



THE FRIENDS SUMMER 2021 NEWSLETTER



A Year of Growth for the Bike Path and for the Friends

Phase 1B (Shining Tides) Update

We'll start off the newsletter with the question everyone is asking: **When will the Shining Tides Mile open?** The following is a statement from Town Administrator Mike Lorencio.

The Town of Mattapoissett is in negotiations concerning final construction and future bridge maintenance costs and responsibilities with the Bike Path Construction Team (Mass DOT, the contractor, and engineers.) Progress in final installation of planking and railings will proceed according to these negotiations. Unfortunately, use of the bike path is prohibited until the planking and railings are installed in conformity with the contracts and the project in its entirety is completed to the satisfaction of the Bike Path Construction Team. These negotiations proceed in earnest, and we are hopeful for a timely conclusion.

Meanwhile, the Marion Connector is currently under construction and should be completed in July. This will connect Mattapoissett's rail trail to Marion's. Marion's path is on the fiscal year 2023 budget and could go out to bid at that time.

The Half Mile Marion Connector is Almost Done!



The construction of the half mile Marion Connector began in May and is awaiting the finishing touches! This project paved the old railroad right of way from the end of Industrial Drive to the Marion town line, and includes a parking lot at the intersection of Bay Club Drive and Industrial Drive.

The Town of Marion is expected to begin construction of their bike path in 2023. When Marion's project connects to our paved half mile, riders and walkers will enjoy a car-free path and access to the Sippican Lands Trust walking trails.

The Connector project was part of a larger plan to upgrade Industrial Drive. Construction was funded using a \$110,000 grant from MassTrails, a \$95,000 grant from the Friends 2020 fundraiser, and a 1:1 match of funding from the Town of Mattapoisett (voted by the Town in 2019 and 2020.)

Again, we want to thank all who donated to and supported the completion of this very important half mile!

Completing the Path (Phase 2A and Industrial Drive)

The Friends are working with Mattapoisett's Capital Planning Committee to address present and future bike path phases in an effort to include bike path needs in the Comprehensive Capital Plan that will be presented in the 2021 Fall Special Town Meeting. Discussions will include the needs and car-free opportunities from Depot Street to the Park and Ride on North Street (Phase 2A) and Industrial Drive (the final segment of Phase 2B.) It is important for the town to fully incorporate major expenditures on permanent infrastructure like the bike path into the Capital Plan.

Supplying Needed Amenities for the Rail Trail

The Friends have voted to dedicate up to \$20,000 towards an array of amenities for the bike path, including bike racks, water stations, and informational signage. The Select Board is currently reviewing a set of safety regulations for posting.

If you would like to help in donating bike path amenities, please go to:

<https://mattapoisetrailtrail.org/donate>.

Also, if you would like to fund a memorial bench, as close friends of Ron LaFleur (a biking enthusiast and bike path supporter) have done, please contact us through our website:

<https://mattapoisetrailtrail.org/contact-us>.

John DeCosta

We were deeply saddened by the sudden loss of Selectman John DeCosta. John had served the Town in several capacities before joining the Select Board in Spring 2020. He was a steadfast bike path supporter, and began working with the Friends in December to ensure that the bike path would have the appropriate level of amenities and signage. We will miss his passion, expertise, and friendly spirit.

Bikes for All



We are thrilled with the support and success we've gotten for our latest initiative, **Bikes for All!** In January, we asked for gently-used bike donations and volunteers that could help fix them up for families in need. Since then, we have received more than 100 bikes, as well as a few amazingly dedicated volunteers. Thanks to additional donations, every recipient leaves with a new helmet and basic safety instructions.

Check out our coverage in *Sippican Week*:

<https://sippican.theweektoday.com/article/mattapoissett-group-gives-%E2%80%9998bikes-all%E2%80%99/53565>.

If you would like to make a donation to help the Friends purchase bicycle parts and helmets, please make your checks out to: Friends of the Mattapoissett Bike Path, PO Box 1336, Mattapoissett, MA 02739. Be sure to specify on the check that your contribution is for **Bikes for All**.

Contact Jane Finnerty 508-758-4548, jane.mattrail@gmail.com or Liz DiCarlo, 508-942-9343, lizdicarlo@comcast.net for more information.

Bonne DeSousa Stepping into a New Position



Bonne DeSousa has been the face of the Friends for thirteen years. In 2008, a small group of enthusiastic advocates for safe bicycling asked Bonne if she would take on the role as President of the Friends, and Bonne said, “Sure.” Since then, she’s attended hundreds of meetings, became a fixture at Town Hall, and fought passionately for car-free biking and walking trails, not just in Mattapoissett, but along the entire Southcoast. Bonne would wince if we credited her for the increased support and huge bike path progress we’ve experienced during her tenure, and would quickly point to other invaluable people. Proof of her influence, however, is in *The Wanderer’s Keel Award* she earned in 2017, and *The Standard-Times Woman of the Year* recognition in 2018.

The current Friend’s board is indebted to Bonne for her devotion to the bike path and for giving the Friends a voice. Stepping down as president will allow Bonne to spend more time on her family sailboat. But (thankfully), she is not sailing away forever! Bonne will remain a member of the board, specifically in an advisory capacity.

We wish you fair winds, Bonne!

Meet Our New Officers



Left to Right: Renee Pothier (President), Chris Matos (Secretary), Jane Finnerty (Vice President), Bill Coquillette (Treasurer)

In May, the Friend's board elected new officers (smiling in the above photo.) Our new president, Renee Pothier, has served more than 20 years as Secretary and Treasurer of the Friends.

In the last two years, our board has expanded to 14 members. In addition to the new officers, board members include Seth Asser, Allyson Bradford, Ann Bryant, Bonne DeSousa, Liz DiCarlo, Bill Emmons, Arlene Fogarty, Dick Grahn, Robin Lepore and Dennis O'Beirne.

If you would like to get involved in our sub committees or help out at events, please contact us through our website at: <https://mattapoissettrail.org/contact-us>.

Harbor Days–July 17 and 18!



Please visit us at our booth, and be sure to let us know that you are a supporter. (We love our supporters!) For any donation amount, you'll get a sticker featuring our updated Friends logo!