

Squannacook Greenways, Inc.
Board of Director Meeting Minutes

January 26, 2012
Nashua River Watershed Association

Attending:

Peter Carson, Mark Cram, Peter Cunningham, Bruce Easom, Al Futterman, Alfred Gadway, Bob Hargraves, Ray Jackson, Christopher Leitao, Steve Meehan, Bill Rideout, Joan Wotkowicz

The meeting was convened by the Chairman, Bruce Easom at 7:05 PM. Bob Hargraves arrived at 7:10 PM, Ray Jackson arrived at 7:33 PM, and Joan Wotkowicz, Clerk arrived at 7:35 PM.

The agenda was reviewed by the Chairman. Steve Meehan requested that a discussion with Bob Plamondon be added to the agenda. It was also decided to hold on review of the meeting minutes from 12/14/11 until later.

Financial Report

Bill Rideout provided the financial report. Bill reported that he had received a reply from the IRS that they have received the 501(c) (3) application. It will take another 4–6 weeks to process the application and before SGI receives official notification of non-profit status. Bill also learned that there is a State filing requirement that will cost \$100 initially and then a \$35 annual renewal. Finally, a local filing of non-profit status is required with the local Board of Assessors, although there is no fee.

Bill reported that Squannacook Greenways currently has \$7,431 in our Workers Credit Union account. The goal is to reach \$10,000.

Liability Insurance

Bill reported that he is still in the process of securing estimates for liability insurance.

Report on Visit to Methuen/Iron Horse Construction Site

Bill Rideout and Mark Cram reported on their visit to a trail being constructed by the Iron Horse Preservation Society, which runs from Methuen to Salem, N.H. It is also a stone dust trail and is currently under construction. Bill and Mark reported that the site appeared clean and they did not observe some of the issues that had been previously reported regarding Iron Horse projects.

They also learned that the rails salvaged by Iron Horse were being resold for use and not scrap, which is a consideration in their value. Bill reported a conversation with Joyce Godsey, President of the Methuen Rail Trail Alliance, who said they had followed the N.H. competitive bid protocol before selecting Iron Horse. It was felt that this is similar to Massachusetts' and should satisfy DCR. Joyce also told Bill and Mark that they did have Blandings Turtles in the area (who doesn't!) and had to follow best turtle management protocols per Mass. Division of Fisheries & Wildlife.

Mark suggested that we visit a completed Iron Horse trail such as Danvers, Topsfield, or Haverhill.

Alternate Approach to Financing Construction

Bill Rideout initiated a discussion about focusing on the entire 9.4 miles of abandoned rail, including 2 miles south of Bertozzi and 6 miles north of Townsend center. In this scenario, we would have the full lease. In addition, we might consider using the income from 9.4 miles of rail to build 3.7 miles of trail.

Negatives:

- We do not have an engineering study on the additional miles.
- Liability may be increased as property owner of non-developed trail.
- Involves two trestles and a highway crossing.
- Railroad lease requires us to be in the process of building a trail.
- Spending the money now means we won't have it later.
- Public perception of changing our position.

Positives:

- Would give us flexibility of getting cash for rails now.
- Opening 3.7 miles as a functional trail would help fund-raising.
- Eliminates risk that DCR may not want to lease the remaining miles at a later date.
- Potential to connect to Ayer eliminates the argument "trail to nowhere."
- Having the full lease now would protect us from financial uncertainty.

It was determined that we will focus on 3.7 miles but plan for 9.4 miles. Our letter to DCR will not address the possibility of a 9.4 mile lease, but it will be discussed at a meeting with DCR.

Response Letter to DCR Commissioner Lambert

Bill Rideout requested final edits by the end of the week and noted that we can include our bank statement. Al Futterman suggested we also send a copy of the letter electronically. We will also send copies to Colleen Abrams and Ed Yaglou at Wachusett Greenways, Inc. and invite them to the DCR meeting.

A motion to send the letter to DCR when Peter Cunningham approves it and to schedule a follow-up meeting with DCR was seconded and passed unanimously.

Capital Campaign

Directors each made pledges, the total of which reaches the \$10,000 goal. Bill Rideout noted that the contributions are tax-deductible but they are unrestricted, which means that they cannot be refunded. If we should fail to build the trail, the funds will have to be passed to another non-profit. The only known reason for failing to build the trail would be if DCR does not sign the lease.

Subcommittees

Directors volunteered for the following subcommittees:

Capital Campaign

Rolland Willis
Bill Rideout

Abutter Issues

Bruce Easom
Steve Meehan
Peter Cunningham
Bob Hargaves (subject to approval)

Membership

Alfred Gadway
Joan Wotkowicz

Publicity

Bruce Easom
Joan Wotkowicz
Bill Rideout
Peter Cunningham
Steve Meehan

Engineering Specifications

Mark Cram
Ray Jackson
Chris Leitao

Permitting

Bruce Easom
Chris Leitao

Additional Topics

MA Division of Fisheries & Wildlife - Al Futterman asked if we should update Pat Huckery, District Manager, as they are a rail trail abutter and also concerned with the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program. We determined to do so once we have an agreement with DCR.

Townsend Board of Selectmen - Steve Meehan stated that he has been updating Bob Plamonden, who would like to attend our meeting but is not available on Thursdays.

DCR meeting – In case DCR wants to move forward with a meeting before our next Board of Directors meeting, we determined in advance that 4-5 Directors should attend, including Bob Hargraves and also Wachusett Greenways if possible.

Earth Day 2012 – Mark suggested we again host a booth at the Townsend event on Saturday, April 28.

Next meeting

Squannacook Greenways will hold our next rail trail meeting on Wednesday, February 29 at 7:00 pm at the Nashua River Watershed Association.

Minutes were recorded with assistance from Peter Cunningham, Vice President.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Wotkowicz
Clerk
Squannacook Greenways, Inc.