

Squannacook Greenways, Inc.

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 15, 2021

Attending:

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

MassDOT Moving Together conference

Bill was one of three panelists in a presentation by MassTrails. He talked about using a MassTrails grant to fund construction, while the other two panelists spoke about permitting and engineering.

Attendees asked several questions, including some about ADA compliance. Bill learned that a trail can only be certified if the trail material is certified, and most suppliers of 3/8" aggregate are unlikely to go through the process.

Status of ARPA funding

The Governor signed the bill, but vetoed one part. If the Senate decides to override the veto, it won't happen until January. Senator Cronin said it could be a couple of months before we receive the money. Gary is aware of this and offered to be flexible with his billing schedule.

Bill would like to print a large check and have a small ceremony with the two senators and representative, once we know when the ARPA money will arrive. It's possible there will be additional ARPA money in the next fiscal year.

Status of tie removal

James Gates began work on December 8 and finished removing ties from Old Meetinghouse Road to Harbor Church. He is now grinding brush off the trail. Next he will begin moving the organic soil to expose the base.

Inspections

Bill and Joan have been trading off visits to the construction site and recording observations.

There do not seem to be any environmental issues.

Abutter consultations

Bill sent letters and/or visited abutters along the north side of the work site to address issues like fences and to offer landscaping between the trail and abutter properties. For safety we will clear at least 5' from the stone dust, but a wider landscaped edge would look nice.

Some of the abutters want the brush cleared, one agreed to move a boat, and another to move a fence. We may need to build a fence at one property. Bill plans to visit a few more houses.

Grant applications

MassTrails applications are due February 1. Joan plans to begin writing in January, requesting funds to build from northern Crosswinds Road to the Bertozzi trailhead.

Bruce J. Anderson applications are expected to be available this month.

CFNCM's Environmental Preservation and Animal Welfare grant applications should also come out this month.

Status of Meehan bridge NOI

Stan Dillis has been meeting with Natural Heritage to work on ways to meet the requirements for resubmitting the NOI.

Ongoing maintenance

Bill and Dave Chennelle cleared the stone dust with leaf blowers. Gary's staff cleared it again.

Bill wants to have a work day in spring to haul in stone dust with wheelbarrows to raise low spots around the culverts.

The trash barrel at Depot Street is empty. Bill

will remind Gary about removing it for the winter.

Other events/publicity/outreach

The opening ceremony gave us great publicity. We hope to repeat that an ARPA check ceremony.

Another idea is to build abutter relationships by inviting them for a cookout in spring.

Joan met with the Townsend Conservation Commission to update them on trail progress and meet the new Conservation Agent Jessica Consolvo and Administrative Assistant Matthew Matos. The Commission was very supportive.

The Townsend Highway Department installed historic-style signposts in three locations around the center of town. Each post has multiple signs, pointing to the rail trail, three other trail destinations, and two parking areas. These were funded by a Shared Streets and Spaces grant.

Bill will post on Facebook that we are building the second section with ARPA money. He will also post a photo of the trail signs, showing the town and our non-profit working together.

Pete Carson posed an idea of approaching the management of Harbor Village shopping center about using a few parking spaces and making a marked path to the rail trail. We could also discuss improvements to the area around the dumpsters. We agreed to do a walk-through next spring and work on ideas.

Financial report

Bill reported we have \$63,136.03 in funds, plus \$100K expected from ARPA and \$30K from Groton CPA.

He proposed a new budget scenario for the next three years of construction, finishing in spring 2024:

Fall 2021

Old Meetinghouse Road to Harbor Church
0.7 miles

Estimated cost - \$140K
Assume ARPA funding \$100K
Remaining assets - \$50K

Fall 2022

Groton section
0.6 miles
Estimated cost - \$122K
Assume grant award MassTrails \$100K
Remaining assets - \$65K

Fall 2023

Townsend Harbor to northern Crosswinds Road
0.9 miles
Estimated cost - \$197K
Shortfall - \$132K
Assume grant awards CFNCM \$30K, Bruce J. Anderson \$10K, and MassTrails \$100K

Review minutes

A motion to accept the minutes from our meeting on December 1, 2021 was seconded and approved unanimously.

Next Meeting

Squannacook Greenways will hold our next rail trail meeting on **Wednesday, January 12, 2022** at 7:00 P.M. via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Wotkowicz

Clerk

Squannacook Greenways, Inc.