

Massachusetts Recreational Trails Advisory Committee
MINUTES
January 12, 2017

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

Members Present:

Dick O'Brien
Becky Kalagher
Bill Boles
Benton Phelps
Larry Tucker
Dick Williamson
Charlene Saulnier
Tom Chamberland

Meeting Minutes:

Welcome

Approve Previous Minutes

Meeting Minutes from 9/29/16 Approved

Nomination of MARTAB Members

Motion by Bill Boles to approve Dick Williamson for an additional term as the bicycling representative on MARTAB. Seconded by Larry Tucker, unanimously approved.

Motion by Bill Boles to approve Joe Geller as a new MARTAB member. Seconded by Larry Tucker, unanimously approved. Joe will represent Rail Trail Users on the board.

Report on RTP Grant Round Status

2017 RTP grants are due on February 1st. 2016 grants have been awarded and most have finalized contracting. One project has removed itself from the grant list, the City of Holyoke, due to a reversal of approval by the Town Select Board. Some abutters had not been aware of the trail plan and appeared at the Select Board meeting after a newspaper article ran about the grant award. Although public meetings had been held, the abutters argued that they were unaware and were overall against the project moving forward. As a result, the Select Board voted to reverse their approval of the project. Another project is facing similar issues – the City of Fitchburg. Similarly, abutters claimed they were unaware of the project until it was in the news and have objections to it. The city is currently working to clear up any misunderstandings and work with the abutters to come to an agreement on measures to minimize any claimed negative impacts.

With the issue of final-hour abutter complaints on two RTP grants just this year, Amanda will work to highlight this issue and steps to avoid it as a part of her grant workshop each

year going forward. This would also be a great topic at the MA Trails Conference for a session presentation.

Grant Round Review Process Discussion

Amanda has made changes to the application for 2017 RTP grants as a result of the June MARTAB meeting discussion. Grants will be submitted on Feb 1st (postmark deadline) and will be distributed to MARTAB members the following week for their review. Scoresheets will be due March 8th and the Grant Review – Executive Session for MARTAB will take place on Saturday, March 11th.

Trails Conference Discussion/Trails Celebration Recap

The Trails Celebration held in October was a great success! Feedback has identified that participants felt the event was energizing, encouraging and educational. The overwhelming response is to hold another one in Fall, 2018 with the hopes of better weather (the trails expeditions were cancelled due to cold, rainy weather all morning). It was also agreed by all that an event indoors rather than outdoors would be better, with unpredictable Fall weather as it is.

Amanda will begin planning for the 2017 MA Trails Conference. First step is to hire an event coordinator, for which she will be sending out bids in the next week. Once a coordinator is hired, he/she will work closely with Amanda to begin Conference Committee meetings and take the first steps in identifying theme/keynote/session options. Amanda has already secured the conference venue through the state procurement process. It will be the Double Tree by Hilton in Leominster, MA again. The conference will be held on November 4th and 5th, with field trips on that Friday and the indoor session-based conference on Saturday.

Meeting Adjourned