

Squannacook Greenways, Inc.

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 2, 2021

Attending:

Rick Bailey, Peter Cunningham, Bruce Eason, Ray Jackson, Tim Palmer, Bill Rideout, Joan Wotkowicz

Recap of post and rail fence installation

We finished the second fence installation, along the steep pitch near Old Meetinghouse Road. This fence section was much shorter, but large buried rocks made the project more difficult. Ray was a big help.

Volunteer work day June 5

Joan sent out a list of tasks for repairing the walking path and collecting trash. She noted that the hydro-seeded grass has only come up in a few places, so the soil is not stabilized enough for wattle removal.

Bill added that wheelbarrows would be useful to carry out tires near the Harbor and a pile of bottles and rusty metal. He and Cheryl already cleared the tree that fell across the trail near Patriot Pizza.

We will meet at 9:00 at Depot Street. Joan will find out if Paul Sebring can pick up Bruce with his tractor and auger later in the morning so we can install Mark's sign at Depot Street.

Possible rail trail extensions

Bill pointed out that our lease extends to H&V and past Worcester Road in Townsend. We have construction plans for the next four years, but since permitting can take 2-3 years, we should start to explore where to extend the trail next.

Going eastward into West Groton may have issues with Natural Heritage. Also, the corridor is narrow and washed out in places and the trestle over the Nashua River needs repair. If we

can get past H&V, Bertozzi, and West Groton Center, the section near Groton Town Forest is in good shape and would get us closer to the Nashua River Rail Trail.

Going westward through Townsend center has fewer environmental challenges, but trestles. We could have an engineer look at the trestles. Joan pointed out that there is a lot of enthusiasm in Townsend right now and extending westward would get us additional parking at Jefts Street.

Extending through Townsend is our preference. In addition, we can explore a possible extension of the MBTA lease to the state line to connect with the Mason Rail Trail. Peter will contact the MBTA to inquire about leasing the corridor to the Massachusetts border.

MassTrails final report

Amanda Lewis scheduled a DCR site visit for Friday, June 11 at 8:00-8:30 AM. We will meet at the Depot Street parking lot.

Bill submitted a budget and close-out form to MassTrails. Joan drafted a final report, which Bill is reviewing, and is working on the attachments/narrative.

Bill noted that we had a 46% volunteer match (vs. the required 20%) and we no longer need to record volunteer hours.

Extensions for Orders of Conditions

Groton Conservation Commission did a site walk and had no concerns. Bruce said the commission granted a three-year extension.

Later this summer we will look into an extension for the Townsend OOC, which does not expire until 2022.

Depot Street welcome area

Joan circulated a new design incorporating feedback from Cheryl Rideout. This version is less crowded around the bricks. When the new shipment of engraved bricks arrives, we will forward the proposed layout to Chris Overton. Bill will ask about the delivery date for bricks.

Invasive Japanese Knotweed

Olin Lathrop is a Massachusetts licensed pesticide applicator and is willing to help us out with the large patch of knotweed in Townsend Harbor. The Town of Groton agreed to let him use their equipment. We are on the agenda for the Townsend Select Board's June 8 meeting to find out if we can cover Olin on Townsend's insurance.

ATV issues

Rick said the Environmental Police Officer can help, but we should go through the local police to coordinate. There has been only one known incident of motorcycle activity on the stone dust. We will address the issue if it happens again.

Trail maintenance

Peter asked about our maintenance plan. He suggested we form a rapid response team that can respond to trees down or other issues. Bruce suggested we do regular trail walks.

Environmental Stewards Pilot Program

We received an email from Carolyn Sellars asking us to co-sponsor an environmental program featuring the Work of 1000 film about Marion Stoddart. As this is a departure for us from trail-building, Bill asked Carolyn if the NRWA is a sponsor.

Grist Mill bridge repair

No activity. Bruce suggested we check with Natural Heritage to ask about permitting requirements. We will revisit in fall.

Natural Heritage site visit

Bruce suggested we invite Dave Paulson to tour the finished section of rail trail. Peter will contact him.

Steve Meehan Bridge project

Stan Dillis had concerns about the steep descent on the Timberlee side. The bridge does not have to be ADA accessible, so he will change the design slightly to reduce the slope of the approach and present the design to the Townsend Select Board.

Financial report

Expenditures this month include fence materials.

Other events/publicity/fundraising

Peter encouraged us to have a formal ribbon-cutting event and invite our legislative representatives and the Lieutenant Governor, now that we are emerging from the pandemic. Tim suggests we contact them soon to gauge their availability. Peter will make inquiries.

Bill would like to honor major donors. The Groton Herald and Nashoba Publications are likely to support us. We should also check with the Townsend Select Board and Recreation Commission.

We decided to try to schedule the event for September.

Review minutes

A motion to accept meeting minutes from May 5, 2021 was seconded and passed unanimously.

Next Meeting

Squannacook Greenways will hold our next rail trail meeting on **Wednesday, June 30 at 7:00 P.M.** via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Wotkowicz, Clerk

Squannacook Greenways, Inc.