

Explore Path Funding Committee  
Minutes taken by M. Aiken  
Thursday, September 26

- Present: all committee members and Julie Wahlin
- Julie had come for a 4<sup>th</sup> of July Committee meeting which was cancelled. She brought “monster cookies” for that meeting which she shared with the Explore Path Funding Committee, all of whom decided they were outstanding.
- This was the first-ever meeting of this committee.
- Each member introduced themselves
  - Gary Bressor, Bridge Street
  - Jared Katz, Snipe Ireland Road
  - Mark Aiken, Johnnie Brook Road
- Committee members decided not to elect a chair. As a three-person committee, it was decided that the committee may be able to function without a chair (or that members could take turns chairing meetings). If it turns out a chair is required, members decided to decide on a chair at that time.
- Gary explained the history (or is it “pre-history”) of this committee: the Richmond Selectboard had a study done about possible routes for a path connecting the Riverview neighborhood to the Richmond Park and Ride to Richmond Village. The Selectboard adopted the study even without funding sources identified. Concerned that the issue would die there, Gary suggested that this committee be formed with the singular objective to explore funding sources for the multi-use path described in the study. He placed an ad on Front Porch Forum looking for volunteers. When nobody responded, he called Mark and Jared.
- Gary mentioned that the path route seems to go through many wetlands. This could be a significant challenge. He suggested the committee explore a dirt path which would be less disruptive to wetlands and therefore potentially more prone to success. Mark said that all alternatives should be explored; if a paved path is the ideal then we should at least find out if it would be feasible.
- Mark suggested that an early step for this committee would be to list goals and priorities, hopes, benefits of the proposed path, and challenges in its way.
- One issue that a pathway from Riverview to Richmond Village might face is land ownership and dealing with owners. Gary wondered what public meeting law says about discussions about land deals and whether specific land deals have to be publicly shared. Everyone decided that the committee needs to learn what public meeting law says regarding this issue.
- Gary mentioned some landowners that he knows who might support this project.

- Gary described the route of the proposed path and where the path would be next to Route 2 and where it could veer away from the road. Committee members wondered if owners of Lucky Spot and the new, under-construction store at Exit 17 might support a pathway that led potential bike and pedestrian traffic to their businesses. Gary suggested that bike tool benches could even be placed in the vicinity of these businesses and that the stores could stock biking snacks for commuters.
- Jared spoke about commuter traffic and that Route 117 beyond Lucky Spot has a wide shoulder for bike traffic all the way to Sand Hill Road (which connects to Saxon Hill mountain biking area). He said there's an okay shoulder from Sand Hill Road to Route 289 – a road where there's great potential for a bike path... and that could connect people to Fort Ethan Allen, Essex, Colchester, and Winooski. He suggested that this project had potential to then connect Richmond to Waterbury for bike traffic. Mark mentioned that it would also be great to explore a bike path from Volunteer Green to the end of the Johnnie Brook Trail on Huntington Road.
- Gary expressed that the original Selectboard discussion was about connecting the Riverview neighborhood to the Richmond Park and Ride. He said the Selectboard supports the entire path.
- Gary expressed that he had conversations with the chair of the Conservation Committee who said that her committee supported this project.
- Gary added that, outside of potentially tapping into the Conservation fund, it was important to him not to add to the tax burden of residents. He then handed out copies of an email exchange he had with Keith Osborne, Richmond director of planning and zoning that listed public funding sources. Committee members each chose one funding source to research for the next meeting. They would each choose another next meeting and so forth.
- Mark mentioned that Burlington's bike path is supported by a nonprofit – part of whose purpose is to fundraise and give individual donors a nonprofit to donate to. This might be something to explore in order to raise funding for this project. Committee members also mentioned other alternative pathways that might serve as models – Colchester's bike path and a path along Interstate 89 in New Hampshire.
- Gary relayed that surveyor Chris Haggerty had come across information in Harriett Riggs' history book about Richmond that confirmed that Route 2 is a "4-rod" road, which may impact how much space there is next to the road for the purposes of the pathway. The information in Riggs' book was actually used in a recent legal case that confirmed Route 2's status as "4-rod."
- Committee members assigned themselves homework for the next meeting:
  - To each research one funding source as discussed above
  - To think about goals for this committee

- To brainstorm the benefits of an alternative pathway connecting Riverview to the Park and Ride and to village
- To think about possible routes beyond the scope of this specific project
- To identify challenges to this project
- Committee members set Thursday, October 17 at 7PM as the date of the next meeting, knowing that the 4<sup>th</sup> of July committee would be meeting at the same time and in the hopes that they might have leftover cookies.