

Squannacook River Rail Trail Funding Exploration Committee - Townsend

Minutes of Public Meeting of Dec 17, 2009

Location: Townsend Library, Townsend

Time: 7 pm

Members Present: Steve Meehan (Chairman), Bill Martin, Bill Rideout (Secretary), Ken Gerken, Hirk Fortin

Members Absent: None

Attendees: Bruce Easom, Peter Carson (Groton committee), Al Futterman, Mark Cram, Cheryl Rideout, Joan Wotkowicz

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 after moving the venue to the Townsend Library and posting the new location and time at Memorial Hall in Townsend. Ken Gerken informed us that Conrad Crawford, the public/private partnership director at DCR who was expected to attend, had called to cancel. The group decided to try to get Conrad to come to the next meeting by offering him a selection of dates: Jan. 20, 21, or 28. We also decided to ask Peter Cunningham to be our one contact with DCR, so Bill Rideout said he would contact Peter to ask him to take on that task. The group discussed the possibility of sending Conrad a letter summarizing our thoughts before the meeting. There was a motion to authorize Bill Rideout to write such a letter, if Peter thought it was good idea. The motion passed unanimously.

The next topic of discussion was the design process of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail in Acton. There the town had paid for the 25% design, and had managed to acquire state fund for the rest of the design process. We discussed whether such a process could be a model for our rail trail. Bill Rideout volunteered to investigate who had done the 25% design in Acton and who had done it. Al Futterman volunteered to ask FST what they estimated a 25% design would cost for our trail. Bruce Easom volunteered to contact Brad Harris from the Montachusets Regional Planning Commission about the feasibility of such an approach for our rail trail.

The next topic of discussion was the Project Initiation Form. Since Peter Cunningham is the main contact to MassHighway and was not present, Al Futterman volunteered to follow up with him as to its status.

The next topic of discussion was the surrendering of freight rights by Pan Am railways. Al Futterman reported on conversations he had had with Kathy Hersch at City of Nashua NH Planning Dept and with Tim Doherty at MassDOT, and Bill Rideout reported on discussions he had had with Steve Winslow. The bottom line of these conversations was that we would basically need to cover Pan Am's costs in filling out the abandonment forms, and there would be no additional filing fee costs. We needed to negotiate these costs with Pan Am, but that starting with what previous towns had paid (~\$5000) would be a good negotiating strategy.

The Townsend meeting minutes from Nov 18, 2009 were unanimously approved.

Steve Meehan reported on a discussion he had had with Townsend selectman Bob Plamondon. Steve

said Bob's concerns focused on the issue of environmental liability.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:26.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Rideout
Secretary, Squannacook River Rail Trail Funding Exploration Committee