

Bikeways Committee Minutes (draft)
March 18, 2025

Attending:

Paul Gazaille

Fred Rice

Charlie Walkley (acting chair)

Jim Ferry

Guest- Richard Siegel

Charlie Walkley called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

November, 2024 minutes were approved. In the future, we will approve minutes online so that they can be posted more promptly.

Old Business

1. Charlie Walkley reported on the meeting that was held last month with Linc Hooper, head of the Harwich Highway Department regarding plans for “re-paving the Old Colony Rail Trail”.
 - a. Important to note that this is not a ‘re-paving’ of the trail. It is a State funded safety project focused on intersections. A redesign of the Oak Street intersection and addressing issues with the Rt 124 intersection will be key elements of the project. The project is still scheduled for Summer, 2027.
 - b. It is outside the scope of the project to straighten the trail between Rt 39 and Depot Road around the Water Department.
 - c. A temporary fix to smooth the roots has occurred and will be repaved in sections.
 - d. Open meetings will be scheduled to get input.
 - e. Charlie thanked the Highway Department for its ongoing maintenance of the trail.
2. The lady who tripped on a hump on the trail is still recovering. Her thumb is bothering her and she has a chipped tooth. Linc Hooper thanked us for being his “eyes and ears on the trail” to prevent future accidents like this from happening.
3. The J-1 safety issue is still a concern. It is unclear whether the Committee can engage in fund raising to provide helmets or lights to J-1 workers.

New Business

1. An 8-mile extension of the Cape Cod Rail Trail from Yarmouth to Barnstable is being planned by Mass DOT. News media reports say that approximately 80 trees will be removed. We are invited to make comments on the plan. A November, 2024 presentation can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/doc/yarmouth-barnstable-cape-cod-rail-trail-extension-phase-3-includes-new-bridge-over-willow-street-railroad-presented-at-the-massdot-board-meeting-on-november-20-2024/download>

2. There is interest in joint meetings with Bikeways committees from other Cape towns to discuss common issues. Our annual meetings with Chatham Bikeways committee are valuable. Perhaps a joint meeting with DCR and all the Cape town committees would be valuable. No specific action was taken on this.
3. Guest Richard Siegel urged the Committee to make safety a bigger issue this Spring, perhaps with some public announcements about safety at intersections. The signs that tell bicyclists to stop and walk their bike across the road are not generally observed.

Charlie spoke for the Committee and explained that as we understand it, if bicyclists do not dismount and walk their bicycle through the intersection, they are not considered pedestrians. It was noted that the Harwich Police have communicated this policy on their Facebook page.

There was general discussion and agreement that bicyclists need to be aware of this policy and take personal responsibility for their actions. It was also agreed that forcing them to dismount and walk will greatly diminish the value of the rail trail. It might even result in some cyclists getting off the bike path and taking to the roads, which would be more dangerous.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 15 at 1:00 P.M.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:45 P.M.