

# Route 113 Corridor Committee

Corridor Committee Meeting

January 17, 2008

3:00 – 5:30 PM

East Hiram Fire Barn

## Meeting Notes

**Attendance:** Marlee Turner (Brownfield); David Knapp (Fryeburg); Phil Pomerleau (Standish); Mike Shaw (Standish); Lou Stack (Standish); Glen Reynolds (Baldwin); Eric Noble (Hiram); Ed Pierce (Hiram); Larry Seidl (Baldwin); Steven Wood (Baldwin); Conrad Hartford (Hiram); Ken Kimball (Hiram); Toni Seger (Western Maine Cultural Alliance); Tom Reinauer (SMRPC); Julia Dawson (SMRPC); Caroline Paras (GPCOG).

### 1. News

Caroline welcomed Julia Dawson, SMRPC's new Transportation Planner, to the Committee.

Hiram: Hiram is improving its town cemetery.

Baldwin: The Baldwin Business Association is working with their State representatives to change the administrative rules so that the Town can be grandfathered into the Southern Maine Pine Tree Zone. This would enable the Town to offer incentives in order to attract new businesses.

Standish: Standish is working on a CDBG grant for Steep Falls that would include improvements to the library, park and gazebo. They are also trying to find a new parcel of land for the proposed community center.

Brownfield: The Town is conducting a survey for its Comprehensive Plan update. So far, they have a 10% return rate. One challenge is that more than 50% of its residents are seasonal.

Fryeburg: Route 302 between Bridgton and Fryeburg finally has a PIN # from the Maine Department of Transportation. SAD #72's alternative school consolidation proposal has been approved. Weston's Farm has been designated a National Historic Landmark. Next July, the Town will host the Maine Bike Rally. Dave authored an editorial in the Portland Press Herald re: the importance of continued funding for the Downeaster. If the train does not continue into Portland, it certainly won't be expanded westward.

Caroline made a few miscellaneous announcements:

- MaineDOT is planning to pave the Mountain Division trail from Windham to Standish.
- Wayne Davis could not make the meeting but wanted the Towns to encourage their State legislators to support the Downeaster.
- The Maine Narrow Gauge Railroad may be looking for a new home. Eric Noble discussed the organization's scouting visit to Hiram last October. The MaineDOT does

not support the concept of the Narrow Gauge operating a limited run on the Mountain Division track or right-of-way. To further this discussion, however, the Committee would like to see the Narrow Gauge invited to a future meeting.

- Officials from the Maine Turnpike Authority could be invited to a future meeting to discuss the proposed spur to Gorham, which will affect east-west travel.

## **2. Economic Opportunities Strategy for the Saco River Valley**

### **A. Committee and Municipal Endorsement**

Caroline reviewed the proposed changes to the study that were approved at the last meeting. She noted that the Mountain Division Alliance took issue with the following strategy:

*Apply for Transportation Enhancement grants to construct the trail in a manner compatible ~~in~~ accordance with the state's adopted design standards for rails with trails with freight and regularly scheduled passenger service.*

However, Dan Stewart from the MaineDOT weighed in to support the language the way it has been revised.

The Committee voted to adopt the Economic Opportunities Strategy with the proviso that language be added to strengthen support for the Downeaster.

Once Caroline makes the changes proposed at this and the October 25, 2007 meeting, the Committee agreed that the word "draft" can be omitted from the document and the document can be posted online. Other public outreach strategies reached by consensus follow:

- Caroline will prepare an 8-page version of the document for distribution at Town meetings, local libraries and Town offices. This will include a cover letter that will be signed by members of the committee, a draft of which will be distributed at the next meeting.
- Caroline will prepare a PowerPoint presentation for members to use at their own Board of Selectmen, Town Council and Town Meetings.

## **3. Scenic Byway**

### **A. MaineDOT update**

Tom reviewed the timeline for development of the Corridor Management Plan. There is a long lag time between the application for funding to develop a plan and the actual award. In the meantime, there is still a lot of work that can be done, including development of a byway brochure or a Clean-up day on the byway. Tom will circulate a list of possible activities for discussion at the next meeting.

### **.B. Naming of the Scenic Byway**

Tom and Toni reviewed the background on how the corridor was named the Evans Notch Scenic Byway for purposes of the application. Now that designation has been granted, the name can be changed.

After a lively discussion, the Committee voted to name the corridor the *Pequawket Trail Scenic Byway*.

#### C. Discussion of Advisory Group membership

Tom reviewed the list of people and organizations that could be invited to join the Route 113 Corridor Committee in order to develop the Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan. Many Committee members took issue with the number of people suggested for inclusion who would represent interests north of Fryeburg. This brought up a number of related issues.

*Do we need to apply for a grant to maintain our Scenic Byway status?* Federal designation makes the corridor eligible for capital improvement grants for such projects as a scenic turnout or turning lanes. The only way to achieve Federal designation is to develop a Corridor Management Plan under the auspices of an Advisory Group. Tom was uncertain whether applying for Federal designation was a mandatory requirement of receiving State designation.

*Now that designation has been granted, what are the responsibilities of Towns in relation to the MaineDOT?* A number of Committee members commented that now that signs were up, they were getting lots of questions from residents on what the Town needs to do next. There were also some questions on whether the Towns "voted" to be included on the Byway (in fact, all that was necessary was a letter of support from the Town, not a binding vote nor a vote of the Route 113 Corridor Committee). Also some Towns had not received any communication from MaineDOT regarding the designation of the Byway, much less a notice that signs would be erected within their jurisdiction. Tom suggested inviting MaineDOT to the next meeting to answer questions from the Committee. He will also prepare a document outlining the advantages and responsibilities of Scenic Byway designation.

#### D. Continued planning for the "ribbon cutting" for State Byway Designation

There was no time for discussion of this item. However, the Committee did agree to have Toni draft a brochure of the Pequawket Trail Scenic Byway for review at the next meeting.

### V. Mountain Division Rail Study

#### A. Update from MaineDOT and/or HNTB

Nate Moulton had agreed to provide an update on the rail study. However, the meeting was adjourned by 5:30 PM when there was no sign of the guest speaker. Caroline offered to find out whether Nate was available for a future meeting. *It was learned the next day that Nate had indeed shown up to the meeting around 4:30, but the door to the fire station was locked and pounding yielded no results.*