

Massachusetts Recreational Trails Advisory Committee
MINUTES
January 21, 2014

Location: *Conference Call*
Time: *7pm to 8pm*

Members Present:

Becky Kalagher
Bill Boles
Benton Phelps
Pam Browning
Larry Tucker
Dick Williamson
Mark Shea
Dick Miller
Bill Riordan
Amanda Lewis

Meeting Minutes:

Welcome

Approve Previous Minute

It was agreed that the minutes from the last meeting will be reviewed and approved at the next MARTAB meeting, given they were just sent out today

RTP Updates

RTP Status: Amanda updated MARTAB on the status of the current RTP grant rounds. No issues to report: the 09 Re-obligated, 10, 11, and 12 rounds are currently active. 08 and 09 are closed with less than \$100 remaining in each. This should be brought to the attention of MassDOT and could help in coordinating future obligation levels with them.

2013 Round: Contracts are continually being set up, events have been held, 5 grants have Section 106 issues and will be re-submitted to FHWA (Federal Highway Administration) and MHC (Massachusetts Historical Commission) for approval within the month

Additional Funds for RTP: No news on the possible \$10 million in the Environmental Bond Bill at this time. There has been no discussion yet on how

the funds would be managed and/or if they will fall under the same requirements as the federal RTP. There are lapsing funds which may become available for this round – Amanda will work to get these programmed in the coming weeks.

Chainsaw Safety Course

The Chainsaw Safety Course, paid for with RTP Education Funds, will be held on Saturday and Sunday, March 15 & 16 by Walker Korby, who will subcontracted by Conservation Works, LLC (on the state vendor list for training). The cost to participants will be \$25 per person, due upon signing up. Dick and Amanda are working on the fiscal end to get the money set up, and an announcement will be sent out once that is complete. Participants will be responsible for their own lunch and bringing their own equipment. The training will be held in Leominster, at the Leominster Sportsman's Club in Leominster.

*In speaking with Michele Biscoe the day after the meeting, it seems logical to have participants somehow prove or pledge that the training they receive will directly benefit the Massachusetts trail system. It will be beneficial to require that they are affiliated with an organized trail group, and indicate which one, when registering for the class.

Upcoming RTP Grant Review – Saturday March 1, 9-5

The review meeting will be held at the DCR Greenways and Trails office (Amanda and Paul's office) at 136 Damon Road, Northampton 01060.

Lunch will be provided in the form of pizza as well as drinks. Please bring all of the grant applications that you reviewed to the meeting, and be prepared to return them to Amanda at that time. Each person is asked to either bring a morning snack or an afternoon snack (not all sweets, please) to share with the group.

Amanda will hope to get the grants sent out to reviewers by the end of the first week in February. A letter will spell out the review process in detail and will include a list of non-permissible use of RTP funds, to help guide reviewers when a grant seems questionable as to whether its proposed tasks qualify for funding.

Please direct any questions that you have about a grant to Amanda directly. She will then contact the applicant and share the information with the whole group at the same time, when the question is answered. It was agreed that contacting applicants was acceptable, but all reviewers should be given the same information in order to keep the process official, fair and equitable.

As a change, it was agreed that Amanda will review the same amount of grants as the rest of the reviewers, to allow the grants to be spread out to the greatest number of people (she used to review all grants).

Other MARTAB Business and News

MCRT News: the 23-mile assessment for the DCR-owned portion of the MCRT (Mass Central Rail Trail) has been completed and the requirement for an EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) has been waived. To get on the list for news and updates on this project, contact Craig Della Penna.

ATV and 4-Wheel Drive issues: there was a discussion about the use of RTP funds for these types of trail use, as there are limited and no opportunities on public lands for these uses, respectively. Amanda expressed that organizing and advocating was the best way to pursue this subject, but that the RTP could also make possible the purchase of land for these uses specifically, managed by a non-profit organization rather than the state. As long as the parcel was open to the public for continued use (membership fees are okay), then it would qualify for RTP funds. Dick O'Brien has also been advocating for the possibility of 3 or so large projects being set aside as a part of the RTP in the Environmental Bond Bill, one of which could be an ATV/motorized-use park or facility.

Accessible Trail Surface Requirements: Amanda expressed that she will soon be conducting some research into what is considered and generally accepted as an accessible trail surface (ie: stone dust vs stabilizer vs paved). Dick Williamson, Dick Miller and Becky Kalagher expressed interest in providing input/collaborating on this subject and Amanda will be in touch with them about this. It was also suggested that she contact AMC in Boston.

Adjourn