

Squannacook Greenways, Inc.

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

May 13, 2020

Attending:

Rick Bailey, Peter Carson, Mark Cram,
Peter Cunningham, Bruce Easom, Dan Hager,
Ray Jackson, Bill Rideout, Joan Wotkowicz

This was an online Zoom meeting.

Bridges in Harbor Pond area

Bill wants to start repairing the two rail bridges in Townsend Harbor to make them safe for walking, even though the rail trail will not use the bridges.

Mark said the Conservation Commission may require a permit and a tarp beneath if we remove boards. Bruce said we may need to submit an RDA. We will only be doing maintenance, as opposed to construction, but we will need to keep debris out of the water.

Mark estimates that pressure-treated wood across the center section on the larger bridge would cost about \$650. He will work on an updated cost.

We also need to ask the Townsend Historical Society. Bill will contact the society and also Gary Shepherd.

We should post signage directing people to the sidewalk. Pete Carson said signs would help with liability, but a gate would be optimal.

We agreed to begin working on repairs, with signage in the meantime. Joan will make signs that say "Bridge closed. Use sidewalk instead."

Public comment on Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization's draft Unified Planning Work Program

Veronica Kell of the Townsend Planning Board asked for our comments on a request for safer walking and biking routes in Townsend. Bill

submitted supporting comments from Squannacook Greenways.

Fence request

Pete Carson talked with the abutter on Crosswinds Drive and also did a site visit with Pete Cunningham. We gave the abutter contact information for the MBTA, who responded with a cost of \$50K to remove language from their lease that prohibits a fence.

A worst-case solution would be for the abutter to pay for the fence and we install it on our property. The abutter estimated \$2,500 for 250 feet of six-foot tall wood fence. He would like to run the fence to within eight feet of the roadway, but that would probably impede visibility for trail users.

Pete Cunningham reminded us that many people who want fences later realize they are unnecessary. He asked if we could compromise with plantings.

Rick favors installing the fence on our property if the abutter pays for it. Other parties may want to do the same, so we should establish some standards. For example: chain link or stockade only, good side of the fence faces the trail, minimum distance from the centerline of the trail, located close to the abutter's property line as determined by us, meets MassDOT standards for distance from the roadway, and maintained by the abutter. We should point out that the fence is not tax deductible.

We cannot allow abutters to be their own contractor because of MBTA requirements for insurance, etc. We should encourage a waiting period before proceeding.

Pete Carson will develop a draft letter. Bill, Pete Cunningham, Mark, and Joan will review.

"No ATV" signs

We lost one sign, but Bill said the remaining signs have not been touched. Joan still has one sign to install in Townsend.

Status of MassTrails 2019 grant reimbursement

We submitted our reimbursements forms and final report. DCR asked for some additional documentation of our receipt and canceled check, which Bill provided. We should receive the money soon.

Status of MassTrails 2020 grant application

Joan said the stated date for award announcements is right around now, although DCR typically does not announce until June. Pete Cunningham voiced a concern about the state's revenue stream, given the pandemic. Even if we don't get a grant this year, we may be able to get the rails pulled.

Depot Street parking permit

Stan Dillis said the Planning Board is not currently meeting, but he will put us in the queue when they do. Apparently he will work on the Stormwater Management Plan at that time.

Ray asked about piles of debris near the gym. This will be addressed during construction.

Publicity

As a way to encourage people to walk on the trail, Bill would like to post a sign at Depot Street saying "Rail trail open for use." The sign should be large enough to see from a car.

He also wants to update our map with parking places. We discussed which lots to use. The map will show Depot Street and the fisherman's parking lot. We will not show Bertozzi. Bill will ask Matt Amidon, DCR supervisor, about using the small lot on Meetinghouse Road.

Bill asked Dan to make a video with his son Hatch, demonstrating that the trail is ready for

use with young children.

Progress on trail clearing

Several people have been out doing clean-up. Bill reported that the stretch from Old Meetinghouse Road to Depot Street is in good shape. Piles of wood from Shepherd's to Harbor Church need to be cleaned up. Steve Legge has been working around Crosswinds Drive.

Fundraising and financial report

Bill circulated the financial report by email. We have a bill for insurance, with an offer to pre-pay three years in advance for a small discount, but Bill thinks it's more important to keep our cash ready.

Review minutes

A motion to accept the corrected minutes from our meeting on April 15, 2020 was seconded and passed unanimously.

Other topics

Ray is still trying to contact NH DOT about a possible collaboration with Friends of the Nashua River Rail Trail on interstate trails.

Next Meeting

Squannacook Greenways will hold our next rail trail meeting on June 10, 2020 at 7:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Wotkowicz

Clerk

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