

Squannacook Greenways, Inc.

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 20, 2021

Attending:

Pete Carson, Mark Cram, Peter Cunningham, Bruce Easom, Ray Jackson, Tim Palmer, Bill Rideout, Joan Wotkowicz

Recap of opening celebration

All agreed the ceremony went very well. We built relationships, got on people's radar, and planted seeds for more support. The energy was very positive.

Colleen Abrams of Wachusett Greenways was impressed with the park-like look with grass along the trail. The bricks and granite monument also looked great.

At a Community Foundation event, Peter spoke again with Senator John Cronin about his advocacy.

Update on Steve Meehan pedestrian bridge

The Townsend Conservation Commission hearing is on hold until NHESP concerns are addressed.

Stan Dillis, Peter, and Joan met with Dave Paulson on October 5 to discuss next steps for the NHESP filing. Dave was very open and clarified what additional information he needs. He discussed building a narrow bridge, blocking off ATV side trails, and possibly placing signs to prevent motor vehicle access past a certain point on Old Meetinghouse Road.

Stan expects there will be a MESA "take" to be addressed, but he came away with a clear path of next steps. There will also be issues from the District F&W office.

Joan will update the Wild & Scenic Stewardship Council on the project status.

Update on Community Foundation grant application

CFNCM determined that our grant application for the Community Enrichment Program would be more appropriate to the Environmental Preservation and Animal Welfare program. They invited us to re-submit to that program in January. Peter and Ray spoke with Linda Mack, who supports us but was not involved in the proposal review.

Discussion on funding and construction

Congresswoman Lori Trahan will try to get us in the queue for Community Project Funding, which starts in January. Also, the state expects more funding through the American Rescue Plan. Peter exchanged emails with Amanda Lewis about the likelihood of this money channeling through MassTrails. Peter also met Gerald Autler, DCR's new Director of Trails and Greenways, who may be a resource.

MRPC suggested we look at Philanthropy.com and Sherri Bean at MRPC gave us a list of funding opportunities.

Bill spoke with Gary Shepherd, who will speak on our behalf at CFNCM. Gary said he can build two sections next year, if we can get the funding.

Update on Townsend Shared Streets and Spaces project

Procurement has become an issue due to supply chain delays, so MA DOT gave us an extension until next June for implementation. Bike lanes and much of the signage are on hold, but some items might be delivered in time for installation this year, including a bike rack, park bench, repair stand, and "You Are Here" map for Depot Street. Joan will send out a draft of the map for

review.

Next steps for Japanese Knotweed

Dan sprayed a month ago and will spray again, possibly tomorrow.

Other maintenance items

Groton Fire Dept. will require a permit for using a cutting torch on the rails near Crosswinds Drive.

A Facebook user asked if dogs need to be leashed on the rail trail. We decided to rely on Townsend's leash law rather than develop a policy.

Pete noted a mattress and box spring dumped behind the dumpsters at Harbor Village. Peter will call the management.

We will need another cleanup there at some point. It would be nice to have a fence to stop trash from blowing onto the trail property.

Other events/publicity/outreach

Bill would like to collect trail usage statistics for upcoming grant applications. We decided to take shifts on Sunday, October 24.

9:00–11:00 Bruce

11:00–1:00 Bill

1:00–3:00 Pete Carson

3:00–5:00 Peter Cunningham

Joan will make a blank form for counting users and recording demographics.

Financial report

Bill reported our total assets at ~\$43K.

Review minutes

A motion to accept the minutes from our meeting on September 15, 2021 was seconded and approved unanimously.

Next Meeting

Squannacook Greenways will hold our next rail trail meeting on **December 1, 2021 at 7:00 P.M.** via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Wotkowicz , Clerk

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