

## Squannacook Greenways, Inc.

### Board of Directors Meeting Minutes Wednesday, November 16, 2022

Attending:

Pete Carson, Mark Cram, Peter Cunningham, Dale Gates, Dan Hager, Linda Mack, Tim Palmer, Bill Rideout, Joan Wotkowicz

#### **New board member**

Dale Gates has agreed to join our Board of Directors. A motion to elect Dale for a three-year term ending September 2025 was seconded and approved unanimously.

#### **MassTrails conference**

Bill attended the presentations on November 12. He noted that MassTrails might increase the funding in the grants program and grant levels could increase to \$500K per application.

Bill learned that state representative Michelle Ciccolo from Lexington is starting up a trails caucus for representatives. Michelle was the town administrator in Hudson during rail trail construction.

Another topic at the conference was the challenge for the Mass Central Rail Trail to get DCR to relax restrictions and allow rail trail passage across the reservoir dam in Clinton.

Bill also attended an interesting talk about historical signs along rail trails.

Joan attended the two-day chain saw workshop.

#### **Recap trail user count**

Bruce, Bill, and Joan counted for nine hours on Sunday, October 16. We counted 73 trail users, which is about 30% less than last year. Of these, the majority were walkers, many with dogs (on leash), and some families with children on bikes or in strollers or wagons. A few were bicyclists or runners. One frequent user advised that Sundays are a slow day as compared to

Tuesday–Thursday.

Our experience is that more people than ever are using the trail, but because we counted at Depot Street, we may have missed many who started at Harbor Church.

Joan noted that late in the afternoon some older kids ripped through on mountain bikes rigged with loud motors. Linda said that the Townsend Police are helpful with this type of problem.

#### **Phase 3 and 4 construction**

Bill asked both Gary and James when they expect to start phase 3 construction, but they did not have an exact date.

Peter said we missed the date for a preliminary application for the Groton Community Preservation Act. He will meet with the committee on November 28 and try to submit an out-of-cycle application for phase 4 funding.

Bill discussed the possibility of phase 4 funding during a meeting with Senator John Cronin.

#### **Financial report / grants / fundraising**

Bill said we sold a few more bricks and a bench for a total of \$5,800. He paid \$1,430 to Stan Dillis for the parking lot engineering plan.

We expect to have \$88K left after phase 3. Assuming we win a \$100K MassTrails grant, we will need an additional \$37K for phase 4 construction.

Joan pointed out that the Wild & Scenic Rivers Stewardship Council will be opening a new round of Community Grants soon. These are ~\$5,000 grants for projects that promote the river stewardship goals. We previously won a grant to upgrade the canoe launch on Harbor Pond. Joan encourages us to think about other small projects we want to fund.

Pete asked about improvements to the fisherman's parking lot, which would alleviate potential problems with people parking at Crosswinds. He also asked if we could fund repairs to the railroad bridges in the Harbor.

Bill asked if we could try to fund one of the riverbank reinforcements in phase 4. Since the grant period runs to the end of 2023, we agreed to put in an application for funding to use next fall.

### **Shared Streets project in Townsend Harbor**

The final engineering plan has a bike lane on one side and sharrows on the other side of the roads approaching the south street / Rt. 119 intersection.

### **Harbor Church parking extension**

Stan's draft plan had parking alongside the church. We eliminated those parking spaces and reviewed the plan with the Townsend Historical Society. Bill will get notarization and approval from the Society.

The Townsend Conservation Agent has seen the plan and thinks we can submit it as an amendment to our OOC.

### **Proposed Steve Meehan bridge**

Bill gave a presentation to the Townsend Select Board on November 15 to ask for the town's permission to repair Old Meetinghouse Road for pedestrian and bike access. Stan Dillis and the Townsend Police Chief attended to answer any questions.

The Select Board was supportive and saw no issues. They agreed to consult with town counsel and then continue discussion at the December 6 Select Board meeting. If the Select Board gives approval, Stan will work next on permitting.

### **Soil excavation**

Vegetation has been cleared and ditches excavated between the rail trail and the abutting farm field at 158 Main Street, allowing excess

runoff to flow directly onto our property toward the new culverts. Linda said that the Townsend Conservation Commission is aware of this wetland issue and is working with the abutter to rectify.

She noted that the culvert is backing up with sediment. If the abutter mitigates stormwater on his property, we will probably need additional work on the culvert and the surrounding area.

### **Other projects, events, and maintenance**

Bill, Peter, Pete, and Dale will bring leaf blowers to clear the trail of leaves and other organic debris. They will meet on Saturday at 1:00 at Old Meetinghouse Road.

Gary and James organized a planting day to put down soil and plant flower bulbs. The NMRHS football and field hockey teams planted 2,500 bulbs.

Joan and Bill attended a Montachusett Regional Planning Commission public outreach workshop on 2024 Regional Transportation Plan updates. They provided feedback on Townsend issues. MRPC has a survey online that we can fill out:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JGK7WYR>

### **Review minutes**

A motion to accept the minutes from our October 12 meeting was seconded and approved unanimously.

### **Next Meeting**

Squannacook Greenways will hold our next rail trail meeting on **Wednesday, December 7 at 7:00 P.M.** at Bailey's. Bill will make a reservation.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Wotkowicz, Clerk

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