

# **Cobbossee Trail Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

**January 9, 2023**

## **1. Meeting began at 3:05 PM, Welcome and Introductions**

Members present: Gay Grant, (Chair), Tom Reeves, Kate Carnes, Allison Wells, Melissa Lindley, (Gardiner Main Street), Greg Ponte, (Upstream), John Cameron, (Public Works), Kelly Hare (Public Works/Recording Secretary), Brian Keezer, (DOT), Dakota Hewlett, (DOT), and Davis Block, (Colby Intern).

## **2. Report on remaining project funds from Brian Keezer**

Brian Keezer reported that the amount remaining in the DOT account for phase 2 of this project, after the completion of the “Elbow” portion, is \$595,000.

## **3. Update on mapping project and review of draft**

Davis Block, Colby Intern, discussed the scope of the project and hopes to have a draft to submit before the next meeting on the 23rd. He walked the trail from Hannaford to the trestle bridge. He had further questions about the trail design.

Gay gave a brief overview of the Stantec feasibility report detailing two proposed alignments for crossing the stream instead of the old trestle. The committee is now leaning toward the least expensive alignment, which also is the least environmentally intrusive option. It was determined that due to its condition and the cost to renovate it, reusing the trestle is not a feasible option.

Dakota asked for clarity on the scope of the mapping project. Davis said he will be making a digital map with a ‘story map,’ showing how this trail will connect to other trails and community assets, that will provide a virtual tour of the trail, with text boxes, and photos of each portion of the trail. The map will be both virtual and printed.

Allison added that since story maps are interactive, and include text and photos, they give the viewer a virtual walk along the trail. The committee could choose what to features are most important to include.

Some benefits of the mapping project discussed included:

-A visual map to attach to applications, as well as for the public, to show how this trail connects to a list of community resources included in the scope of the mapping project.

-Links that will allow map users to virtually follow the trail.

-Virtual version could be useful for entities considering funding this project, allowing them to “take a trip down the trail” showing funders why this trail is so special.

-It will also be a great marketing tool and a way to recognize project funders, adding funder names to the map (for example, ‘this portion of the trail is funded by ---- Bank.’)

-A regional map would show how the Cobbossee Trail is part of a regional interconnected trail system that begins in Augusta, and includes the Kennebec River Rail Trail, through Hallowell and Gardiner, and portions of the East Coast Greenway and Merrymeeting trails, which are signed from Gardiner to Topsham/Brunswick. From a regional perspective, it’s important to show the framework of these trails and how they connect.

Short discussion about how to market the trail; ideas to market as a nature getaway right in the heart of Gardiner that all can enjoy, not only for active transportation, but fishing and birding as well.

Gay noted that Colby provided a grant to cover the costs of this mapping project as part of the annual “Jan Plan Program,” so the project will be at no cost to the city. Allison, who is supervising Davis’s work, said Colby was very enthused about the project, and that Davis was a great candidate for this job.

#### **4. Next Steps**

Dakota asked what the broader vision for the Cobbossee Trail is. From DOT’s perspective with the costs of the new bridge crossing, the case for the project would be stronger if we emphasized the regional connectivity for pedestrian and bicycle transportation. He suggested a more comprehensive approach to regional planning that would include neighboring communities. DOT has programs for developing bike/pedestrian master plans, and mentioned the PPI (Planning Partner Initiative), which would be a cost sharing program between the municipalities and DOT. Dakota stressed the competitiveness of the department’s projects, and that projects with the broadest impact might have the best chance of funding. He suggested a multiple jurisdiction study, with each municipality developing their own set of priorities, but showing common connections and interests, that could provide wider benefits for the region and tap into larger resources and funding. DOT has funds to help with the cost sharing of such projects, and suggested working with a professional planner, such as Joel Greenwood at KVCOG. He will follow up with information about these programs.

#### **5. Meeting Schedule**

Monday, January 23, 3-4:30 PM (All meetings to be held in City Hall Council Chambers.)

Mondays, February 6 & 27, 3-4:30 PM

Mondays, March 6 & 20, 3-4:30 PM

#### **6. Meeting Adjourned 4:20 PM**

