

TOWN OF SOUTHBOROUGH TRAILS COMMITTEE



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<http://www.southboroughtrails.org>



Member Conduct Policy

The Southborough Trails Committee ("STC") is comprised of voting and non-voting associate members ("Associate Members"). It is the responsibility of all members to comply with all laws and Town policies that affect the STC. Members must take particular care to avoid inadvertent violations of the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law ("OML").

While Associate Members are not included in quorum and do not move, second, or vote on matters, they do participate in meetings and interact with the voting members outside of public meetings. **Therefore:**

- Associate Members must complete the same training as voting members, including training on the OML and Massachusetts Conflict of Interest Law ("COI Law").
- **All** members must take care that communications outside of public meetings do not constitute a "deliberation" under the OML. This means that STC business may not be discussed by a quorum of voting members outside of a public meeting – either directly, or via interactions with Associate Members (or the public).
- While **voting members are ultimately responsible for ensuring that all deliberations occur in a public meeting**, Associate Members shall take care to avoid transmitting the opinions of one voting member to another outside of a public meeting. This does not preclude communications to schedule or provide topics for meetings, or to coordinate work that may occur during projects such as maintaining a trail, **provided that such communications do not discuss changes to or interpretation of policy or other matters which may require a vote of the STC**.
- Compliance with this policy, including the OML and the COI Law is required of all members. Violations can have serious consequences for the members and the Town.

For detailed information about the OML, refer to <https://www.mass.gov/doc/open-meeting-law-guide-and-educational-materials-0/download>. For information about the COI Law, refer to <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/complete-the-online-training-program-for-municipal-employees>.

New members should note that while it can take time to adapt to the required limits on communications, the STC tries to ensure that they do not prevent the members, volunteers, and trail users from having an enjoyable and productive experience.

This policy was adopted by vote of the STC on December 20, 2021.