

JOHNSON RAIL TRAIL COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 2025

**Present:**

Committee Members: Jan Gearhart, Lynda Hill, Kim Dunkley, BJ Putvain, Adrian Schmidt, Mary Lou Kopas

Others: Adrienne Parker, Duncan Hastings (by phone), Ellis O'Hear

**Absent:** Doug Molde, Peggy Williams

**Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.**

The meeting was called to order at 6:25.

**Mary Lou moved to approve the minutes of April 16, 2025 with one correction to the sentence "Mary Lou will talk to loggers she knows about ways to achieve the log bench look" – replacing "Mary Lou" with "Jan." Adrian seconded and the motion was passed.**

Adrienne said she still needs to do the updates to her map that were discussed. She can try to have that done by the next meeting. Committee members suggested places that should be shown on the map. Mary Lou said the idea is that permanent places like the arboretum will be shown on the map and businesses will be listed on the side with pins on the map marking their locations. Pins can be removed or added as businesses close or open. Lynda noted that we need to make sure when the kiosk is built that there is room under the plexiglass for the pins.

Kim asked if we have permission from the village to put a map on the Village Green. Jan and Lynda said no. Lynda said Ken Tourangeau feels the Green is too small to put anything else on it. Erik Bailey and BJ had suggested moving the bike racks that are there now and putting the map in that spot. The trustees asked the committee to come back with exact measurements for the proposed bike chargers and map stand.

Jan said the Masons will let us put a map stand at the corner by the Masonic temple.

Adrienne said there is a Reimagine Johnson task force that got a grant that is paying for a graphic designer and a landscape designer to put together a new plan for the downtown area. The rail trail committee could suggest the things we want at the Village Green be included in that plan. If they are, they could potentially be approved as part of the larger plan. But that is a lengthier process.

Kim suggested calling trustee board members to encourage them to vote to allow the map stand and bike chargers on the Village Green or possibly submitting a petition to the trustee board.

We have permission to put one kiosk at Legion Field. The committee agreed Jan should tell Brian Currier that we want him to build 2 kiosks.

Jan said we have to wait on the Act 250 permit before putting in the granite steps. We have until the end of December to get that done. It was agreed that different committee members would reach out to Tom Galinat over the next few weeks to encourage follow-up on that.

Jan said she knows some people who may be able to supply logs to make log benches. Duncan joined the meeting by phone. He agreed that if logs could be brought to his house he could use his sawmill to saw them in half. Committee members said the benches would probably need to be built on-site once we have the cut logs.

Committee members did not know if anyone has bid on the welcome center upgrades. We need to ask Tom for an update.

Jan will talk to Eric Schultz about providing logs for the benches. She suggested Will Jennison might be able to build them. Adrian said he would love to help with that project.

Ellis O'Hear arrived at 7:07. Committee members explained to him that Adrienne is making a map for the trailhead that is more geared toward our town than the map there now. In addition, the committee wants a map on the Village Green because that will allow people who don't even know there is a rail trail to find out about it and possibly plan to come back to use it, as well as allowing rail trail users to find out about other things in town. Ellis suggested putting a map on what used to be the Parker & Stearns property. Committee members questioned how many people would go there and see it and pointed out that the Village Green is in the center of town where people who are visiting businesses are likely to see a map. Ellis said signage is needed to point people from the rail trail toward town.

It was discussed that the bike racks at the end of Railroad Street are not that useful and that the bike racks at the former Sterling Market could be moved. The library and Jenna's Coffee House were suggested as possible locations.

Kim said Jenna's Coffee House is willing to host a bike charging station.

Ellis brought up possible insurance issues with a charger. Sometimes they catch on fire. (*BJ arrived at 7:13.*) Committee members said that is an issue with car chargers. Bike chargers are much smaller.

BJ said Ken Tourangeau had suggested the idea of a 3-pedestal information setup because a single pedestal on the brick area where the bike racks are now might not fill enough of the space and might not look right. One pedestal could have information on the history of Johnson. Lynda asked, what about putting the charging stations on either side of it? BJ said that would require drilling through the brick to bring power to them. Lynda said 3 pedestals would cost more.

Lynda said the chargers are 36 inches high, 19 inches long and only 5 inches wide. BJ said he likes the idea of putting the chargers on either side of the electrical box.

BJ said the trustees prefer having the map at the corner of Railroad Street and Main Street. The idea was that when rail trail users get to the end of Railroad Street they need information. Kim said she feels the Village Green works well as a location because people who are stopping in Johnson to go to Butternut Mountain Farm or the Woolen Mill and don't even know there is a rail trail can see the map there and learn about the rail trail, as well as other stores and restaurants. It would help the economy. BJ said that is not really a rail trail thing; it is a resource for the town. Adrienne agreed

that it is not a rail trail map; it is a village-specific map with a focus on recreation. Mary Lou said cars won't stop at the end of Railroad Street. There is a place to park at the Village Green.

