
THE RAIL TRAIL Future Developments

David Hutcheson

Local people are taking positive action to bring our rail trail into being. Larry Kiernan, of Friends of the Wayland Rail Trail, held a meeting on January 11. He told the 30 or so people in attendance how it will happen.

recreational rail trail here is now a "by right" use and individual towns cannot vote it away.

Does this mean that DCR will impose an unwanted trail on us? Absolutely Not! DCR has

H. Bentley Crouch



LEFT: February, 1969, was one of the worst winter months on record in eastern Massachusetts. A major storm on the 9th and 10th raised havoc with the railroad, and operations were just returning to normal when a three-day blizzard struck on the 24th. Locomotives were assigned to tow Trains 740 and 741 in a vain attempt to maintain Central Mass. service. GP-9 1708 is shown fighting better than two feet of snow at Conant Road in Weston on February 26, a battle she lost when she stalled at the Weston depot a few minutes later. The train was not freed until late that evening.

Photo from *The Central Mass.*, published by Marker Press under arrangement with the Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society, Inc.

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The MA Department of Conservation and Recreation has signed a 99-year lease with the MBTA taking control of the right-of-way of the former Central Mass. Railroad running 104 miles from Belmont to Northampton. Where DCR's mission is conservation and recreation, a

no money. To advance the trail they will work first with towns that wholeheartedly want it, like Wayland. How it goes is that Wayland will satisfy the regulatory requirements and do the work. DCR will hold the title. Trail Delineation and MEPA Approval are permits Wayland must satisfy before

work begins. It is hoped that work might begin during 2012. Wayland has 3 miles of trail to do. The quarter mile in their town center will be done by the private Wayland Town Center developers who have committed \$250,000 and will take care of major intersections at Rte 27 and at Rte 20. For the remaining two-and-three-quarter miles, Iron Horse Preservation will take the rails and ties and leave behind a smooth graded firm surface trail.



Today: The abandoned Central Mass. Railroad, looking west from the Conant Rd. bridge

Here in Weston we can be supportive of our Wayland neighbors, keep our own informal rail trail the best we can keep it, and hope that DCR might hold us in mind to follow Wayland.



Today: The abandoned Central Mass. Railroad, looking east from the Conant Rd. bridge

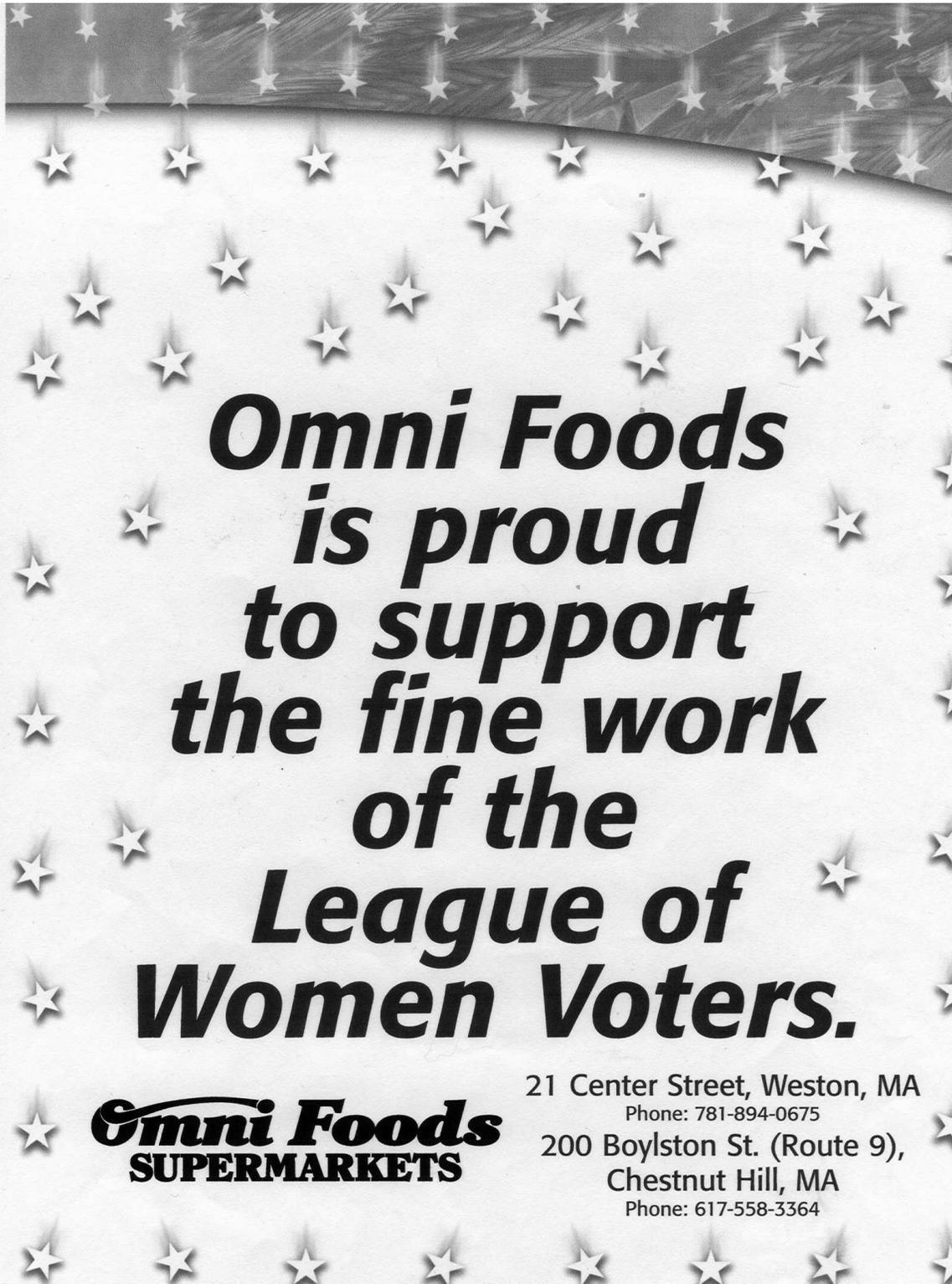
The small, local, grassroots method of building rail trails was pioneered by Wachusett Greenways, who are actively successful on our MA Central r.o.w to our west. WG was formed in 1995 with the intention of building all 30 miles of the MA Central Rail Trail in their region. To date they have completed 15 miles of now happily and actively used trail. Next year they will build more, connecting people to the land in a very healthy way.

