You can also apply for funding sources other than MaineDOT including:

- Maine's Community Development Block Grant Program – for planning
- Local funds
- Private money
- Congressional earmarks
- Maine's Recreational Trails Program

MaineDOT's applications for spring, 2010 funding will be due on June 1.

There was a great deal of discussion concerning the trail and its potential. Andy explained there are areas with significant environmental constraints. Lloyd suggested portions of the trail away from village centers could be unpaved for more comfortable walking. Darryl reported that Richmond is applying for \$600,000 for pedestrian ways and streetscapes and related trail work.

3. Logo. The Group reviewed the draft logo ideas that Brian Kent had prepared. There was discussion about including the Bay, not just the river, and keeping the logo simple so it can be recognized even when it's small. The group agreed that a subcommittee should explore logo ideas in greater depth and report back. Amanda Bunker agreed to head up the subcommittee; Darryl Sterling agreed to work with her.

4. Website

Victor reported that he can design a website. The address will be Merrymeetingtrail.org.

5. Next Meeting

The group agreed to meet next on the second Monday in March unless the need for a meeting arises in the meantime.