

Trail project on is track, but over budget

By **Leslie H. Dixon / Daily News Staff**

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MILFORD -- Upper Charles Trail Committee Chairman Reno DeLuzio is expected to tell selectmen tonight that despite drainage and other problems, the trail project is proceeding quickly.

"The project is going like greased lightning," DeLuzio said of the 3-mile trail which already is paved from Main Street to Dilla Street.

Construction of Milford's portion of the 27-mile trail began in May and is expected to be completed by next spring. The trail will be used for biking, walking, jogging, and in-line skating from the municipal parking lot across the street from the Sacred Heart Church on Main Street to the Holliston town line. Funding for the second phase, which will link the trail to the Hopkinton town line, still needs Town Meeting approval.

DeLuzio will meet with selectmen tonight to get an update on cost overruns, drainage problems and the progress made on the trail construction of the \$1.4 million state and town-funded project. The board meets at 7 p.m. in room 3 of Milford Town Hall.

DeLuzio has said the project is over budget because the contractor, Northern Construction, underestimated how much fill was needed to level the area that had drainage problems. Railroad tracks were also unexpectedly found underground along the railroad bed and had to be removed.

Several weeks ago selectmen were told the town could be responsible for as much as \$25,000 of \$200,000 plus in projected cost overruns.

The \$200,000 was caused by the need for extra gravel to help fix drainage problems. DeLuzio said at least \$146,000 will be paid for by the state highway department.

Additionally, DeLuzio said he recommended removing several design items, including some landscaping to save another \$75,000. The costs are still changing as the project continues.

"It's a moving target," he said of the overrun costs.

"The drainage has been a problem for a long time. Whatever the case, one way or the other we should address that for the many families who use that area. We should take care of our infrastructure," said selectmen Chairman Dino DeBartolomeis.

DeLuzio said anticipating problems and their costs is always tough.

"It gets complicated," DeLuzio said of the problems and who is responsible to take care of them. Like DeBartolomeis, DeLuzio said the section of the trail running through the Fino Field area, off Sumner and Granite streets has had drainage problems for a number of years. "The town has been wrestling with how to deal with it," he said.

We were faced with a big problem," DeLuzio said of the initial overrun costs. But now, "we got to a manageable \$25,000," he said.

It is hoped the trail eventually will link Milford with Holliston, Hopkinton, Ashland, Framingham and Sherborn.

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