

Squannacook Greenways, Inc.

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 22, 2023

Attending:

Pete Carson, Peter Cunningham, Bruce Eason, Linda Mack, Bill Rideout, Joan Wotkowicz

158 Main Street wetland violation

Additional hay bales were placed on site following the Townsend Conservation Commission's February 1 meeting.

The Commission continued the enforcement order hearing on February 8. Stan Dillis presented an Emergency Mitigation Plan involving two check dams and a temporary pumping station. The owner was to complete the work within two weeks and is scheduled for a status update at tonight's Commission meeting.

Additional follow-up work to restore the swale and return the site to its original condition is to be completed by spring and may require an NOI.

Phase 3 construction status

James did more leveling of the base and some work along the sides. We seem to be in good shape for March 15.

Peter said a check for Groton CPA money was approved and should be sent soon.

Pete Carson wondered if we could put a couple of parking spaces along the rail corridor off Crosswinds Drive to prevent parking on the street. We will ask James what that might cost and find out if the Groton CPA will allow some of our funding to be used.

Phase 4 and long-term plans

Gary had estimated cost at \$320K for phase 4. We applied for \$150K from Mass Trails and \$90K from Groton CPA. So with the \$88K we will have left over from phase 3, we will have all that we need if we win both applications.

Peter put in for a community grant for \$200K with Congresswoman Trahan. The goal of this money would be to start work both north and south of the present trail.

Bill suggested we contact the MBTA about the possibility of acquiring the lease in two areas: from Bertozzi in Groton to Groton Shirley Road in Ayer and from the present northern limit of our lease near Worcester Road to the NH border.

Townsend Historical Society plans

Bill briefed the group on all the activity involving Gary Shepherd's offer to upgrade historic buildings in Townsend Harbor. Much of this work would benefit the rail trail, such as improving the two small bridges in the area, adding parking at Harbor Church, and improving the crossing of South Road. This would occur without cost to Squannacook Greenways.

MassTrails grants

We submitted our application on January 31 and received an email receipt.

Per the MassTrails web site, the award maximum depends on the project type and needs and is generally \$60,000 for "local" projects and up to \$500,000 for projects demonstrating critical network connections of regional or statewide significance.

We asked for \$150K based on our potential to connect to the Mason Rail Trail and the Nashua River Rail Trail to create a regional trail network nearly 32 miles long.

Letters of support are not a requirement but we submitted 15 letters as an optional appendix.

We expect decisions in June or July.

Groton Community Preservation Act

The CPA committee will vote on March 13 on recommendations for town meeting. Peter and Bruce feel our application is in good shape.

Other grants & fundraising

Congresswoman Trahan's office will alert Peter when grants are open.

Other projects, events, and maintenance

Linda shared that a person thanked the Conservation Commission, mistakenly thinking they built the rail trail. He said he used it every day while undergoing chemotherapy and could not have gotten through without it.

Bill will mention to Gary that the trash barrels are full.

During the last big snowfall, a plow at the storage facilities pushed banks up onto rail trail property and buried some of our trees. Joan and Paul dug two of them out, but a third was buried too deep.

Jane Jackson gave us the remainder of Ray's tools. We have his steel bar, a rock hammer, and a set of rock chisels. Also several heavy-duty web straps and some rope.

Mark signed us up for Earth Day in Townsend.

Groton River Fest will be on June 11.

Review minutes

A motion to accept the January 18 minutes was seconded and approved unanimously.

Next Meeting

Squannacook Greenways will hold our next rail trail meeting on **Wednesday, March 29, 2023** at 7:00 P.M. via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Wotkowicz

Clerk