Squannacook Greenways March Board Meeting

March 18, 2026 | 7 PM

Summary

The meeting covered project updates, including the Groton and Townsend extensions, with a kickoff meeting scheduled for next week. The MBTA lease amendment was discussed, highlighting new requirements like job hazard assessments and tarping dirt piles. A motion was made and approved for Peter to sign the amendment. The team also discussed the potential impact of allowing snowmobiles on the trail, considering maintenance and volunteer challenges. Upcoming events include the Townsend Earth Day celebration on April 25 and the 250th anniversary parade on June 20. Financial updates and grant progress were also reviewed.

Action Items

- Upload the abandonment documents to the group's website so they are available publicly
- Resend the explanatory email about how mile markers work (including the constant and units conversion) to the full group
- Add/put the scanned valuation maps (up to the NH border) onto the website
- Send the virtual kickoff meeting link for the MassTrails/contractor kickoff meeting to the group once scheduled
- Redo the project cash-flow/reimbursement spreadsheet to reflect that the $16k deposits must be counted as matching funds and update reimbursement/payment schedule (aim to request quarterly invoices from contractors)
- Contact Lunenburg and Mason conservation groups to get feedback about potential snowmobile access and maintenance on the trail
- Meet with the recreation department representative (Emy Hoff) on Friday to discuss the Townsend 250th parade involvement and possible recreation department support
- Follow up with Liam Breen this week on flagged MBTA lease amendment items and, if resolved, execute/sign the lease amendment on behalf of the group
- Invite Chris St. Germain (Lunenburg Snow Riders) to the next meeting to present and discuss snowmobile access proposals and questions
- Provide the group with any updates from discussions with the MBTA about the lease amendments as they become available
- Reach out to local contacts (Conservation Commissions or similar) to gather additional feedback on motorized access/maintenance

Meeting Notes

Project Updates – Groton & Townsend Extensions

<u>Contractor kickoff meeting</u>:

- Bill mentions a kickoff meeting with contractors scheduled for next week, which Peter plans to attend virtually.

MBTA lease amendment:

- Peter praises the work done by the MBTA and Senator Cronin's office in preparing the lease amendment.
- Peter highlights specific terms in the lease, such as the requirement for a job hazard assessment and the prevailing terms of the amendment over the original lease.
- Peter discusses the new requirement for dirt piles to be covered with tarps, which Bill finds reasonable.
- Peter mentions the need to follow up with Liam Breen regarding certain items in the lease amendment.
- **Bill suggests making a motion for Peter to sign the amendment to the MBTA lease, which is seconded and approved.**
- Peter and Bill discuss linking valuation maps and abandonment documents to their website and the process of finding these documents. Bill mentions the involvement of Tom LaRosa and the DCR lawyer in finding the documents.

Request for Snowmobiling on the Trail

- Peter discusses the request from the Lunenburg Snow Riders regarding snowmobiling on the trail.
- Bill mentions the need to maintain control over the trail and the potential impact of allowing snowmobiles.
- Peter and Bill discuss the pros and cons of allowing snowmobiles on the trail and the need to consult with other organizations.
- Linda mentions the Granite Town Rail Trail in Brookline, New Hampshire, which allows snowmobiles and maintains the trail by compressing the snow.

Maintenance and Events Planning

- Peter and Bill discuss the plan for the **Townsend Earth Day** celebration on April 25, including an information table and a QR code for donations.
- Bill mentions the **250th anniversary celebration** and the plan for a bicycle decoration parade from Yee's Village to the town common.
- Peter and Bill discuss the **spring cleanup day** and the need to schedule it later in April or early May due to the snow cover.

Grants and Collaborations

- Bill provides an update on the MassTrails grant, including the kickoff meeting and the need to send out the link for attendance.
- Bill discusses the Wild and Scenic community grant for invasive and native techniques along Harbor Pond, involving the Historic Society.
- Bill mentions the need for permitting work in the harbor church parking area, and for the replacement of clapboards on the Cooperage bridge.
- Joan praises the work done by Shlomiya and the importance of bringing in expertise for the invasive and native plant work.

Financial and Fundraising Reports

- Bill provides an update on the financial and fundraising report, mentioning the need to redo the cash flow due to the change in reimbursement payments.
- Bill mentions the need to check the cash flow when they return from vacation.
- **Peter and Bill discuss the minutes from the February meeting, which are approved with minor corrections.**
- Peter schedules the next meeting for April 15, 7 PM, and discusses the need to talk about cleanup activities if necessary.