

Squannacook Greenways, Inc.

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

February 5, 2020

Attending:

Rick Bailey, Peter Carson, Mark Cram, Peter Cunningham, Bill Rideout, Joan Wotkowicz.

Guest: Paul Sebring

Townsend Historical Society / Harbor Church

Bill and Joan attended a membership meeting of the Townsend Historical Society about leasing the Harbor Church. This will be a 99-year lease to the Townsend EMS and Firemen's Relief Fund Association to store and display antique fire trucks, and will include much-needed repairs. At the meeting, Bill voiced his support for the project, which will enhance a historic walking tour along the rail trail.

Joan brought up an idea for improving the canoe launch on Harbor Pond in collaboration with the Wild & Scenic Rivers Stewardship Council. She plans to speak with the Historical Society about using the Harbor Church parking lot as access. Bill will also mention the project to Gary Shepherd, who is involved in the lease.

Sterilite fence

Members of our board met at the site on January 11, along with Paul Bourgeois of Max13, for another review of fence placement. Bill gave Paul a deposit for installation.

Bill coordinated with Max13 and Gary Shepherd to plan installation for the first week of March. Gary requested a few days notice to remove the large snow pile that is in the way. Paul Bourgeois is 98% sure he can do the installation unless we get another severe freeze. He will check the ground a week ahead to make sure it isn't too frozen.

Pete Cunningham left a message for Mr. Stone

to try and speak with him about the fence project.

"No ATV" signs

Pete Carson built free-standing posts and placed our large signs at the two outer Crosswinds trailheads. Each post has a large sign with a smaller metal sign below, sending both a courteous message and a more stern warning.

Joan gave Pete Carson four more large signs. He will order more small metal signs and place two signposts at the inner Crosswinds trailheads and two at Meetinghouse Road. Joan will place one where ATVs enter the rail trail near Sterilite.

Meeting with Dave Sears

Joan set up a meeting for Saturday, February 8 at 9:00 AM with Dave Sears, who has interest in the rail removal project. Dave seems very experienced with rail trail conversions and has a lot of ideas, including pulling some or all of the rails this year before March 15. He mentioned a company called Vermont Rails who is interested in the steel. Dave thinks they will pay well and we may be able to make some money on the steel.

We will meet at Dunkin Donuts on Rt. 13 near the new fire station. Mark, Joan, Paul, and Pete Carson will attend. Pete Cunningham will try to catch up later.

Pete Carson said people from the Nashua River Rail Trail advised us to have everything in writing. We agreed to get a quote.

Bill made a motion to allow us to enter into a tentative agreement if Dave can remove the rails for a profit or at least no cost to us. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Bill reminded us that there are no wattles near

Gary's property near the fisherman's parking lot, so we cannot remove the rails there.

Current MassTrails grant award

We spent \$10K of the grant money on tree clearing and will spend \$26 on the fence. Joan pointed out that we will owe a grant report by March 15.

Bill would like to apply for the reimbursement as part of the March report. We plan to have a trail clearing day by then, which will strengthen our narrative even though we don't need volunteer hours for this reimbursement.

Joan distributed a new worksheet for recording volunteer hours. The new worksheet is updated for the change in project scope to tree clearing, fence, and stormwater plan.

Bill will contact Stan Dillis about the permitting covered under this award.

New MassTrails grant application

Joan and Bill worked on our application for the new round of grants, which we submitted on January 31. We requested \$100K, with a \$25K match from our funds.

Joan said we can expect notification around mid-May, with July 1 as the earliest start date (see the MassTrails award schedule below).

Notification to applicants on the status of their grant application is expected to be on or about 100 days after the grant application deadline. All applicants will be notified by email and informed of the status of their proposed project (approved or not).

The effective start date of a contract (grant award) shall be the latest of the following dates: the date the Standard Contract Form has been executed by an authorized signatory of the contractor and the procuring department; the date of secretariat or other approval(s) required by law or regulation; or a later date specified in the Standard Contract Form. The earliest start date for a MassTrails grant project will

generally be on or after July 1st.

Joan pointed out that Max13's new estimate is for approximately \$200K to build the first one-third of the trail, including a parking lot and wetland replication. This is much higher than previous quotes, but it is a rough estimate that Paul Bourgeois put together quickly in time for the grant deadline.

Bill put a cost of \$145K in the grant budget for the first year of construction, with projections of \$130K each for the next two years.

Groton Community Preservation Act

Pete Cunningham will contact Bruce Easom to discuss the possibility of a CPA request. We would apply this fall for the next fiscal year.

Review of trail walk/inspection

Joan walked the trail on February 1 to review the tree clearing project. She said that most of the walking path is fairly clear and only needs sticks and branches tossed into the woods. Two sections that need more work to clear slash and brush are near the landing areas at Gary Shepherd's property and Harbor Village Shopping Center.

Joan and Pete Carson expressed concern about removal of large trees along the field and granite wall behind Harbor Auto. Paul suggested we get a timber tally before the stumps are removed. Bill will ask Dan Hager to do that analysis.

Bill reminded us that we gave permission to remove some trees outside of the designated area if they posed safety issues. He will speak with Gary for clarification.

Pete Carson voiced another concern about some cutting beyond the wattles.

Spring volunteer day to clear trail

Bill would like to schedule a volunteer day to clean up after tree removal. Pete Carson pointed out that saplings that were cut high may pose a safety risk if left in place. We agreed to use

brush cutters to trim saplings to ground level, but leave stumps. Mark thinks we should trim anything outside of the ties to the ground. Where wattles are in place, we will need to move slash and branches away from wetlands.

We decided on Saturday, May 2, which would allow us time to publicize at Earth Day.

Trail walk with Historical Society

Bill expressed an idea for another collaborative walk with the Townsend Historical Society. He will confer with the society president to choose possible dates.

Earth Day

Earth Day in Townsend is scheduled for April 25, 2020 from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

Fundraising and financial report

Bill reported that we will have about \$103K in cash after paying for the fence and receiving the grant reimbursement.

Groton Conservation Forum

Pete Cunningham reminded us that the forum will be on Thursday, February 27 at 7:00 PM in the new Groton Center.

North County Land Trust meeting

Bill shared an announcement for a North County Land Trust meeting on February 11, 2020 from 6:00 to 7:30 PM. The topic is Conservation Conversation—Establishing Trails.

Review of meeting minutes

A motion to accept the corrected minutes from our January 8, 2020 meeting was seconded and approved unanimously.

Next Meeting

Squannacook Greenways will hold our next rail trail meeting on **Wednesday, March 11, 2020** at 7:00 PM at the Groton Legion.

Respectfully submitted,
Joan Wotkowicz , Clerk
Squannacook Greenways, Inc.