

Squannacook River Rail Trail Funding Exploration Committee (Townsend)

Minutes of Public Meeting of Oct 14, 2009 (Approved Nov. 18, 2009)

Location: Memorial Hall, Townsend

Time: 7 pm

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

Members Absent: None

Attendees: Bruce Easom, Peter Cunningham, Peter Carson, Steve Legge (Groton committee), Al Futterman, Joan Wotkowicz

Peter Cunningham began the meeting with a discussion of the status of the Project Need Form. Peter said the form had been received by MassHighway and will begin reviewing it for completeness. He said MassHighway did not have a firm date when they would be able to get to it. Peter said he would follow up with Arthur Frost about details on how the whole process worked.

Peter Cunningham reported on his conversation with Mr. Tom LaRosa, of the Department of Recreation's Chief Counsel, about helping with the lease agreement with the MBTA. Mr. LaRosa said that DCR would be willing to provide help with the lease agreement but did not have any experience in dealing with freight right issues. Al Futterman suggested that the Committee request help from DCR on the freight rights issue thereby encouraging DCR to come get up to speed on this issue. Peter Cunningham said that the governor, Deval Patrick, is scheduled to make an announcement regarding more state budget cuts tomorrow (Thursday 15 October 2009) so DCR may be less likely to be able to provide help with freight rights issue. Peter Cunningham volunteered to consult with Sean Navin at DCR about taking on more responsibility for the lease negotiations with the MBTA. Peter said that he would also try to press DCR to provide advice on the freight rights negotiations with the B&M Railroad.

Al Futterman reported on the status of the project's federal earmarks. Al said that Kristen Wood, assistant to Congressman Olver, expects that action on the earmarks would be delayed about a year while Congress deals with healthcare issues.

Al reported in the status of the negotiations with the B&M Railroad. He said the B&M is looking for some consideration from us to give up the freight rights. Bill Rideout said that he heard from Steve Winslow that the city of Cambridge, MA paid Pan Am Railway's costs associated with going through the abandonment process. Steve Winslow said that the Saugus Branch of the Boston & Main Railroad has the same problem with freight rights as the SRRT

Al Futterman volunteered to contact the city of Somerville to find out what their experience was with freight rights negotiations with the B&M. Al also volunteered to talk with his co-worker Rick Muehlke, since he had formerly worked with B&M.

The committee voted unanimously to accept the Aug. 20, 2009 meeting minutes

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Bruce volunteered to contact Amanda Louis to see if DCR Trails Grant awards could be in excess of \$50,000 for an intra-municipal project. The goal would be to use the DCR grant money to provide the 20% local match needed for the 100% design effort. Al Futterman volunteered to contact Fay, Spofford and Thorndike, LLC to get an update estimate of the cost to complete the 100% design.

The Committee agreed that its next meeting should be on Wednesday 18 November 2009 in Groton.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Rideout