BJ said if people coming off the rail trail get to the end of Railroad Street they won't know what is in the village. Mary Lou said they will, because there is a sign right where they come off the trail. We can put another sign at the end of Railroad Street pointing the way to food, businesses, etc. BJ said a map at the Village Green is more for people who are stopping there. If this is a rail trail committee project the map should be at the end of Railroad Street. Kim said the rail trail committee is happy to help the village with this because we have money, but the information on the Village Green would be focused on the village economy in general, not just the rail trail.

BJ said he thinks the trustees will not approve a plan to put a map only on the Village Green and not at the end of Railroad Street. He thinks there would be a better chance they would approve having a map at both locations. Committee members said we do want to put a sign at the end of Railroad Street that points the way to information and services. There was discussion about having a wayfinding sign like the one at the trailhead, with arrows pointing toward multiple things – food, shopping, gas, etc.

BJ said the trustees seemed to feel a map pedestal was more acceptable at the Village Green than a larger kiosk. If we have the money, he would like to push the idea of both – a kiosk at the end of Railroad Street and a map pedestal at the Village Green. He thinks it would be best to bring the trustees a specific plan including locations and sizes of all items. Adrienne said she could try to use Photoshop to show how the chargers and pedestal would look in the proposed locations.

BJ asked who will do maintenance on the chargers. Lynda said they are simple. They are really just racks with outlets. Kim pointed out that the other bike racks around town are not being maintained. BJ said they are being neglected because the village crew apparently doesn't have time to work on them, so it would be a problem to add more to their plate. They would be low maintenance, but the company that makes them must have information about what maintenance is needed – changing a plug every so many years, for instance. Lynda said there are electricians in town who can do work like that. BJ said it would help if the committee could get the town to commit to maintaining the chargers.

The committee discussed things that could be included on a wayfinding sign at the end of Railroad Street – gas, information, food, shopping, the fire department, the town hall, the Historical Society building, the Cold Spring and the Long Trail.

BJ brought up the issue of how it would look to have just one pedestal on the big brick area where the bike racks are now. Committee members said they don't think it would be a problem. People will need room to walk around it. Adrienne suggested flower planters could be put there too. BJ suggested we could get a pedestal sized to fit the space.

**Kim moved to present a plan at the next village trustee board meeting, with specifics, for a map pedestal on the Village Green where the bike racks are currently located, bike chargers on either side of the electrical box, and signage at the Railroad Street/Main Street intersection, Mary Lou seconded and the motion was passed.**

Mary Lou asked about moving and resurfacing the old bike racks as previously discussed. BJ said that is a village responsibility, not a rail trail committee responsibility. Mary Lou said the budget information she was given shows that the village put \$715 toward sandblasting and painting the bike racks. BJ said he doesn't remember that. BJ said we had previously discussed that he would sandblast and Kyle would be right behind him painting. And if we had enough money we would also clean up the metal parts of some of the benches. Mary Lou asked if the village has any ability to sandblast. BJ said no; he does their sandblasting. Kim and Lynda said they would be willing to spend their own money and time to paint bike racks and benches. BJ said he would donate his time to sandblast.

It was agreed to get on the selectboard agenda to ask if the town will take on responsibility for maintenance of the bike chargers.

Adrienne said on May 28 there will be a meeting to talk about restructuring committees. It is possible that the rail trail committee would be rolled into a recreation committee with subcommittees and that committee might have a reserve fund that could be used for maintenance.

BJ said we got approval for concrete and bike racks at the Cold Spring. What happened with that? Adrienne suggested looking through past village trustee board minutes to see when that was approved and then asking when it will happen. Adrian volunteered to check the minutes.

Mary Lou said we have talked about putting a sign at Willow Crossing pointing to the Village of Johnson. Kim said she can check with Jackie Cassino or Doug Molde about any state requirements for the sign.

Mary Lou said where the rail trail crosses Railroad Street there is a pink sign that we would like to move across the road. We also need to update the map on that sign. There is a sign there pointing to Johnson Village but it is not as obvious as it could be and doesn't look like it was designed for the rail trail.

Mary Lou said if there is money left maybe we can work with the Beautification Committee to make the area where people turn onto Railroad Street from the rail trail more attractive. Adrienne suggested a joint meeting with the Beautification Committee.

There was discussion about the \$715 supposedly dedicated to sandblasting and painting. Committee members agreed that this would have been money the village gave to the town for the rail trail committee. BJ suggested Kyle might remember what happened with this. Lynda said Doug may as well. Adrian will try to find discussion on it in past village trustee board minutes.

Mary Lou said there will be a public meeting on the scoping study on May 22 at 6:00 p.m. at the municipal building.

Jan said she was at the Recreational Economic Opportunities Task force meeting. She didn't find out anything other than that the scoping study meeting is coming up.

Adrian volunteered to serve as committee chair.

**Kim moved to elect Adrian Schmidt as chair and the motion was seconded and passed.**

**Kim moved to elect Mary Lou Kopas as vice chair, BJ seconded and the motion was passed.**

The next meeting will be June 18 at 6:00 p.m. at the municipal building. ‘

Kim will call Eben to get the question about bike charger maintenance on the selectboard agenda. Jan said she will talk to Tom about the Act 250 permit and the welcome center renovations and she offered to go to the next selectboard meeting.

**It was moved and seconded to adjourn and the motion was passed at 8:07.**

*Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths*