

# Route 113 Corridor Committee

February 10, 2010

2:30 – 5:00 PM

Standish Municipal Center

## Meeting Notes

**Committee Members:** Steve Gourley (Brownfield); Dave Knapp, Chair (Fryeburg); Marlene Livonia (Hiram); Phil Pomerleau (Standish); Lou Stack, Vice Chair (Standish); Larry Seidl (Baldwin).

**Guests:** Gordon Billington (Standish); Tony Donovan (Portland); Chuck Morgan (SMRPC); Rip Patten (Crede Associates); Jack Sutton (Maine Rail Group); Tony Wood (Baldwin); Steve Wood (Baldwin).

**Staff:** Chris MacClinchy (SMRPC); Caroline Paras (GPCOG).

### I. Welcome and Introductions

#### A. Minutes of 12/16/09

Steve made a motion, seconded by Larry, to approve the meeting minutes of 12/16/09. Motion passed unanimously.

### II. Updates

#### A. Town News

*Brownfield:* A new restaurant is coming to town.

*Baldwin:* A pellet mill is planned on the FE Wood and Sons property.

*Standish:* The new addition to the Town office is heavily used. There is a new skate park planned. The town recently hosted its annual pond hockey tournament.

*Hiram:* The town is in the midst of budget cuts.

*Fryeburg:* The Maine Department of Transportation has deemed the Red Iron Bridge on MacNeil Road and Harbor Road redundant and wants to close it. The Fryeburg Business Association is up and running.

#### B. Gorham East West Study Committee

Lou will attend the March 16 meeting in David's place.

### III. Mountain Division

#### A. State Rail Plan

The Route 113 Corridor Committee has submitted public comment requesting that the Mountain Division be designated a critical corridor. Jack suggested that the package be cc'd to potential rail operators for the Mountain Division.

## **B. Trail**

The communities of Westbrook and Windham may be applying for a MaineDOT grant for the Mountain Division from Westbrook to Windham. There has been speculation that along this section, where the tracks have been removed, the railroad bed will be improved with a gravel or paved trail until such time that rail returns. Dan Stewart, Maine DOT Bike/Ped coordinator, provided the following response:

The rail bed gravel surface is currently open for trail use for walking, bicycling, snowmobiling, cross country skiing, and equestrian use. This in no way inhibits future rail use. When the track is restored on the mountain division, the trail will be closed until a rail with trail is established (unless they both happen at the same time). This rail with trail will meet all MaineDOT specifications and will in no way inhibit use of the corridor for rail. The intent of the corridor has always been to be a Rail with Trail as happens all over the country. MaineDOT supports the economic development, transportation and quality of life improvements that this corridor is bringing to the Route 113 Corridor Towns. Please call Dan Stewart or Nate Moulton with any questions.

It is the stated position of the Route 113 Corridor Committee to “Apply for Transportation Enhancement funding to construct the Mountain Division Trail in a manner compatible with freight and regularly scheduled passenger rail service.” Comments included the following:

- Dan’s comments are not necessarily a position statement of the MaineDOT but his professional opinion as Bike/Ped Coordinator.
- HNTB has identified \$3 million in costs to achieve adequate separation of the rail and trail in the Windham-Standish section. It is not clear what these costs are for.
- The paving of the trail may be undermining the integrity of the railroad bed in the Windham to Standish section.
- Around the country, significant job creation is associated with the restoration of rail, not the trail.
- There are a number of worthy economic impact studies for rail-trails. The one for the Katy Trail in Missouri is most often cited as an example for the Mountain Division.
- Whether or not the grant goes forward, the Mountain Division from Westbrook to Windham IS an interim trail, at least until the tracks are put back in place.
- What will be the alignment of the trail in the Westbrook to Windham section relative to the railroad bed?
- The case made to take out the tracks along the Calais Branch was unfortunate.

*Action:* Draft a letter to MaineDOT restating the committee’s position that the trail be built in a manner compatible with freight and regularly scheduled passenger rail service. This would preclude support for an improved trail, whether gravel or pavement, on the same alignment as the railroad bed.

## **IV. Scenic Byway**

### **A. Marketing Materials**

Caroline reported that a request for \$2,500 was submitted to Norway Savings to fund the second printing of the Byway brochure. This request was not funded.

### **B. Hiram Falls Rest Area**

Chris made a report on the process for requesting improvements to the Hiram Falls Rest Area. Improvements may include the trimming of trees to restore the scenic view of the dam and the installation

of a picnic area with tables, trash can, and portable. The rest area is outside the jurisdiction of the Saco River Corridor Commission. The Baldwin Code Enforcement is fine with the proposal. Next Era Energy, which owns the property, is willing to provide the picnic area as part of a no-cost lease agreement and supports the tree-trimming concept. An entity would have to step forward to maintain and service the rest area. Questions and comments included the following:

- Is liability coverage on the property required? From whom?
- Perhaps the Boy Scouts would be willing to maintain the rest area.
- No trash cans should be installed. Instead, there should be a “carry in-carry out policy.”
- The portable needs to be visible from the road to discourage unwanted activity. However, it could be designed to blend in with the natural environment.

*Action:* Larry, Phil, Lou and Steve volunteered to serve on the planning committee to design and execute the plan for improvements.

## **V. New Business**

### **A. Brownfields Presentation**

Chuck Morgan, Economic Development Director of Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission and Rip Patten, Vice President and environmental engineer with Crede Associates, made a presentation on the Brownfields program.

Both GPCOG and SMRPC have received grant funds from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to conduct environmental assessment of sites possibly contaminated by petroleum and other hazardous substances. Potential sites include old gas stations, mills, schools, and other industrial, institutional, or commercial sites that could be redeveloped to a higher and better use. Redevelopment of these sites along the Route 113 Corridor could benefit both the Scenic Byway and the Mountain Division.

*Action:* Interested property owners should contact GPCOG or SMRPC to participate in the program.

### **B. Other**

Chair David Knapp has been called up to active duty. He will be gone from 6 months to one year.

Myranda McGowan is the new transportation planner for SMRPC.

### **C. Next meeting date**

The next meeting will be held on February 24 in Baldwin to discuss what to do in the event the TIGER grant for the Mountain Division is or is not funded.