

## Squannacook Greenways, Inc.

### Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 14, 2024

Attending:

Mark Cram, Peter Cunningham, Emma Grazier, Dan Hager, Linda Mack, Frankl Murphy, Bill Rideout, Joan Wotkowicz

#### Recap wattles removal

We cleared wattles from the phase 4 section and removed the netting for disposal. Volunteers showed up to help and aside from the poison ivy, it was a very successful day.

The Groton Conservation Commission plans to walk the site on August 24 and discuss a letter of compliance at their meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

Mark asked if we should remove the silt fence at the culvert. We agreed to wait until the Townsend Conservation Commission does a walk through.

#### Updates on trail extensions

Peter is trying to coordinate a site walk on the proposed Groton extension with Tim McGuire of Natural Heritage. He is trying to get additional engineering quotes for the CPA grant. He connected with the MBTA about developing a document to relinquish freight rights. The Groton Trails Committee is interested in working on the project.

#### Update on Old Meetinghouse Road/Meehan Bridge

Bill and Emma met on site with staff from Natural Heritage, Fish and Wildlife, DEP Central Region Wetlands, and Dillis and Roy, as well as. Joe Shank from the Townsend BOS, James Deroian of the Townsend Conservation Commission, and State Representative Margaret Scarsdale.

The proposed project has major challenges. DEP

wants an elevated walkway along the wetland section of Old Meetinghouse Road and NHESP claims that splitting up the habitat would constitute a taking. The trail extension past Bertozzi has permitting challenges for the same reason.

Bill asked Tim McGuire for scientific data that demonstrates human presence would disrupt sensitive wildlife habitat.

We will continue to explore if the town of Townsend is interested in rebuilding Old Meetinghouse Road. Bill will ask Joe Shank to consult Town Counsel about the feasibility.

NHESP said that permitting the Townsend extension to the NH border would have fewer challenges.

#### Update on Townsend Harbor projects

No bids were received at the second bid opening for sidewalk construction. Jessica Consolvo, Townsend Land Use Agent, hopes that MassTrails can provide options for the grant.

The current dirt path through Townsend Harbor along Rt 119 is inconvenient and potentially dangerous.

Bill will inquire about Gary's plans for resurfacing the two small railroad bridges.

#### Update on Rt 119 culvert

Due to high demand for culvert funding from the state, we don't expect repair work soon. In the meantime, the repaired culvert under the rail trail seems to be working well.

#### Townsend CPA status

The Community Preservation Act is on the ballot for November 5<sup>th</sup>. Bill asked if Squannacook Greenways will endorse the ballot

question, which would not be considered lobbying.

A motion to endorse the Townsend CPA was seconded and passed unanimously. Bill will use email and Facebook to encourage support among rail trail followers.

### **Grant writer status**

Joan met with Emma to hand off grant-writing tasks. She gave Emma 18 years of grant-related and other relevant files, an overview of MassTrails and other grant applications, and resources such as images, maps, minutes, and legal documents. Joan emphasized that she will be glad to help as needed.

The transferred files are not an official document collection, so Emma offered to set up a centralized repository for the group.

### **Financial report / fundraising**

Bill reported current total assets of just over \$43K, with about \$6K remaining after committed expenses.

Our Community Foundation account no longer meets their limit of \$10K, so he will close it out and transfer the money to our bank account.

### **Phase 4 follow-up tasks**

Bill will approach the Townsend Town Administrator and Selectmen to request a pedestrian crossing near Cherry Hill Too with a rapid flashing beacon.

### **Other maintenance / projects / events**

Bill proposed a dinner to celebrate trail completion. We will meet at Bailey's on

**Saturday, September 14 at 6:00.**

Spouses/families invited!

Bailey's inquired if they could post a menu on our rail trail. Joan suggested a kiosk along the side trail to Harbor Village for business messaging. Peter will discuss the idea when he contacts the shopping center management.

We planned a workday for **Saturday, November 16<sup>th</sup>** to leaf blow and to install signs at intersections.

Our grant from the Wild & Scenic Rivers Stewardship Council includes funding for "Stop" and "No ATV" signage. We discussed wording for warning signs, possibly based on the design of a "Trail Rules" sign that Mark put up at Depot Street. We will add a rule limiting e-bikes to 20 mph.

We still need to remove the two trash cans at each end of the phase 1 section.

Bill would like to apply for a MassTrails grant to fix the trail section behind Harbor Auto. We could also try to get funding for engineering on the trestle bridge in Townsend.

The MassTrails trails conference will be on October 26.

### **Review minutes**

A motion to accept the minutes from our June 26, 2024 meeting was seconded and approved unanimously.

### **Schedule next meeting**

Our next meeting will be on **Wednesday, September 18 at 7:00 PM.**

This will be our annual meeting with elections of directors and officers.

### **Other business**

Emma submitted her Conflict-of-Interest form as a new director. A motion to accept Emma's COI was seconded and approved unanimously. The Treasurer will retain the document.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Wotkowicz

Clerk

Squannacook Greenways, Inc.