

Squannacook Greenways, Inc. - Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 19, 2025

Attendees

Directors

Peter, Bill, Linda, Emma, Mark, Dan
Mark Cram, Peter Cunningham, Dale Gates, Emma Grazier,
Frank Murphy, Tim Palmer, Bill Rideout, Joan Wotkowicz

Guests

Bruce Easom, Shlomiya Lightfoot

Agenda

1. Guest Presentation (10 min): Shlomiya Lightfoot, [Indigenous Landscape Initiative](#)
2. Review [January meeting minutes](#)
3. Project updates
 - o Groton extension
 - o Townsend extension
 - o Old Meetinghouse Rd/Meehan Bridge
 - o Townsend Harbor activities
4. Maintenance & events
 - o Snow removal
 - o Earth Day
 - o 250th march
5. Grants
 - o Mass Trails Grant (submitted Feb. 3)
 - o Nashua Rivers Wild & Scenic Community Grant (due March 3)
6. Financial & fundraising reports
7. Schedule next meeting & adjourn

Notes

Meeting called to order 7:03 PM

1. Guest Presentation - Shlomiya Lightfoot, In Land

Shlomiya lives in New Ipswich, background in ecology, sustainability, science policy

In Land's mission is to involve communities in caring for the land, enjoying its abundance, and building relationships through reviving Indigenous land stewardship practices across the Northeast. In Land is 501(c)(3) non-profit with five board members and one official Indigenous advisor. They are recruiting other volunteers, participants, and funding sources.

Shlomiya visited our rail trail recently and noted several species of interest, topography, community connections, etc. that would be relevant to reviving Indigenous stewardship practices.

In Land looking for event partnership, rather than funding. Suggestions include:

- Community engagement with the trail (planning, planting, enjoying, learning)
- History of trail and surrounding areas
- Edible and pollinator plants walk
- Help with invasive species management and land stewardship (volunteer days?)

Board discussion:

- Peter - Certainly a nexus with SRT - providing people with history and information of the area for all the new people who have access to the trail
- Bill - Could do a walk together when the snow is cleared to get ideas for plantings and other community activities for volunteer days
- Are there synergies with the Mason Rail Trail group? Shlomiya to contact Liz Fletcher - Mason ConCom liz@lizfletchersculpture.com
- Linda - Andre from No Loose Braids came to speak about the cranberries in an area in Townsend near the rail trail.
- Linda - Are there any hops along the trail? That could be a fun learning event too.

2. January minutes reviewed & approved

3. Project updates

Groton Extension

- Sorting out the lease agreement from Nashua River up to Hollingsworth & Vose with MBTA & GW (owns the freight rights).
- Asking for \$70k from Groton CPA for permitting.
 - EJ permitting for \$5k (Ayer has EJ block group).
 - MEPA E&F for \$20k.
 - 30% design prep \$5k.
 - Wetlands permitting \$5k.
 - \$10k for MESA permitting.
 - \$17k for town counsel to negotiate lease agreement.
 - Plus a 12% contingency to get to \$70k.
- Bruce attended the Ayer CPA Committee meeting. They seem to be a willing partner if we can figure out how to get the trail from the south bridge abutment to Groton-Shirley Road.
- Peter shared letter of support for the WGRTC's Groton CPA application.

Townsend Extension

- Townsend Center up to Mason has no freight rights.
- Should be able to get \$1,000 application fee waived.
- MBTA wants to see a map.
- Peter to talk to Rep. Scarsdale and Sen. Cronin in case they need to weigh in with DOT and MBTA about waiving fees.

Old Meetinghouse Road

- No movement from Select Board due to competing policy priorities.

Townsend Harbor Activities

- Harbor Church tentatively set to open in Spring 2025.
- Work on Cooperage and Grist Mill to start in the spring.
- Gary confirmed he will be working on the two bridges in Townsend Harbor. We need to close out our building permit in the spring.

4. Maintenance & Events

Snow removal

- To plow or not to plow? Consensus - keep it unplowed.

Earth Day

- Mark signed us up: April 26th, 10-3 at North Middlesex Regional High School

250th March

- April 19, 11-2
- Historical Society will be firing a cannon at the Town Common.
- Jock Snaith making 73 wooden muskets.
- We will walk from the Common to the Harbor Church on the rail trail, John Barrett will give a lecture, and there will be food trucks.

5. Grants

Mass Trails:

- Grant submitted February 3
- Expect decision by July 3

Nashua River Wild & Scenic:

- Need to spend current grant by end of April (signs and fencing for our next volunteer day)
- Mark will order the materials as soon as possible.
- Schedule the work day: Saturday May 10th 9 AM.
- Personnel needs: Invite select individuals - not general public. Maybe just do the sections that aren't over the culvert - Mark Has divided into four sections - we can store the culvert lumber until whenever. No schedule for the culvert.

Upcoming grant ideas:

- Restoration behind harbor auto body - dump trucks full of material.
- Bollards for ends of trails

6. Financial and Fundraising

Cash on hand: \$8,440

Total assets: \$40,534

Note: Townsend CPA doesn't begin until FY 2026.

7. **Next meeting:** Wednesday March 19 at 7 PM

Meeting adjourned 7:55 PM