

Squannacook Greenways, Inc.

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

January 8, 2020

Attending:

Peter Carson, Mark Cram, Peter Cunningham, Bruce Easom, Ray Jackson, Bill Rideout, Joan Wotkowicz

Groton Conservation Forum

The 6th annual forum will be on Thursday, February 27 at 7:00 PM in the new Center at 163 West Main Street, Groton (site of the old Senior Center). Joan, Bruce, and possibly Pete Cunningham plan to attend. Joan updated our organizational information on the forum web site.

Abutter fencing

An abutter asked to meet with us but did not pursue fencing. Our informal policy has been to speak with the abutter and consider fencing on a case-by-case basis. We will encourage them to wait a year. Pete Cunningham reminded us that we should not sanction encroachments on MBTA land.

Motor vehicles on the trail

Residents in the Crosswinds area reported two incidents with people trying to drive cars and trucks onto the trail. They requested signs or barriers to prevent vehicle entry from Crosswinds Drive.

Joan gave three large foam board signs (non-motorized welcome, unauthorized motor vehicles prohibited) and two small metal signs (no motorized vehicles) to Pete Carson. We discussed placing the signs on a post in the middle of the trail. Since the ground is frozen, we will have to figure out how to support them.

Joan will buy 5-6 additional signs to be placed on posts at the fisherman's parking lot, Old Meetinghouse Road, and other locations.

Several large rocks used to block the south

entrance at Crosswinds, but they have been moved. We discussed repositioning them to block the trail, but decided to leave them off to the side for now.

Tree clearing project

King's Tree Service finished clearing the whole corridor, from Depot Street to Bertozzi. It looks great, despite stumps and some slash. Bill paid the Kings for the work done and has a receipt for our grant reimbursement.

We will clean up the slash during a volunteer day. Our erosion controls survived. We will remove the pile of stumps in Townsend Harbor when construction crews clear stumps along the corridor.

Sterilite fence

Joan submitted a change request on our Townsend OOC for fence installation. Dave Henkels, Conservation Agent, approved the request via email. With permission in place and the area now clear of trees and brush, we can begin fence construction when weather allows.

Bill asked Alfred Sawyer and Joan asked Max13 to look for an opportunity to get started. Max13 sent us a contract to sign and requested a \$9,275 deposit, with \$9,275 due on start of installation and \$7,950 on completion.

Bill made a motion to sign the contract with Max13 Construction for the fence behind Sterilite. As part of the motion, we discussed placement of the fence.

The fence will be 10' from the centerline of the trail for most of its distance, conforming to the layout of the land. (We only own 12' in this area, as Sterilite purchased some property from the MBTA.) Along the parking lot, the fence will run closer to the center line of the trail and will butt up against the edge of the asphalt.

We debated the placement requested by Sterilite vs. the MBTA property line. Peter Cunningham asked that the fence be as close to Sterilite property as possible and he would like to be present when it gets measured. Pete Carson voiced concern about losing use of any MBTA land. Mark sees no problem with putting the fence on the property line.

Joan pointed out that a large snow pile is blocking the path of the fence and will have to be moved if construction starts soon.

We decided on a site visit to reach agreement upon fence location. We will meet at Central Plaza this Saturday at 10:30.

With discussion closed, the motion passed unanimously.

Plan for three-part construction

Bill presented an idea for breaking the 3.7 mile corridor into three parts for construction over three years. He also presented second scenario that addresses Pete Carson 's concern about stopping the project behind McDonald's.

We worked on developing a breakdown of project segments so we can describe the first year's construction in our upcoming MassTrails grant application.

Joan pointed out that each section has several add-on projects, such as wetland replication, parking lot, and culvert repair, that will add to the cost. The middle section has the fewest add-on projects.

Bruce brought up the possibility of CPA funding for the Groton section, which might allow us to build the trail in two years. The next CPA application cycle starts in October 2020 and funds become available at the end of June 2021.

We are in favor of starting the first year of construction in Townsend at Depot Road, including the wetland replication. Our grant application will not go into much detail about years two and three.

Current MassTrails grant award

Amanda Lewis accepted our revised grant scope to cover tree and brush removal, fence construction, and professional inspection. The dollar amount of the award has not changed.

The contract has been signed. We can pay invoices and record volunteer hours as of December 5, 2019. Joan will send out a new log for recording individual hours and will keep track of meeting hours.

Joan asked when we should consider engaging Ducharme & Dillis to start on the stormwater plan, which must happen within the current grant period. She will put it on a future agenda.

New MassTrails grant application

The new round of MassTrails grants is open and applications are due February 1. Joan developed a first draft, which Bill already reviewed. We will ask for \$100K to construct one-third of the trail, to be matched by up to \$20K of our own funds and volunteer hours.

Joan asked Max13 to revise their quote to 1.3 miles and add the wetland replication in the first year of construction. Once we get their figures, Bill will begin working on the grant budget.

Joan asked what letters of support we should include. We decided to ask for the following letters by January 24:

- Groton Conservation Commission (Bruce)
- NRWA (Joan)
- Groton Board of Selectmen (Pete)
- Townsend Business Association (Bill)
- Townsend Board of Selectmen (Bill)

Fundraising and financial report

Bill distributed the latest Profit and Loss. We received several new donations, including another bench in memory of Steve Meehan, purchased by his sister. Bill paid \$10K to King's Tree Service.

Our current cash is \$129K; we will pay \$26K for the fence.

Other topics

Ray told us about attending the funeral for Ed Yaglou. We all voiced our respect and agreed that we learned a lot from him.

Review of meeting minutes

A motion to accept the minutes from December 4, 2019 was seconded and approved unanimously.

Next Meeting

Squannacook Greenways will hold our next rail trail meeting on **Wednesday, February 5** at 7:00 PM at the Groton Legion.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Wotkowicz, Clerk

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