

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Rail Trails Advisory Committee (RTAC)
Meeting Minutes– November 19, 2020

CALL TO ORDER:

The regular meeting of the Swanzey Rail Trails Advisory Committee was called to order at 6:17 pm. The meeting was held via Zoom software for electronic conferencing due to the COVID-19 health emergency in the State of New Hampshire. Emergency meeting pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, Section 8 and Emergency Order #12, Section 3.

PUBLIC ACCESS: The public access to the meeting online via www.zoom.us using the Zoom App on a cell phone or tablet or laptop, or using a landline by calling (929) 205-6099 and entering Meeting ID number 811 3400 9916.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Mike Kowalczyk, Alan Gross, and Larry Antonuk. Also present was Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard.

WEBSITE:

http://www.town.swanzey.nh.us/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={9A2AB92A-4E57-409A-A197-FB0F83AA7503}

ABSENT: Bruce Bohannon

OTHERS PRESENT:

None

MINUTES:

There was a **motion** by Gross to approve the meeting Minutes of October 29, 2020. There was a second to the motion by Antonuk and no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

AGENDA

TAP Grant Update

Kowalczyk said Bob Hudson with New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH DOT) has said the approval letter has come in to proceed with the engineering study. Hoyle Tanner is ready to move forward. Kowalczyk said the next step is a public hearing sometime in early to mid-December.

Brochures

Kowalczyk used Screen Share to show the brochure holder on the Cheshire Trail which is on the town line. It is near to the Seventh Day Adventist church at the Swanzey/Marlborough town line. Kowalczyk said it might be better at a crossroad where people enter the trail. Kowalczyk said he recommended a town line sign be on the post in the future. He said the post is two feet down and the post is fairly secure. The members agreed the look is good. The backing includes the Town of Swanzey seal.

Kowalczyk noted the MMRTC brochures are depleted. He noted the City of Keene paid for the first group and suggested that RTAC pay for the second batch. He estimated the cost at \$226 for 500 quantity and \$450 for 1000. He asked the members what they thought. Antonuk said he thought 1000 batch would cost less. Kowalczyk said there is a balance of \$3,600 in their budget. Kowalczyk said some of the funds were supposed to address invasive species. Antonuk said it would be ideal to rotate the cost with other communities and is in favor for paying for them this time around. Antonuk suggested going with a dollar figure.

Motion was made by Antonuk to expend up to \$300 on regional brochures. There was a second by Gross. Antonuk spoke about getting a quote for the maximum number from Gem Graphics. All were in favor.

Motion passed.

Antonuk spoke about a distribution plan to check on supply at bike shops and the kiosks. Kowalczyk said he would put it on March agenda to discuss further. Kowalczyk said they go fairly quickly while the weather is nice.

RTAC Promotion – T-Shirts

Gross said he will make a run into town to get some cost estimates. Gross said the more items on the shirts, the pricier it will be. Work with the T-shirt company to get a design and a quote. Kowalczyk suggested Volunteer Trail Crew for the back of the shirts.

Cheshire Trail Maintenance

Kowalczyk said there was more tire dumping on the Brnger property and he and a helper picked up 18 tires and brought them to the Recycle Center. He said he put a trail camera on the trail. He said there is a lot of activity including cars driving up and down the trail and stopping at the building. Kowalczyk said he would like to show the footage to the police. Sean Lukeman has equipment and is willing to help out with trail maintenance. Kowalczyk said he provided a key to Lukeman for the gate.

Ashuelot Trail Maintenance

Kowalczyk said the Winchester Trail Riders re-decked the bridge near the Monadnock Speedway. Kowalczyk said Bohannon said he is trying to contact the Keene snowmobile club to help re-deck the bridge over the Ashuelot River near to Sawyer's Crossing Road. He said the State provided the money for the materials and the Winchester club volunteered their equipment and manpower.

Kowalczyk said he has biked the entire Ashuelot Trail to Brattleboro area. He noted the kinds of work that need to be done. The most significant effort will be at the north end of the Fort Hill Trail, which ends at a trestle bridge. There needs to be a new trail head at State Route 119. He said there is a NH DOT project to put in a new bridge at 119 at the southern part of the island which will land south of the Whetstone Brewery in Brattleboro. There is a group working on rehabilitating the island to be used for recreation once the new bridge is completed. The two current bridges would become for pedestrians only. The new bridge is costing millions and there is a group working on the renovation of the islands. They are raising money to get an engineering study and Kowalczyk said he has been invited to attend those meetings.

Compact Excavator Update

Kowalczyk said he has no news. He is waiting for approvals. He noted that Glenn Smith left his position with the Swanzey Department of Public Works (DPW) and is doing similar work with Fitzwilliam. He still wants to help run the excavator. He said he would help out with restoration of sections of trail in Fitzwilliam. Kowalczyk said Rob Hart also is willing to help.

Signage

Kowalczyk showed orange trail markers for snowmobile use. He said the cost is \$5.50 once you have the orange plaque, which needs to be ordered in May to receive in December. The orange sign says, "Trail Information". Antonuk and Gross both said they think the sign is not attractive. Kowalczyk said using the same aluminum plates to make signs, they are more attractive, and he showed an example. Gross said he liked it. \$28 will get you a 12 X 12 sign. Kowalczyk showed other signs with town line markers. He also showed a sign showing the vehicles that are not allowed on the trails. Kowalczyk said ten signs for the Cheshire Trail and another ten of the yellow prohibition signs, 15 signs would cost about \$300. Kowalczyk said he attends another committee that is

considering signage, and maybe branding collaboration could be done. MAST grant might provide signs and that could provide up to \$20,000. Cost is about \$50 apiece for sign and post. Antonuk said the material has a ten-year guarantee since it is designed for outdoor use. Antonuk asked about the timeframe for such a grant and Kowalczyk said he didn't know. The group decided to continue down that path, but not get involved in City of Keene bureaucracy because they move slowly. Antonuk suggested getting out a few signs this winter to see how they survive the winter. Kowalczyk said he liked the idea. Kowalczyk said you could put four signs on one post. He reviewed location for such signs, and he determined about 5 posts and 10 signs. The group considered the idea of putting in the posts as soon as possible even if the signs are not completed since the concern is that the ground will freeze soon.

Motion was made by Antonuk to expend up to \$500 for signs and posts, there was a second by Gross. Kowalczyk said he would bring signs to Gem Graphics. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Monadnock Regional Rail Trail Collaborative Status

Kowalczyk gave a summary of folks who are eager to move ahead and funding is the next step.

Antonuk said he likes getting a last-minute reminder about the RTAC meetings.

Action Items:

- Kowalczyk to work on getting regional brochures from Gem Graphics
- Kowalczyk will note distribution plan for checking on brochure supplies for March 2021 agenda
- Gross to get estimates for T-shirts next Wednesday (November 25th)
- Kowalczyk to bring signs to Gem Graphics for ordering.
- Antonuk will layout the signage verbiage

Next Meeting: January 21, 2021

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion was made by Gross to adjourn the meeting. There was a second by Antonuk and no further discussion. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary