

JOHNSON RAIL TRAIL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 2025

Present:

Committee Members: Jan Gearhart, Peggy Williams, Lynda Hill, Kim Dunkley (via phone)

Others: Adrian Schmidt

Absent: Doug Molde, BJ Putvain

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

Mary Lou called the meeting to order 6:41

Jan moved to approve the minutes of March 19, 2025, Peggy seconded and the motion was passed.

The committee discussed possible uses for remaining grant money.

Kim said she had been tasked with looking into locations for benches and kiosks. Jackie Cassino of VTrans had concerns about Willow Crossing as a location. She feels we don't want Willow Crossing to become a trailhead because there is limited parking and people have to pull out onto Route 15. Mary Lou said Doug said we need a kiosk at the trailhead. Jan and Kim said we already have a place to put a map there. Lynda suggested that maybe we could just put up a sign at Willow Crossing giving the distance to the village of Johnson.

Kim said the new grocery store and Jenna's Coffee House are willing to host bike chargers. We need to get them pictures and costs. She said she has seen a bike rack at the library. If the library is growing, it would be nice to have two bike racks there.

Kim said Sue Lovering was getting prices for the kind of benches that are at the arboretum. Kyle Nuse was going to get back to her with a final price for the art bench we had discussed. Dog's Head is state property but it is not clear which state entity owns it. She asked Fish and Wildlife and they are supposed to get back to us to let us know if it is their land; if not, hopefully they can tell us who does own it. They can also tell us about the permit application process to put a bench there. Jan asked if Kim is saying Dog's Head is a possible location for a bench. Kim said the people she has talked to indicate it is possible but it needs a permitting process that she doesn't know about yet.

Jan said each kiosk is \$1500, so it will cost us \$4500 for three of them. She got a quote of \$750-800 from Lamoille Woodcraft for a 5 ft. bench. She showed a picture.

Jan said she likes the bridge as a bench location.

Kim said we should make sure to include the cost of cement for each bench. If we put a bench on a cement pad then we don't have to worry about cutting grass around it. Lynda said the bench could be chained to a bolt in the cement.

Kim said she would call Kyle to ask about the art bench price. The artist said he could use wood as we requested but he didn't have a price yet.

Kim said Jackie Cassino pointed out that there is not a lot of space on the bridge. She doesn't want it bottlenecking the bridge. Jan and Mary Lou said they think there is room off to the side.

Jan said she, Lynda and Peggy spoke to the village trustees on Monday. They haven't given permission yet for a kiosk on the Village Green. They want to look at it.

Mary Lou said she thought Doug thought the LCPC map had to be at the welcome center. Others suggested maybe there could be one there and one somewhere else. Jan said she was thinking Adrienne's map would be at the Welcome Center. Others agreed that makes sense.

The committee agreed that we should tell the selectboard we want to buy benches, kiosks, charging stations and a sign for Lea's playground.

There was discussion about how many charging stations we need. Mary Lou said she doesn't think we need more than one. Jenna's Coffee House and the new grocery store have said we could put charging stations there. Jan said if we could put on one Vermont Studio Center property, that would be centrally located.

The committee discussed getting only 2 kiosks and a simple sign with the distance to the village for Willow Crossing. Mary Lou said any sign on the rail trail has to be a specific kind of sign with a specific look. Peggy suggested keeping the estimated cost for kiosks presented to the selectboard the same even if we think we may only get 2 kiosks and a sign.

Lynda said a charging station seems like overkill to her. All we need is a set of outlets and a cover and bike rack. Jan agreed. We can call it a charging area.

The estimated cost for the Lea's playground sign is \$1400.

Peggy left at 7:20.

Adrian said he would get quotes on concrete, a bolt, etc. for the bench.

The Woolen Mills was suggested as another possible location for a charging area.

There was discussion about possible locations for a third kiosk. Lynda suggested the Hoag property on the corner of Railroad Street and Main Street. Mary Lou asked about using the former grocery store property. Lynda said it will be a long time before that is turned into a green space. Lynda and Jan agreed to look at possible locations.

Jan showed a picture of a log style bench that other committee members liked. There was discussion about how a bench like that could be made.

Kim sent a message saying Kyle told her the art bench previously discussed would cost \$3K. She thinks that does not include the pad. Committee members agreed that is too expensive and it would be better not to have too much art from a single artist.

Lynda said she will talk to Duncan Hastings to see if he could cut a log in half for a bench with his sawmill.

Mary Lou, Jan and Lynda agreed to go to the next selectboard meeting.

The committee looked at the map being developed by LCPC and discussed Johnson locations they feel should be shown on it, such as the covered bridge and Beard Park. It was agreed that the map should show a close-up view of the village and surrounding area.

At the selectboard meeting, we need to ask for Adrian and Lynda to be added to the committee if they have not already.

At this point there was no longer a quorum, so election of officers was postponed.

Some committee members will not be available on the third Wednesday in May, so it was agreed to meet on May 14 at 6:00.

Lynda said she will talk to Duncan about whether his sawmill could be used to cut a log in half and talk to someone else about installation. She will talk to one of the Hoags to see if they are open to a kiosk on their property. Mary Lou will talk to Tori Hellwig of LCPC about the map. Adrian will get prices for different methods of anchoring the bench. Jan will talk to Hope Sullivan about a charging area on Studio Center property. Mary Lou will talk to loggers she knows about ways to achieve the log bench look. Jan and Lynda agreed to meet downtown the next day.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths