

PLANS FOR DOWNTOWN LADYBUG TRAIL SPRING TO LIFE

The Franklin Downtown Partnership (FDP), in collaboration with other local organizations and businesses, is launching an exciting new project to create a sculpture trail connecting historical and cultural sites in downtown Franklin. The Ladybug Trail will use ladybug sculptures to tie approximately 25 sites together. Visitors will walk along the trail using a digital map and view signage detailing the history of Franklin and the names of the artists who painted the ladybugs. Though the project is still in its infancy, the purpose of the Ladybug Trail will be to promote economic development in downtown Franklin by encouraging residents and visitors to enjoy all that Franklin center has to offer by visiting, dining, and shopping at downtown businesses while they walk the trail of sculptures.

There are currently several outdoor ladybugs sculptures in the downtown area, including those at the FDP, Dean Bank, and Keefe Insurance. By the end of summer, the FDP hopes to place more than 15 ladybugs downtown Franklin tying the trail together. A recent grant to the FDP from the Franklin Cultural District and the Massachusetts Cultural Council will help fund a portion of the ladybug installations.

The history of the ladybug in the town of Franklin is a storied one. In 1974, Franklin's John F. Kennedy School second grade students and their teacher, Palma Johnson, petitioned the bill to name the ladybug the state insect and subsequently witnessed it signed into law.

"The elementary school, JFK, rallied the state to make the ladybug the state bug," said Beth Simon who along with Claire Griffin were members of the Franklin Cultural Council in 2014 that initiated the ladybug public art project. "It's a wonderful idea to have a Ladybug Trail to highlight how this was accomplished. It will be a great addition to Franklin."

The Ladybug Trail Committee represents key organizations in the Franklin community, including the FDP, Franklin Cultural District, and Historical Commission. Members are: Lisa Piana, Beth Simon, Roberta Trahan, Pandora Carlucci, Mary Olsson, Melanie Hamblen, Eileen Mason, and Jane Curran.

"We are so excited to bring together several organizations in Franklin to make this project a reality," said Lisa Piana, Executive Director of the FDP and chair of the Ladybug Trail Committee. "Our vision is to have visitors and residents alike enjoy the opportunity to walk the downtown trail and visit the unique businesses along the way, as well as view the historical and cultural sites."

Additionally, the FDP is coordinating a number of public art projects that will be included on the trail. "It has been a fun experience working with five talented artists from the Franklin Art Association to paint murals in what will be known as 'Flower Alley' on East Central Street," Piana said. "This will be just one of the 25 stops along the way."

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