

Squannacook River Rail Trail Funding Exploration Committee

Minutes of Public Meeting of Feb. 11, 2009 – Approved at meeting March 10, 2009

Location: Kimball House, Townsend

Time: 7 pm

Members Present: Hirk Fortin (Chairman), Bill Martin, Steve Meehan, Bill Rideout (Secretary)

Members Absent: Ken Gerken

Attendees: Mark Cram (Townsend), Al Futterman (NRWA) Peter Cunningham, Peter Carson, Steve Legge (Groton committee members).

The meeting was brought to order at 7:13 pm. This was a joint meeting with the Groton rail trail committee, which also was brought to order at 7:13 pm. The first action was the unanimous approval of the meeting minutes for Jan. 14, 2009.

The first item discussed was a Townsend only issue. Hirk Fortin stated that his desire to step down as chairman. A motion to elect Steve Meehan as the new chairman was made and seconded, and passed unanimously.

Next, the planned meeting with Representative Olver and Tsongas' aides was discussed. This meeting is scheduled for Mar. 3, 2009 at 10:30 am at NRWA. Jane Adams will be there from Tsongas' office, and Kristen Woods will be there from Olver's office. We decided we should be able to hand them either hard copies or electronic copies of the preliminary engineering report. Bill Rideout volunteered to bring those CD's. Bill Rideout, Hirk Fortin, and Bill Martin said they could make the meeting from Townsend, and Bruce Easom, Peter Cunningham and Steve Legge from Groton were planning to come. We also decided to invite representative from the state representatives offices. Peter Cunningham said he would contact Hargraves' and Panagiotakos' offices, and Al Futterman said he would contact Flanagan's office. Al Futterman also suggested we invite Arthur Frost or Sarah Bradbury from MassHighway. Bill Rideout volunteering to put together some hard-copy slides. It was suggested that the slides should include a timeline.

Al Futterman volunteered to follow up with B&M about the letter requesting they drop their freight rights.

Al Futterman spoke with Brad Harris about their policy that earmarked funds could not be released until all funds were in place. Brad told Al that the Massachusetts Joint Transportation Committee

would not be the correct place to discuss that issue, and that it should be brought up before the full Montachusets Regional Planning Commission.

We discussed Bruce Easom's research on maintenance costs for the Nashua River Rail Trail. Bruce found total annual maintenance costs of \$17,200 for the 11 mile trail, or \$1564/mile. We noted that this was within the Rails-To-Trails study which found maintenance costs ranged from \$700-\$2000/mile per year. Bill Martin noted that this number assumed the organization doing the maintenance had all the needed equipment.

We mentioned the article on the financial issues facing the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, and felt we should mention it at the meeting with the Congressional representatives.

Steve Meehan discussed his plans to meet with Karin Canfield of the private Townsend Recreational Activity Committee. Steve discussed the possibility of joint fundraising with that group.

The next meeting date was set for Tuesday, Mar 10, 2009 at 7 pm at Town Hall in Groton. The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Rideout

Secretary, Squannacook River Rail Trail Funding Exploration Committee