

JOHNSON RAIL TRAIL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2025

Present:

Committee Members: Adrian Schmidt, Kim Dunkley, Jan Gearhart, Doug Molde, Mary Lou Kopas (by phone)

Absent: BJ Putvain, Peggy Williams, Lynda Hill

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

Without a quorum present initially, the committee members who were there had informal conversation about placement of bike racks and kiosks. Kim and Jan feel we should leave the bike rack at the Village Green that is there now. Jan said Lynda spoke to Greg Tatro and explained that we want a place for e-bike charging stations close to shopping and food. The most obvious place is at the coffee shop, He agreed one could be placed there. Lynda described to him what she and Jan had talked about because we have to cover the chargers – building a little roof in the open area between the Studio Center and the coffee shop, just past the main door and porch.

Mary Lou joined the meeting by phone at 6:22, making a quorum.

1. Call Meeting to Order

Adrian called the meeting to order at 6:22.

2. Additions to Agenda

Doug said he would like to report on his conversations at the college with Alexis Anderson and Tom Fondakowski. Kim said she would like a short discussion of signage.

3. Approve July Minutes

Doug moved to approve the minutes of July 16, 2025 with the minutes amended to show that at that meeting he requested to add to the agenda discussion of getting two more picnic tables at the Welcome Center and discussion of signage. Jan seconded. It was discussed that this meeting was not legally warned, so no official action can be taken.

4. Update on Ted Alexander Center Upgrade, Back Forty Builders

Adrian said Tom has not gotten the itemized list from Brian Raulinaitis. Doug said he called Brian. He said he had been injured but would get the list to us. If his proposal is approved he is planning to get the work done this fall.

Jan said the kiosk that will be at the trailhead can be placed wherever we want as long as it follows the guidelines. We do not have to have it okayed by Jackie Cassino because it is on town property.

Jan said Tori Hellwig at LCPC said the kiosk map is being updated and isn't ready to be printed yet. It should be ready to be printed by the fall. LCPC might print them for us.

Jan talked to Brian Currier, who is building the kiosks. He said they should be done in the next couple weeks.

5. Bike Rack Plans

Adrian said Nate Brigham and Erik Bailey want to choose the location of the bike rack at the Cold Spring. Erik said he had an idea of where it could go that would work with snow removal. Erik has concerns about the specific bike rack Adrian mentioned, the Saris Mighty Mite 5 bike rack. His

concern is that there are beveled connections on it that he thinks would rust quickly. Adrian thinks we need to choose other bike rack. Kim looked at other bike racks and identified one that seemed like a potential option. It is 60 inches long and 27.25 inches wide. Adrian said he can reach out to Eric to figure out a time for him and Jan to meet him to discuss the bike rack. He thinks the rack Kim found looks good.

Mary Lou asked, what about the plan to put one by the café? Jan said Greg Tatro is willing to have bike racks and e-bike charging stations at Jenna's Coffee House. He said a cover for a charging station can be built off the building. He said we should talk to Bill Hoag, owner of Two Sons, about the cost of the electricity. Doug asked if Greg would build the shelter. Jan said she doesn't know if Lynda asked him that.

Doug said the Studio Center was very in favor of having bike racks in that area. It was previously discussed that we couldn't put charging stations on the Studio Center side for some reason. Jan said we should probably talk to Jim MacDowell.

Kim said she found a 9 bike rack that she would like to get for Jenna's Coffee House. Next time she would like to make a motion to buy that one. She hasn't heard anyone talk about needing a charge. There are many places to plug in a bike. Jan suggested we proceed with regular bike racks first and worry about charging stations later. We could always budget for those next year.

Jan said she can talk to Jim MacDowell or Hope Sullivan to see if they have issues with us putting a bike rack next to Jenna's Coffee House. Doug said he already discussed it with Jim. He suggests checking with him to see if it is still all right. Jan said she will do that.

Kim asked if we should order a second bike rack when we order the one for the Cold Spring and also put one at the Johnson General Store. She will ask Mike Mignone about putting one there. Adrian agreed that ordering two at once makes sense.

Jan said the library probably won't be ready for a bike rack until next spring.

There was discussion about how long we have to use the grant money we have. Doug said we should spend it as expeditiously as possible. If we want to ask the Vermont Community Foundation for more money, we need to spend the money from this grant. Jan said she thinks there is a deadline for using the grant money for the stone steps. Doug said that project hasn't gone out for bid and can't yet because we need an Act 250 permit. Carl Rogers is working on it. He can talk to Carl to find out what the deadline is.

Kim suggested just purchasing 3 bike racks now and then working on the logistics of placing them afterwards. Adrian said that is not a bad idea but we can't make a motion to do it at this meeting.

There was discussion about possibly needing to store the bike racks in winter. Doug said the area between the Studio Center and the coffee house will be plowed in winter. And he thinks wherever a rack would go at the General Store will probably be plowed.

Adrian said the town cannot put in the concrete pad at the Cold Spring, but they seemed open to us doing it. The rack at the Cold Spring would be permanent and not removed in winter.

Kim said if the bike rack were against the building under the eaves she thinks it would be out of the way of a plow. Jan said at her house they plow under the eaves. She can check with Jim MacDowell.

6. Signage and Map Lists from Johnson's Recreational Economic Opportunities Task Force

Doug said he and Kyle and Eric Nuse drove around town and considered how current signage could be improved for bikers. Any signage will have to fit into the VTrans methodology. We should try to get VTrans to approve signs for as many of the local attractions as possible. If they do not approve them all, we ought to write grants to help the town buy signage.

Doug said he went to the college today and talked to Thomas Fondakowski, the head of Sodexo there. Doug asked him if we can advertise that they have food 7 days a week. He said absolutely. Then Doug talked to Alexis Anderson and asked about advertising the golf course, swimming pool, weight room, etc. She said that is a great idea but she would check with their attorneys. Doug asked her about empty space and potentially putting a hostel on campus and she said she would call Dave Bergh to check on that. Kim said Dave Bergh has already said he is interested in that.

The committee reviewed the list of Johnson attractions the task force came up with. Tori Hellwig of LCPC will send the list to VTrans. Kim and Jan said swimming at Dog's Head should be removed from the list because it is too dangerous.

It was agreed to discuss at the next meeting which signs we want.

7. Update on Rail Trail Adjacent Benches

Kim said she thinks at this point we are looking for locations for benches. Jan said she thinks we will need to wait for the right wood to become available for log benches. We need cedar or some rot resistant wood and we need someone to build them.

Kim said she often sees people stopping on the bridge. That is why she tried to find a possible location there. But she did not see any possibility and the Fish & Wildlife person she talked to was against it. But he was also against putting one at Dog's Head and someone has placed a bench there. If we put a bench in the rail trail right of way we need permission from LVRT. Doug said he thinks we should ask Jackie Cassino if we can put in a bench.

Jan said she will see if Butternut Mountain Farm is okay with us putting a map stand or kiosk somewhere between their property and the adjacent property. Doug said we should also find out if we have to coordinate that with VTrans.

8. Schedule Follow-Up Meeting

It was agreed to meet next on September 24 at 6:00.

Doug noted that the Recreational Economic Opportunities Task Force is meeting August 18 if anyone is interested in attending.

9. Other Business

Doug said Kyle Nuse had mentioned that Bobby Hoag has talked about maybe having a mural on his building on Railroad St.

10. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:38.