

JOHNSON RAIL TRAIL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2026

Present:

Committee Members: Jan Gearhart, Daniel Langevin, Doug Molde, Mary Lou Kopas, Adrian Schmidt, Kim Dunkley

Absent: BJ Putvain, Lynda Hill

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. *Call Meeting to Order*

Doug called the meeting to order at 6:05.

2. *Changes or Additions to Agenda*

Doug added discussion about available funds and Adrian added discussion about anchoring the bike racks.

3. *Consider Approving Minutes of March 11, 2026*

Mary Lou moved to approve the minutes of March 11, 2026, Jan seconded and the motion was passed.

4. *Welcoming Daniel Langevin as a New Committee Member*

Committee members welcomed Daniel Langevin. Doug asked whether it would be easier for him to come to meetings in person if they were on a different day of the week. Daniel suggested Thursday would be a good day for him.

5. *Report on Selectboard Meeting of April 6 and Rail Trail Related Items*

Mary Lou said the rail trail committee members talked to the selectboard about the expenditures they would like approved. Selectboard members mentioned that they would like the bike racks to be anchored.

Jan asked if they mentioned anything about the agreement letter for landowners. Doug said John said he would draft one. Mary Lou said that was not brought up at the selectboard meeting.

Doug said he thinks anchoring the bike racks will be something to discuss with each property owner. Each property owner can decide whether that is something they want or not. Mary Lou said Mike Mignone at the Johnson General Store doesn't see any need to anchor the bike rack there. Mary Lou suggested that for the bike rack at the Cold Spring a bolt could be placed in the cement pad. Jan said the two benches at the Welcome Center just have chains around them.

Doug suggested that someone talk to John Sutherland and suggest that security is another subject to discuss in the landowner agreements. Adrian offered to do that as well as getting the ball rolling on the written agreements. Doug suggested John could put language about securing the racks into the boilerplate agreement as an option.

Mary Lou said she messaged with Duane from Lamoille Woodcraft. He thinks he will order materials in late May or early June. She did not talk to him about securing the benches. He will bill after the work is done.

Mary Lou said at the selectboard meeting there was also discussion about sharrows. Adrian said the selectboard seemed in favor of them.

Doug said the suggestion from the selectboard that sidewalk lines be painted in front of the old Parker and Stearns property surprised him. They also said that the town had a paving budget for Railroad Street. They did not do the work last year but plan to do it this year. The whole project of replacing storm drains and grates would be very expensive, but he thinks they are planning to do some touch up work.

Doug said he had a letter from Paul Warden asking him to get specs for sidewalk lines. He sent it on to Jackie Cassino. He will ask VHB for advice about how the lines should be painted. He noted that the village ordinance says bikes cannot be ridden on sidewalks. Daniel said from the rider's perspective going back and forth between the sidewalk and the road introduces more potential for accidents or confusion. Mary Lou said she thought the idea was to have markings to show pedestrians where to go for increased safety. Kim said she thinks planters could also help delineate the walkway.

The committee discussed whether there is a need for a crosswalk to be painted. Jan said it could be helpful for alerting drivers.

Mary Lou said it occurred to her that some kind of public art in the spot where people are uncertain whether they want to leave the rail trail and head toward the village could give the message that Johnson is a cool community that they want to go into. Daniel said tourists love the World Cow. Kim said she can check with Greg Tatro, who might be able to collaborate on an art project. Doug said he thinks we should work with the beautification committee on things like this.

Doug said he will check whether the selectboard authorized a crosswalk.

Kim suggested that the tiling the beautification committee is going to have done at the Cold Spring could show pictures of things in Johnson. Doug suggested checking with Adrienne Parker on where that project stands.

6. Discussion on Whether a Johnson Specific Rail Trail User Questionnaire Should be Developed

Daniel said he feels it is helpful to have baseline data that is tracked over time so that we can see to what degree any of our initiatives are making a difference. He thinks questions with multiple choice quantitative answers or rankings on a scale of 1 to 5 are good for comparing data sets. Adrian agreed it is a great idea.