Photos by Katherine Wolfthal



Coffee Hour with Senator Susan Fargo and Representative Alice Peisch

On Saturday, January 21 at 11:00 a.m., at the library's Community Room, Senator Fargo and Representative Peisch will be our guests. They will each speak briefly about recent events on Beacon Hill and their priorities for the current legislative session, and will be available to answer any questions we might have. Please come and bring a friend to take advantage of this opportunity



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JOSIAH SMITH TAVERN AND OLD LIBRARY UPDATE

Barbara Hill and Beth Keane

To recap, after the original proposal for renovating the Tavern and Library failed to garner sufficient support, the Town went back to the drawing board to determine what to do with these two buildings in the center of Weston. As you may know, the Board of Selectmen hired The Cecil Group to help facilitate a consensus on how to use these buildings and what criteria was most important. There was broad (but not universal) consensus that the buildings should be preserved (not razed.) While the Cecil Group's work was continuing, Town Meeting approved a plan to spend \$850,000 restoring and renovating the exterior of the Old Library, similar to the prior exterior renovation and restoration of the Tavern.



The Old Library

After holding several open meetings at Town Hall, and after soliciting input from Weston residents, The Cecil Group developed a rubric of criteria and weighting factors. See:

http://weston.govoffice.com/vertical/Sites/%7B264E11B6-4A4A-4EC0-B631-35FE907B479E%7D/uploads/Potential_Proposal_Selection_Criteria.pdf

Next, Weston issued requests for Letters of Interest. While providing the letter of interest was not

mandatory, it was an opportunity for the Town to assess interest and for interested developers to find partners to work with: Weston received seven (7) letters of interest by the December 14, 2011 deadline. Copied below are the summaries of the letters, taken from the Town of Weston Website.

1. **CSM North, LLC** proposes redevelopment of the historic structure into residential apartment units.
2. **GLC Developmental Resources, LLC** proposes an RFP process that provides a framework for all parties to collaborate and arrive at a final plan that meets as many objectives as possible. Open to a number of scenarios.
3. **The Landmark Trust USA** proposes to develop the Tavern property as a Landmark vacation rental property. The Landmark Trust USA rescues significant historic properties suffering from neglect, threatened by inappropriate use, or searching for a benign use. Once restored, the properties are rented to small groups for vacation. This rental practice allows people to experience history in an intimate way and generates the funds necessary for maintenance.
4. **RARE Properties, Inc.** has identified a general interest with focus on adaptive reuse, in accord with some of the ideas advanced for a new Weston History Center and Archive and restoration of the Tavern.
5. **Urbanica Design + Development** proposes two possible uses for the Tavern and Old Library:
 - 1) Artist housing (Tavern, 8-10 units), gallery and art education program (Barn) with an attached event space (Old Library). Event space could potentially be a small café and/or teenage recreational center.

