

Squannacook Greenways, Inc.

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 11, 2020

Attending:

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

Planning Board hearing on parking lot

Beth Faxon notified us that the Depot Street parking lot is on the agenda for a Townsend Planning Board meeting on Monday, November 16, 2020. Stan Dillis will present the plan.

Environmental permitting review

Pete Cunningham reported that Groton's Conservation Agent, Nick Gualco, visited the site on November 5 and is satisfied with the status of the wattles.

Joan informed Townsend's Conservation Agent Dave Henkels that construction is starting and asked him to make sure we are meeting their requirements.

Joan has a spreadsheet of requirements from the Conservation Commissions as well as NHESP, DEP, etc.

Groton requires contractor signatures on the Orders of Conditions. Pete Cunningham will follow up with the rail removal contractor. Groton will also require documentation of disposal of ties removed during construction.

Townsend requires regular inspections for environmental compliance.. Bill and Joan will share a schedule, with Joan going tomorrow and Bill on Friday. We will also need a final inspection report from Stan Dillis.

Rail removal project

Bill, Mark, and Joan met on site this morning with Jeff Greene from JMG Trading and Russ Clark of Keystone Rail. Bill shared photos.

We reminded the contractors about wattles and showed them the Orders of Conditions clipped to DEP signs.

Bill spoke with Gary Shepherd about using Harbor Auto as a staging area.

Russ started cutting rails and bringing in equipment today. Jeff estimated 400 tons of scrap metal to be carried away in 20 truckloads of rail and 1-2 loads of other track material (OTM). We will find out from Russ where the rails are going and what they will be used for.

Bill marked 30 feet of rail to keep intact near the parking lot as a historical marker. He also marked the ending points at Harbor Church and before the grassy area near the fisherman's parking lot. The rails near Shepherd's can be used for bank stabilization.

Pete Cunningham will try to get a decision from Tom Delaney of the Groton Highway Department about removing the rails from the pavement at Crosswinds Drive. The crossing at Old Meetinghouse Road no longer has rails.

Signage

Bill installed a large "Coming Soon" sign at Depot Street that acknowledges our funders. He sent a photo to Amanda Lewis, who was very appreciative.

Bill also posted "Closed During Construction" signs at Depot Street, Old Meetinghouse Road (two). He has additional signs for Crosswinds Drive (four), Harbor Church, Shepherds, and Bertozzi.

Joan re-painted the DEP sign for the Townsend terminus and Paul Sebring installed it on a tree at the Depot Street lot. Orders of Conditions are mounted behind each DEP sign in a zip-lock bag.

Construction project

Bill told Gary it will be another week or 10 days before the rail removal team is finished. We will owe Gary another \$45K when he starts construction.

Construction inspections

As a reminder, Bill and Joan will inspect in Townsend. Pete Carson, Bruce, and Pete Cunningham will inspect in Groton. Once both rail removal and construction are ongoing, we will need to inspect both.

Joan made a blank form for us to record daily observations. While not a requirement, each inspector should keep a record in case we need to prove compliance.

MassTrails contract amendment

Amanda Lewis sent us a signed amendment and Notice to Proceed for the amended grant amount of \$115,000.

Bill submitted our first reimbursement request for \$36K. Along with a 20% match of \$9K from our own funds, this will cover our first \$45K payment to Gary Shepherd. Bill hopes to get the reimbursement from DCR in time for our third payment to Gary.

Bill reminded us to record volunteer hours for any activities that allow this phase of construction.

Budget scenarios for MassTrails 2021 grant

The next round of grants is open. Applications are due by February 1, 2021. Bill worked out a new budget for four years of construction, based on a \$110K MassTrails grant each year:

Year 2 - The next stage will be Old Meetinghouse Road to Harbor Church, 0.76 miles. At Gary's current price and allowing for some increase, construction is expected to cost \$139K.

Year 3 - We will build from north Crosswinds Drive to Bertozzi, 0.6 miles in Groton, which we hope to supplement with Groton Community Preservation Act funding.

Year 4 - We will need to raise additional funds in the fourth year to finish the trail from Shepherd to north Crosswinds Drive. We may need to apply for Bruce Anderson and Community Foundation grants to match MassTrails funding.

Groton Community Preservation Act

Pete Cunningham and Pete Carson submitted a preliminary CPA request at a hearing this week. The committee seemed receptive, especially since the money would be leveraged by a MassTrails grant.

Meehan bridge project

No activity until Stan Dillis begins work on permitting.

Fundraising and financial report

Bill paid Gary the first \$45K. At the end of this phase of construction, we will have \$43K remaining. Having one section of trail completed should give us traction with future grant applications.

Townsend does not currently have a Community Preservation Act program and we do not know the potential for bringing it to another town meeting vote.

Moving Together conference

The MassDOT conference is scheduled for Tuesday, November 17 to Thursday, November 19. This year's event is virtual and free. Bill and Joan registered.

Bill pointed out two sessions that may be of interest: One about the MassTrails grant and another about increases in pedestrian and bicyclist deaths.

www.MovingTogetherMA.org.

Review minutes

A motion to accept the minutes from our meeting on October 14, 2020 was seconded and approved unanimously.

Next meeting

Squannacook Greenways will hold our next rail trail meeting on **December 9, 2020 at 7:00 P.M.** via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Wotkowicz, Clerk

Squannacook Greenways, Inc.