

**Massachusetts Recreational Trails Advisory Committee**  
**MINUTES**  
**January 14, 2016**

**Location:**     *Conference Call*  
**Time:**         *7pm to 9pm*

**Members Present:**

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

**Meeting Minutes:**

**Welcome**

**Approve Previous Minutes**

Meeting Minutes from 10/8/15 Approved

**Nomination of Local Land Trust/Non-Profit Trails Representative on MARTAB**

Motion by Bill Boles to approve Thomas Chamberland as the local land trust/non-profit trails representative on MARTAB. Seconded by Larry Tucker, unanimously approved. His term will begin now, but the five years will be begin as of the summer MARTAB meeting..

Since Tom will represent local land trusts and non-profit organizations that support trails, it was suggested that Amanda let MLTC (Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition) know that we have appointed a member to MARTAB representing those organizations and ask if they would like to appoint an alternate from one of the other land trusts. Amanda will do this.

**MARTAB Terms Discussion**

The MARTAB Bylaws have a complicated term organization for members that is difficult to keep track of and keep up with. It is suggested that a new term organization be implemented. The board discussed a few options and came to the conclusion that a 5-year term for each member makes the most sense and is easier to manage. These terms will be staggered according to existing time remaining in each member's terms. Once a five year term is up, the alternate for that user group will become a member, if he or she chooses to do so. If they are not interested, then the statewide trail user group for that representative will be asked by the RTP Coordinator if they want to nominate someone different. If they do not, and the current member prefers to stay, then that member can

stay on officially for another five years. Amanda will make this change in the bylaws and send out the term timeframes for each member. It will be the member's responsibility to seek out an alternate for their user group.

### **Trails Conference Discussion**

Amanda is proposing that the MA Trails Conference be held once every two years to allow for conference planning to be more manageable, comprehensive and to allow for certain steps in the planning process, including save the date announcement, calls for session proposals, calls for conference sponsors, release of session details and the program, etc. be announced and circulated at an earlier date. In addition, too much staff time from Amanda is going towards planning an annual conference, from January through November and then starting over again in January. This has required that some improvements to RTP and other job duties be scaled back, which is not advantageous for the grant program or DCR. An every other year conference will allow for RTP Education funds to be spread out – spending more funds on conference planning assistance from an intern, partner organization, or an event planning company which could help Amanda and others in planning a more professional conference that follows a more appropriate planning timeframe. New ideas on improving the conference can be more easily implemented and the ongoing issue of sponsors could be addressed. A 2017 conference will also fall in line with a possible 2019 International Trails Symposium – freeing up time for Amanda and others to be able to support that possibility (in lieu of a MA Trails Conference that year).

Amanda also proposed that, as a replacement for the trails conference on the off year, RTP education proposals be encouraged for planning an off-year workshop or trail networking event that would bring the community together, but in a less formal and planning-heavy way. Dick O. suggested a Trails Fair focused on the trails community 'coming outdoors to celebrate trails'. There could be entertainment, a potluck (so no food would have to be ordered) and a planned series of fun events, sponsored and organized by different organizations (a horseback ride, for example, sponsored by the equestrian organizations). Amanda suggested an expo of some sort, where everyone comes together and sets up information on projects that they have completed, allowing others to walk through and ask questions about any project that they see. This could be several things, but the key would be that DCR is not the primary or chief planner of this activity, but does act in a support role. And, keep costs down by keeping the event very simple and casual – open and free for lots of networking.

### **MARTAB Discussion**

Dick O'Brien asked MARTAB what roles the board would like to pursue and which ones may not work out for MARTAB in particular, but perhaps could be more successful with a different group. MARTAB acknowledged that it has to remain in its given capacity as an advisory board to the RTP and to provide assistance with the MA Trails Conference. However, all members agreed that previous ambitions of acting as the primary advocate for trail issues statewide, as a catalyst for fundraising for the broader trail community, etc., are too ambitious for this board, given their additional responsibilities within their own organizations that they represent. There is also the question of how appropriate it is

for MARTAB to act as the statewide advocate and voice of the trails community given that it is essentially a board created and perpetuated by DCR for the primary purpose of reviewing and advising on the RTP.

Dick O'Brien agreed with this assertion and, as such, resigned as Chair of MARTAB effective immediately, though he plans to remain on the board through his term, representing community trail groups. He will likely be starting a new trails organization in the near future to address the lack of a statewide, trail-focused organization that advocates for trails and trail issues in Massachusetts. The board (reluctantly) accepted his resignation through a unanimous vote. A new board chair will be solicited to step up at and be voted in at the next meeting.

### **MARTAB Roles**

Given the decision of the Board, the following is a list of the expected duties of MARTAB with some voluntary opportunities as well:

1. Advisor to DCR on the Recreational Trails Program- Duties include; 1) Makes RTP grant recommendations to the DCR Commissioner after individually reviewing grant applications and participating in discussions at the annual grant review meeting; 2) advises DCR on the application process, interpretation of federal rules and regulations, the review and scoring process for grant recommendations and participates in grant award events and follow-up on grants as needed.
2. Communication with DCR as an appointed Trails Advisory Board: Amanda will work to ensure, going forward, that MARTAB is consulted when DCR is working on new trail initiatives and issues for which it would be beneficial to solicit feedback from MARTAB. Amanda will also arrange that MARTAB is given a "DCR Update on the state of state trails" once a year, or as appropriate.
3. Quarterly Meetings: To address the fact that board members live in all corners of the state and do not get compensated for mileage to make it to meetings, there will now be two teleconference meetings a year – one in January and one in October, rather than having members drive across the state to attend a meeting every three months. The Grant Review Meeting will be held in March and will require every member to attend in person. The Summer Field Trip Meeting will be held in June to view a completed RTP trail project.
4. MARTAB will continue to provide assistance and feedback for the MA Trails Conference and any other planned RTP Education project or other DCR education initiative related to trails.

\*Anyone considering to become chair should recognize that this duty will be limited to the above-mentioned tasks with the added role of directing MARTAB meetings and consulting with the RTP Coordinator on the agenda. Those interested in becoming chair should contact Amanda before the next MARTAB meeting.

**Meeting Adjourned**