

Bike trail could link Kent, Vermont

KENT — The Board of Selectmen gave its support for a bicycle trail that, as proposed, would begin at Bulls Bridge, go along the Housatonic River and continue up to the Massachusetts border.

Sal Lilienthal, owner of The Bicycle Tour Company at 41 Kent Blvd., is spearheading the project, which will be known as the Housatonic Covered Bridge Bike Trail. He presented the proposal to the selectmen at their July 6 meeting.

Lilienthal helped organize a five-route bicycle trail throughout town that is already in use. It is part of the federal Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area, which includes towns in Massachusetts and Connecticut. Those trails can be found online at bicycletours.com.

He said that the new Housatonic Covered Bridge Bike Trail would utilize some of the existing town bike trails and would connect to a trail in western Massachusetts that, in turn, connects to a trail in Vermont.

"If we get grant funding, Kent would be the first section of this trail," Lilienthal said.

He added that the route is still being developed.

Lilienthal said he was at the meeting looking for a letter of support for the project from the selectmen.

He explained that the National Park Service requested the letter to make sure the community would be in support of the trail.

"If we do apply for grant funding, we will be the first town to be part of this in a big way," Lilienthal said.

The selectmen voted unanimously to draft a letter of support.

"I love it when Kent gets to be part of a pilot program," Selectman Karren Garrity said. "It just puts us on the cutting edge."

"It's very appealing to drive into a town you've never been in before and see a bike trail," First Selectman Bruce Adams said.

Lilienthal said he had no idea how long the process would take to finalize the trail.

"You never know how long it takes," he said. "But we're trying everything we can to move the process along."

— Shaw Israel Izikson