

Company set to remove ties from possible rail trail

By Andrew J. Manuse/Daily News staff
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Natick -

A salvage company has removed rails from CSX Corp.'s railroad in sections spanning across Rte. 9 and Lake Cochituate and is preparing to remove ties from the possible rail trail, town officials said.

National Salvage & Service Corp. of Clear Creek, Ind., won a bid to remove Jacksonville, Fla.-based CSX's rails and ties on a 2.5 mile, 20-acre line in Natick it no longer uses. The company began the monthlong operation July 23, according to Bob Bois, Natick's environmental compliance officer.

National Salvage & Service, which paid CSX an unspecified price for the materials, promised the town's Conservation Commission it wouldn't stockpile any of the materials next to Lake Cochituate or wetlands before taking them away, Bois said.

"The salvage company is interested in the salvage piece of it," he said. "Once the ties are removed, the discussions with CSX and the ultimate disposition of the property will be discussed."

A spokesman for National Salvage & Service could not be reached to comment.

With rails and ties soon to be removed from CSX's right-of-way, town officials are concerned that illegal dumping or ATV riding could become a problem and are taking steps to prevent it, according to Selectman Joshua Ostroff, who also sits on Natick's Cochituate Rail Trail Task Force.

The town's Department of Public Works will likely erect Jersey barriers where the CSX right-of-way intersects with roads at the request of the town's safety committee and Board of Selectmen, Ostroff said. The operation may not cost anything because the town already owns the barriers, he said.

Tonight, selectmen will discuss a request for proposals to appraise CSX's right-of-way as part of the town's due diligence leading up to possible negotiations with the railroad company to buy the land, Ostroff said. CSX has said it wants \$14.5 million for the possible rail-trail land.

While the town hopes to incur little to no cost for the purchase of the land, because state and federal taxpayer dollars may be available, many local officials have said the company's value assessment is too high.

"I think right now there's a difference in opinion on the value of the land and we're working through that with the folks there," said Gary Sease, a spokesman for CSX.

Separately, the Cochituate Rail Trail Task Force meets at 7:30 p.m. tomorrow in Town Hall to discuss the possibility of using the CSX right-of-way for bicyclists and pedestrians as well as some form of compact public transit vehicle that would connect the Golden Triangle area by the mall with the Natick Commuter Rail station downtown.

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