

## Squannacook Greenways, Inc.

### Board of Directors Meeting Minutes Wednesday, January 18, 2023

Attending:

Pete Carson, Mark Cram, Peter Cunningham,  
Bruce Easom, Linda Mack, Bill Rideout,  
Joan Wotkowicz

#### Phase 3 construction status

The Groton section is moving along nicely with no significant problems. The soil organic layer is thinner than other sections, so progress is faster.

We discussed an abutter's pile of stumps on MBTA property. They are not impeding construction, but may be an eyesore and could cause damage to living trees. Bill will ask Gary for an estimate for removal, in case we want them taken away before putting down stone dust. Peter will advise the owner that nothing more should be disposed of on MBTA property.

Gary gave us his first construction bill, which was submitted to the Groton CPA for the MassTrails grant match.

#### Phase 4 budget / financial report

Bill expects our balance after phase 3 will be \$88K. If we win the \$150K MassTrails grant for phase 4, we will have a \$27K budget shortfall.

Bill recommends we ask Senator Cronin for \$50K or \$100K. Bruce asked if we can request more than \$50K from the Groton CPA.

Amanda said we can change the scope of work if we win the next MassTrails grant, allowing us to split the work over two years if necessary.

#### MassTrails grant application

Our application is due February 1. Joan wrote a 1st draft and Bill added comments. Bill is working on a budget. Peter, Joan, and Bill are working on getting letters of support by Friday, January 20.

We are requesting \$150K based on the potential for our rail trail to become part of a larger multi-town network.

#### Future extension of the rail trail

Bill developed a concept for a "Nashoba Rail Trail Network" that would incorporate the Mason Rail Trail and Nashua River Rail Trails with the Squannacook River Rail Trail and extensions.

Our MBTA lease ends north of H&V, but we might be able to pay CSX to abandon the freight rights as far as Groton Town Forest. We could then try to lease and permit all the way to the trestle bridge. With no abutters, this might be an easy section to build and would add value for Groton residents.

Bill would like to do Board of Directors hikes this year to familiarize ourselves with the trails.

#### Harbor Church

Bill is involved on a study committee to improve historic buildings in Townsend. The plan for a historic village would use the rail trail as the connector. A sidewalk in Townsend Harbor and expanded parking at the Harbor Church will hopefully be part of this project.

#### Other grants & fundraising

Joan and Bill discussed the Wild & Scenic and Bruce J. Anderson grant opportunities that are currently open. They agreed that the time and effort might not be worth an additional \$10K, as it does not address our phase 4 shortfall. Also, Joan thinks that taking a break from these grants might help our credibility when we seek funding for small projects after the trail is finished.

## **Runoff/sedimentation from 158 Main Street**

At their January 11 meeting, the Townsend Conservation Commission advised the property owner of actions needed to protect the wetlands. They voted to issue an enforcement order requiring him to stabilize the swale, remove sediment, and clean out the culvert. They want him to hire a professional engineer to develop a restoration plan within a two-week deadline.

Bill gave the property owners contact information for Stan Dillis, who has already reviewed the project, and recommended Gary for the restoration work.

Linda pointed out that the owner will need to file an NOI.

## **Steve Meehan Bridge project**

The Townsend Board of Selectmen approved a town project to improve Old Meetinghouse Road from the Rt. 119 side, with Squannacook Greenways paying for the work.

## **Projects, events, and maintenance**

We discussed the need for volunteers to do maintenance, especially after the entire trail is built. Younger people will be important for the years to come.

James Gates suggested we set up a table at the youth soccer league's fundraising event to recruit volunteers.

Pete suggested we start an adopt-a-trail program.

## **Review meeting minutes**

A motion to accept the minutes from our meeting on November 16, 2022 was seconded and passed unanimously.

## **Next Meeting**

Squannacook Greenways will hold our next rail trail meeting on **Wednesday, February 22** at 7:00 P.M. via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Wotkowicz, Clerk

Squannacook Greenways, Inc.