Daniel suggested the survey could be on the town website or social media sites. Other committee members suggested the Discover Johnson website would be a good place for it. Doug suggested maybe there could be QR codes for accessing the survey at places like Jenna's Coffee House and on our kiosk. Jan agreed it should be on the kiosk.

Doug said the 2024 survey VTrans did was really useful.

It was agreed that committee members will review Daniel's survey draft and give him feedback.

7. Other Business

Doug said he thought we could ask Jackie Cassino to suggest a couple of dates she could come to Johnson that we could choose from. Committee members don't all have to be there to meet with her. The meeting with her will cover signage and making sure we are putting the kiosk in the right place. She wants to talk to John Sutherland about a culvert VTrans plans to do some work on. She had suggested coming to town in late April or early May. Doug will write to ask her about dates.

Kim asked who the best person is to talk to about downed trees on the rail trail. Jan said Bill Gray.

8. *Correspondence with Gregory Eckman about College Resources*

Doug said he communicated with Gregory Eckman, the athletic director at the college. He was excited about listing the college assets as trail friendly businesses. Doug sent the information to Tori Hellwig and she is going to list them.

Doug said he wants to talk to Discover Johnson about the college resources that are available. Doug passed information about college resources on to Yva Rose. Kim said she thinks we should put information on Front Porch Forum about the resources the college has available to the community. Jan said she will do that.

9. *Instructions for Adrienne Parker for Map at Welcome Center*

Jan showed examples of different styles of maps. The committee discussed the style they like and what should be shown on it. Jan suggested that she could do a rough sketch of what we want the map to look like to show Adrienne. We want it focused on the village but want to also include some outlying spots like Journey's End. We don't want it completely to scale because then there would be too much dead space. Adrian offered to help come up with an example map. Jan will send Adrian a draft and they will come up with something that can be sent to Adrienne. Adrienne suggested there could be different layers with different types of information and the committee could decide how much of the information it would be good to have on the map.

10. *Set Next Meeting Date and Time*

The committee discussed meeting on May 21. Adrian said the Conservation Commission usually meets on third Thursdays but they may be willing to switch their date. Doug said if May 21 does not work we will meet on May 20. Adrian will see if third Thursdays could be made available for rail trail committee meetings on an ongoing basis.

11. *Other Business*

Jan suggested we should ask the selectboard if we can put up "Share the road" signs along Railroad Street. Doug suggested that Adrian ask John about that.

12. *Available Funds*

Doug handed out a sheet showing money we have spent and money we have left. Mary Lou and Jan agreed to compare it to their balance sheet to figure out whether there is any uncommitted money that is not accounted for.

13. *Other Business*

Kim asked if anyone is working on the Act 250 permit for the stone steps. Doug said Carl Rogers is.

Kim asked if the lease for the kiosk has been agreed to. Doug said everyone has agreed to it but it is not fully signed yet.

14. *Instructions for Adrienne Parker for Map at Welcome Center*

Adrian will send out map ideas and people can communicate back with Adrian individually.

15. *Other Business*

Kim asked if we can set a date for putting up the kiosk, make sure the village will dig holes before then and then post the date on Front Porch Forum to ask people to show up and help. Doug said we need to talk to Jackie Cassino first. Kim suggested putting on the agenda for the next meeting a discussion on how to get that going. Adrian suggested that it would be better not to discuss the map and the kiosk at the same meeting because that would be a long meeting. It is important to get the kiosk going soon, so perhaps that should be discussed first.

Doug said when Wolcott put up their kiosk they put in some metal culverts and packed them with rocks. He thinks we should consider that. Jan said she talked to Brian Currier, who built the kiosks, and he said that would not be necessary. It would be a lot of extra work. He suggested digging a hole, putting in the post and then pouring in cement.

Kim asked Adrian to check in with the Conservation Commission about where we plan to put the kiosk to see if there will be any issues with roots nearby.

Mary Lou suggested that we talk about the survey at the next meeting if there is time. Doug reminded committee members that they should send comments about the survey only to Daniel and not to the whole committee.

16. Adjourn

Doug moved to adjourn at 7:28, Adrian seconded and the motion was passed.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths