

Squannacook Greenways (pre-incorporation) meeting minutes

May 25, 2011

Squannacook Greenways held a meeting on May 25, 2011 at Memorial Hall in Townsend at 7:30 pm. In attendance were Steve Meehan , Bill Rideout, Mark Cram, Al Futterman, Ray Jackson, Arthur Gadway, Peter Cunningham and Bob Hargraves.

The first topic was negotiations with DCR. Peter Cunningham had spoken with Conrad Crawford. Conrad has been asked by the new DCR commissioner Edward Lambert to brief him on our project, but that briefing has not yet happened. Conrad said Peter's letter was effective. Peter said he is planning to keep pressure on to make sure this project does not get put on the back burner.

Bill Rideout noted that he had sent Gene Rauhala the draft bylaws and articles of incorporation. Gene had replied that it was basically fine, but that he had a few suggestions he would send us. Bill noted that we should be able to incorporate in a short period of time. Bob Hargraves noted that there was a significant fee of hundreds of dollars in order to file with the IRS for 501(c)(3) status, which we will do after our incorporation.

Mark Cram talked about his draft engineering study. He has written a draft report which he will be sending out to the group for comments. We decided that once the document was ready, Bill Rideout and the engineering subgroup would visit possible contractors to get feedback from them. It was suggested that Gary Shepherd could be the first contractor we contact. Ray Jackson talked about the possible use of gabions (<http://www.gabions.net>) for erosion control along the Squannacook River. Since this work involves the use of a lot of unskilled labor, it might be appropriate for a volunteer project.

Ray also discussed a chainsaw training course for volunteers. He had a number of contacts: Dick O'Brien (dobrien578@gmail.com) who would do a one-day course for 10 people for \$500 plus mileage. This would not be a certificate-granting course. Ray also had contacts for more expensive certificate granting courses. The group decided that we should consider the total costs of volunteer versus professional clearing of the trail. The volunteer cost would also include any additional insurance costs, which would have to be researched. Ray estimated that 6 volunteers with chainsaws could clear 1/2 mile per day.

We discussed the document Bill Rideout had put together with short biographies of all present directors of Squannacook Greenways. It was now complete and approved by each board member. Bill Rideout will send it to Peter Cunningham for possible use in convincing DCR of our credibility.

The group had had a table at Earth Day in Townsend on April 30, 2011. It had been a chilly day until the afternoon, which kept the crowds down. Bill Rideout noted that the email list now had 250 email addresses. The group had a discussion about launching a SRRT newsletter to that email list. We decided to wait until DCR made a decision.

Bill Rideout talked about the status of the sidewalk in Townsend Harbor. He noted that Townsend's town administrator Andy Sheehan had told him in a recent email that there had been no progress. Bob Hargraves noted that he had had a number of good contacts at MassHighway division III that could help Andy, and Bill Rideout said he would forward that information to Andy.

Al Futterman noted that the next DCR Recreational Trails grant was now open, with a deadline of Oct 1, 2011. All agreed that it made sense for us to try to submit an application, with the hope that negotiations with DCR on the lease would allow submission by Oct, 1st. We also noted that the grant could be delayed without substantial reworking, so any effort we put into it now would not be wasted.

The Board of Directors meeting next meeting was planned for Wednesday, June 29, 2011 at 7 pm at the Nashua River Watershed Association.