

Squannacook Greenways, Inc.

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Attending:

Rick Bailey, Peter Carson, Mark Cram,
Peter Cunningham, Bruce Easom, Dan Hager,
Ray Jackson, Bill Rideout, Joan Wotkowicz

Rail removal updates

Russ Clark removed rails from Depot Street to Old Meetinghouse Road and trucks have been picking them up from the Depot Street landing. Russ was working alone because a merger of CSX and Pan Am diverted his crew to a rail pulling job.

Russ finished at Depot Street and set up at Harbor Auto Body this week. More crew and equipment arrived and he expects to finish the section from Old Meetinghouse Road to Harbor Church by Friday or over the weekend. Bill will put up signs at the next sections alerting people not to use the trail.

Pete Cunningham is working with the management company and retailers at Harbor Village to get dumpsters moved. At some point, we may ask them to fence off or clean up the dumpster area to improve the shopping center's appearance from the rail trail.

The Groton Highway Department does not want rails removed from the Crosswinds Drive road crossing at this time. Bill is concerned that pulling rails across the roadway will damage the asphalt, so we decided on two staging areas at Crosswinds Drive. Pete Cunningham will stake them out. Pete Carson will send an email to Crosswinds neighbors alerting them to stay away from the trail.

Construction updates

Gary Shepherd's crew has removed all ties from Old Meetinghouse Road to behind Central Plaza. They are staging in the Sterilite yard via the east

gate, where the ties are being crushed and trucked away. The crew said they are finding sand, not ballast, under the ties.

Behind Almost There Farm is a collapsed makeshift culvert, which Gary offered to replace. Joan will check if culvert removal is part of our Orders of Condition and check with Dave Henkels if not.

Bill said there is a pile of soil and debris between the rock cut and Old Meetinghouse Road, which Gary wants to screen to remove wood and stumps before returning it to the trail. Bill reminded him that no soil may leave the site. Mark suggested the screened material might be useful in the sandy area near Sterilite.

The ties are being compacted and trucked to New Bedford, to be loaded onto rail cars and sent to Ross Environmental Services, a hazardous and industrial waste management company in Ohio.

If weather cooperates, Gary hopes to finish by Christmas.

Compliance

Bill and Joan have been inspecting daily and recording observations on a Google doc. The wattles have fared well and the crews are respecting the Orders of Conditions. We posted an additional copy of the Townsend OOC at the Sterilite gate.

Nick Gualco inspected the Groton section and Jeff Greene signed the OOC document required by the town. Pete Cunningham, Pete Carson, and Bruce will take over inspections from the fisherman's parking lot to the Groton terminus. The inspection form is available online.

Townsend Planning Board hearing for parking lot

After multiple delays, the Planning Board voted unanimously on December 7 to approve a special permit for the Depot Street parking lot. Public notices were sent and no one attended to voice concerns.

The approved plan has parking along the trail side of the lot so people will not cross traffic when leaving their cars. Access to the lot will be from Depot Street instead of Center Street, which has an ownership issue. The Board is requiring us to install a No Left Turn sign at the exit to the one-way on Depot Street.

Unfortunately, the published agenda had incorrect Zoom meeting information, so the Board will reopen the public hearing on January 11. We will proceed with the project on schedule and make any changes later if required.

We do not know if the Board's decision was filed with the Town Clerk. Joan will call Kathy Spofford to find out. Bill will inform Gary of the delayed hearing.

2020 MassTrails grant contract

MassTrails informed us that the \$23K from Community Foundation is considered a donation, not a payment to Gary. Bill adjusted the budget accordingly.

Bill gave Shepherd's the second payment of \$45K and submitted a form with the cashed check to MassTrails for reimbursement. We need the reimbursement to make the next payments.

2021 MassTrails grant application

Joan and Bill will start on our next application, which is due February 1. This will be for construction from Old Meetinghouse Road to Harbor Church. Bill will ask Gary to quote this section for the grant budget.

Groton CPA

The Community Preservation Act committee was receptive to our preliminary request. Pete Cunningham is working on a formal application. We will request funding to match a MassTrails grant for the third year of construction, from Bertozzi to the northern crossing of Crosswinds.

We will need at least one construction bid. Pete will ask Max13 to quote and Bill will ask Gary Shepherd.

The application is due in January, gets voted on at spring town meeting, and money is available on July 1.

Shared Winter Streets and Spaces grant program

Veronica Kell, from the Townsend Select Board and Land Trust, contacted Bill and Joan to solicit ideas for a state grant to fund safe streets for walking and biking. She asked about a bike lane between the town parking lot and the rail trail.

Bill suggested a bike lane from the town common to the rail trail instead, as listed in the FST engineering report. He noted that a sidewalk in Townsend Harbor would be our first priority. Veronica will bring Bill's ideas to the Select Board and look into eligibility of a sidewalk.

Wild & Scenic Rivers Community Grants

Joan announced a new grants program administered by the Wild & Scenic Rivers Stewardship Council, which will award up to \$5K for projects that support the stewardship values. The Council will send out an RFP this month and applications will be accepted from February 1 to April 1, 2021.

Municipalities and non-profits are eligible. This will be an ongoing program, so we may want to apply after the trail is built.

Fundraising and financial report

Bill distributed a report that details how he plans to use the MassTrails grant. We currently have \$131K in assets, but \$88K in liabilities. After paying Gary, we will have \$44K.

Other events/publicity

Joan spoke with Townsend Police Chief James Sartell, who was very supportive and agreed to have patrols check on construction equipment.

Bill continues to post our progress and photos on Facebook.

Review of minutes

A motion to accept the corrected minutes from our November 11 meeting was seconded and approved unanimously.

Next Meeting

Squannacook Greenways will hold our next Zoom meeting on **Wednesday, January 13, 2021** at 7:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Wotkowicz, Clerk

Squannacook Greenways, Inc.