2) School for the advancement of foreign language and culture. Classroom space in Tavern and Old Library would be used for after-school and weekend foreign language programs, mathematics, music, art, and dance. Barn and upper level Tavern would be used for assemblies and indoor recreation.

6. **Weston Historical Society, Inc. (WHS)** proposes using the Old Library as a Weston History Center and Town Archive and partnering with the Women's Community League to upgrade and fully utilize the Tavern building, with the WHS occupying the main block of the Tavern for a museum and history center.

7. **The Women's Community League of Weston (WCL)** proposes continuing to occupy the Barn and Connector space at the Tavern and to partner with other entities to upgrade and more fully utilize the Tavern. A vision for the Tavern could include a small museum and town tour center run by the WHS, WHS archives, a small WCL-run antique exchange and office, and a grand ballroom rental venue with small catering kitchen. The Barn and Connector could include event and meeting space, a small kitchen, and an expanded clothing exchange boutique. Operations could include more frequent use by commercial partners (weekly coffee shop, exercise classes, monthly dinners, party venue, etc.)

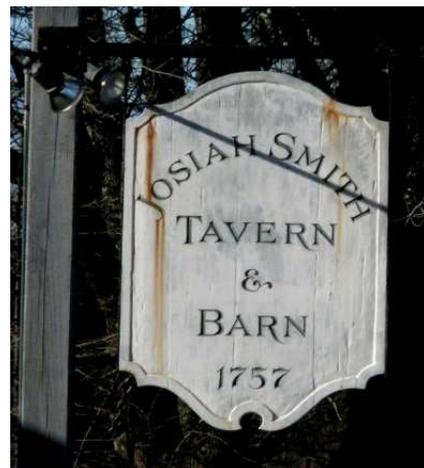


The Josiah Smith Tavern and Barn

You can review the full detail of the seven letters of interest via a link on the Weston.org website, http://weston.govoffice.com/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={001B0223-F403-4C76-83F5-3AB6B0D86342}&DE=

The next step will be that Weston will issue a Request for Proposals, all of which will be evaluated against the rubric. The Town is not required to accept any proposal, but it will be the next option for considering how to re-use these buildings. It is likely that any proposal, if accepted, will include the use of Community Preservation Act funds, and if so, the Community Preservation Committee's recommendation and the support of Town Meeting will be required before any project moves forward.

Please stay informed and involved in the town-wide discussion and consideration of these historic and valued buildings.



Photographs by Katherine Wolfthal

League of Women Voters of Weston

MEMBERSHIP FORM 2011-2012

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan, political organization, which encourages informed and active participation in all levels of government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. We serve the local community in many ways:

- Sponsor Candidates and Issues nights before elections
- Provide voter information and conduct voter-registration drives
- Encourage voter participation with banners and rides to the polls
- Study local, state and national issues and hold open meetings
- Act upon carefully considered positions by lobbying and circulating petitions
- Publish a "Know Your Town" booklet
- Train members to be active and involved citizens.

Our membership year runs from July 1 to June 30. As a Weston member, you also belong to and receive publications from the State and National Leagues.

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Email _____

Check one: Renewal New Member

I enclose a check made payable to **The League of Women Voters of Weston*** for:

\$60 Individual Membership (covers required local dues to the State and National Leagues)

\$75 Family Membership (two individuals in the same household)

Name of second household member: _____

\$50 Basic Membership

\$ _____ Additional Contribution (Any contributions above and beyond regular dues are greatly appreciated and assist our local league in providing more services and offsetting our operating expenses.)

\$ _____ TOTAL ENCLOSED

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 \$ _____ LWV Education Fund (Tax-deductible contribution made payable by separate check to the LWV Education Fund)

Return form to: Rochelle Nemrow, 61 Beaver Rd., Weston, MA 02493

Do you know a friend who might be interested in joining the League of Women Voters?

Name, address & phone _____

* It is the policy of the LWV of Weston that no resident shall be refused participation in the League because of inability to pay. If a hardship preventing payment of dues exists, please contact Katty Chace at 781-790-1087.