

Squannacook Greenways, Inc.

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 15, 2020

Attending:

Peter Carson, Mark Cram, Bruce Easom,
Ray Jackson, Bill Rideout, Joan Wotkowicz

Bridge repair project

We postponed the July 11 work day to repair the bridge near the Grist Mill due to weather forecast and also to inform the Townsend Conservation Commission. On July 13, Bruce, Bill, Ray, and Joan met for a site visit with Conservation Agent Dave Henkels.

Dave suggested we submit a project description to the Commission and he will get back to us within 72 hours about permitting requirements. Bill wrote a draft narrative that he circulated by email today. All please review and send any comments to Joan by tomorrow. She will finish and submit the narrative.

Joan will also contact the Townsend Historical District Commission.

Joan spoke with Taber Morrell, Administrator for the Townsend Historical Society, about the bridge near the Cooperage. He suggested a collaborative cost-sharing project to repair the deteriorated boards.

Updates on volunteer trail clearing

Steve Legge sent an email to report on work done on the Groton segment. Bill has been doing 2-3 hours per week and finds that the vegetation grows back fast. Some of the trail is getting quite a bit of use. Harbor Village still needs a lot of work.

Update on DCR Old Meetinghouse Rd parking

Bill sent an email to DCR inquiring about using their small dirt lot on Meetinghouse Road for rail trail parking. DCR did not respond.

Bill found one of our "No ATV" signs thrown into the woods near Meetinghouse Road.

Status of MassTrails 2020 grant application

Bill sent Amanda an inquiry but received no response as yet.

Plans for rail removal

Jeff Greene contacted Joan to say that he and Russ Clark are still on board to remove rails in November. He asked is there is any wiggle room with the November 7 start date, but this will depend on how the weather affects turtle habitat.

Joan asked if we should contact Gary Shepherd about using his property as a landing, as it is currently being used to store soil materials. Bill wants to wait until we know about the grant award and then ask Gary if he wants to bid.

Upcoming events/Publicity

Bill has been in contact with the Townsend Historical Society about a guided walk. On October 3, they are having a Revolutionary War encampment at the Reed Homestead. We could collaborate with them for a guided walk during this event.

Joan spoke with Deb Busser, who is running for State Representative. Deb asked about priorities and challenges in Townsend. Joan filled her in on status of the rail trail.

Marion Stoddart inquired about the tree clearing along Rt. 119. Joan clarified that is not our property. Joan has heard negative comments and suggested we get the word out that this property is not part of the rail trail.

Ray asked about the bridge near the Cooperage. This will be lower priority than the bridge at the Grist Mill.

Fundraising and financial report

Bill reported that the second half of our insurance payment is due.

Timeline for next steps

If a DCR grant award comes in, we will issue a revised RFP that incorporates language from the grant application. We will need three bids and will give bidders a month to respond. Joan will start working on a draft RFP.

Bruce suggested we try to award the contract by October 1 to give the winning contractor time to prepare. Bill suggested we push that date even earlier and try to choose a contractor by September 1.

Joan will contact two contractors associated with the Mason Rail Trail and ask them if they are interested in bidding. They both declined to bid on our original RFP due to the scope of building the whole trail in one season, but they may be interested in the smaller project.

Assuming we get permission for repairing the Grist Mill bridge, Bill will reschedule the work day for a Saturday in August.

Review meeting minutes

A motion to approve the minutes from our meeting on June 10, 2020 was seconded and passed unanimously with two abstentions.

Next Meeting

Squannacook Greenways will hold our next rail trail meeting on August 12 at 7:00 PM.

The meeting date may change if we win a grant award, as we will need to vote on signing the DCR contract.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Wotkowicz, Clerk

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