

NEMBA to Create Riding Area At Oak Ridge School

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Young Sandwich residents may soon have a new bike riding area near the town’s intermediate school.

The New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA) plans on creating a youth riding area adjacent to the northern parking lot of Oak Ridge School. Members of the group spoke about the project during a school committee meeting on December 11.

NEMBA is a nonprofit recreational trails advocacy organization. The organization is heavily involved in the Town of Sandwich, whether through maintaining trails by the Oak Ridge School and Maple Swamp Conservation Area or by operating the Sandwich Recreation Department’s after-school mountain bike program.

The group proposed creating an approximately 12,500-square-foot youth riding area called a “pump track.”

Cape Cod NEMBA President Frank Merola explained that a pump track is designed to allow riders to generate momentum using berms, rollers and other features on the track rather than relying on pedaling.

The track will be a loop geared toward beginners but also include options for more experienced riders. The riding area will include some infrastructure such as dirt berms, small wooden bridges and log rolls.

“We don’t ever plan on installing something and not taking care of it. We are always out taking care of the trails, taking care of anything that we build,” he said.

No large trees are expected to be removed; instead the track will go around the trees.

Mr. Merola said that 100 percent of the costs associated with creating the riding area will be covered by NEMBA.

“We would like you to think of this, instead of us asking to do this, as something that we would like to give to the school, give to everybody on Cape Cod, because there is nothing like this on Cape Cod,” he said.

The materials are expected to cost between \$5,000 and \$7,000.

Mr. Merola said that NEMBA has an insurance policy that covers liability if anyone gets injured while riding on the trail.

School committee member Burt Fisher asked if the school would assume the liability if someone got injured on the track.

“It is a complex matter in the sense that we hold riders...in regards to insurance as does NEMBA, but I think it was also be based upon the situation, based upon negligence and so on,” said Sandwich Schools Superintendent Joseph P. Maruszczak.

School committee vice chairman Kevin Sareault noted how other facilities on the school’s property such as the basketball courts and playgrounds are also liabilities.

The school committee approved of the project as presented.

The loop will be installed in April of 2025.

“I think it’s a great way for the kids and the parents to come out, get off their devices and enjoy some time outside,” Mr. Merola said.