

# Squannacook Greenways, Inc.

## Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

March 12, 2014

Attending:

Peter Carson, Mark Cram, Peter Cunningham, Bruce Easom, Al Futterman, Ray Jackson, Steve Meehan, Bill Rideout, Joan Wotkowicz

### **Update on Transit Realty Lease/RFP Strategy**

Bob LaVita from Transit Realty indicated they expect to complete their internal process by end of this month and issue an RFP in the central registry soon after.

They have agreed to share a draft. We may want to submit questions after reviewing it.

Also, they may be willing to do a site walk, which we should do before entering into an agreement. The walk should include inspection of a washed-out section.

Our belief is that the lease will be for 5.7 miles from H&V (or Groton Water Dept.) in Groton to just beyond Worcester Road in Townsend. Our plan will not change regarding which section we develop first.

Steve Meehan expressed concern about who is responsible for the trestle in Townsend center. Bruce Easom posed a concern about responsibility for blocked culverts.

Steve found a Transit Realty web site where they post RFPs. He signed up for a free account, which also allows access to a "Land Tracker" with MBTA property maps at <http://www.transitrealty.com/landtracker>.

### **Discussion with VHB**

Bill Rideout contacted Trish Domigan of Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. to inquire about the cost of an engineering study of the additional rail property we do not intend to develop immediately, which was not included in the 2008 study. Bill suggested we might perform the additional engineering as due diligence before assuming any environmental liability, even

though we will not disturb any land in these sections.

### **Update on Resor Amendment**

The legislation is still in committee, but Peter Cunningham believes we are eligible for reimbursement through the MA Business Development Corporation, regardless of the legislative outcome.

### **Recruitment for Board of Directors**

Additional ideas: Trish Donovan of VHB; recruit at our Earth Day booth.

### **Briefing for Townsend Selectman Candidates**

The last day has passed to submit candidacy papers for Selectman. Steve Meehan will check again with Town Clerk Sue Funairole for the list of candidates we will contact.

### **Community Foundation Grant**

We will owe another status report to the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts by July 15, 2014. Bill Rideout and Joan Wotkowicz found no indication of a deadline for spending the money, so our report will explain the progress we have made.

### **Financial Report**

No transactions since last month's report.

### **Review of February 12 Meeting Minutes**

A motion to accept the minutes with one correction passed unanimously with one abstention.

### **Other Next Steps**

Bill Rideout questioned if we should be moving forward with other activities while waiting for Transit Realty. Possibilities include:

- Abutter outreach – We can develop a plan for outreach, with script.

- Press releases – Best to wait for legal agreement.
- Earth Day – Brochure could explain that we are now negotiating directly with MBTA.

### **Abutter Outreach**

We will send a letter to each abutter and try to meet each one privately and walk on their property. We will express the fact that we now have the right to build the trail.

We want to listen to their concerns but not jump to solutions. This will give us an inventory of the issues. We should have a worksheet that helps us evaluate each one objectively (take measurements, make observations, record comments and answers to interview questions, etc.).

It may be helpful to have materials on hand about how safe rail trails are, how litter is reduced, etc. but we do not want to lead with these. Our main job is to LISTEN. We will only be able to work with them within reason.

We need to develop criteria for need of a fence. During the meeting, we will not make any offers but will listen to requests.

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### **Next Meeting**

Squannacook Greenways will hold our next rail trail meeting on **Wednesday, April 9 at 7:00 P.M.** at the **NRWA**.

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Respectfully submitted,

Joan Wotkowicz

Clerk

Squannacook Greenways, Inc.

### **Preliminary agenda:**

Draft of Transit RFP

Earth Day