



MASSACHUSETTS RECREATIONAL TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD

June 25, 2019

Palmer, MA

MARTAB Meeting

Time: 4 – 6 pm

Location: Town Hall
Meeting Room
4417 Main Street
Palmer, MA 01069

Members Present with Representation:

Larry Tucker – Snowmobiling
Tim Craig – Youth Corps
Joe Geller – Rail Trails
Becky Kalagher – Equestrian
Dick Williamson – Bicycling
Dick O'Brien – Community Trails
Tom Chamberland – Local Land Trust/Non-Profits
Bill Boles – Mountain Biking
Marianne Iarossi – Municipal Trail Planners

Liaisons

Cassie Ostrander – FHWA Representative
Scott Morrill – EEA
Amanda Lewis – DCR
Libby Knott – DCR

Other Attendees

Kayla Prange – Nominee for Alternate Member, Dog Walkers
Jim Bothwell – E-Bikes Proponent

Meeting Minutes:

- **MARTAB Membership and Leadership**

- **New Membership Nominations**

Bridget Likely – was nominated by Heather Clish as her replacement to represent Hikers. Bridget currently serves as the NE National Scenic Trail Coordinator with the Appalachian Mountain Club and has held positions both with the Student Conservation Association and the National Park Service. Tom C. made the motion to approve her membership. The motion was seconded by Dick O. and MARTAB voted unanimously to approve.

It was noted that MARTAB should recognize the years of service that Heather Clish has given with some kind of formal "Thank You" as she parts from her role as a valued MARTAB member.

Kayla Prange – was nominated by Charlene Saulnier as her alternate. Kayla works in Grant Writing for an organization called PALS, Inc. She is also a member of the FellsDOG, is an off-leash dog hiker, and runs her own dog walking business in Weston, MA. Pending completion of her nomination papers, Tom C.

made a motion to approve her membership. Dick O. seconded the motion and MARTAB voted unanimously to approve.

➤ **Board Chair**

Larry T. would like to step down as Chair. Dick O. nominated Tom Chamberland as new Chair. Tom accepted and the motion was seconded. MARTAB voted unanimously to approve Tom C. as new Chair.

Vice Chair is now vacant with Tom C. moving over to Chair. Nominations were solicited, but voting put on hold until the next meeting so that all MARTAB members could participate in nomination and election.

➤ **Membership Terms**

It was decided that membership terms would remain the same. Libby will send out the By-Laws to refresh everyone's memory as to those terms.

• **Recreational Trails Program/MassTrails Updates**

- MassTrails Grants Coordinator hired. Libby Knott joined the MT team in late April.
- MassTrails Grants Award Ceremony will be tomorrow June 26 at 9:00am in Lowell. RTP will be announced at the same time even though those grants are still under review with FHWA and MHC. Most likely an August return for those, but we expect all to be approved possibly with modifications as necessary.
- The goal is to build MassTrails to a point where it will be too big to eliminate. Included in this is: create a website with trails resources, increase public/community interest and participation, complete the Share Use Path Planning and Design Guide, develop data collection process, etc.
- As part of this growth, we will be polishing, updating, improving all processes in the upcoming year.
- 2019 MassTrails Conference planning is underway. To be held Oct 31 – Nov 2 at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Leominster, MA. Similar format to years past.

• **Evaluation and Discussion of RTP Grant Review Process**

➤ **Grant Review Process Document and Discussion**

- Tweaks will be made to the online form and the budget template for usability.
- The Formstack software that MA uses for its website has some limitations that we will need to work with or figure out a different method of facilitating grant application submittals.
- In 2020, all submittals will be required to be made electronically; too much work for MT team to process otherwise.
- There was a discussion regarding the minimum grant amount being lowered from \$10K to \$5K so that we capture more interest / needs of the potential applicant pool. It was decided to try the \$5K minimum in 2020 and then to assess afterward if we will continue with that amount. One concern is that we will be inundated with applications for small amounts of money, and need to increase the number of grants we award, which will put a strain on the MT team and the grant approval process. We can also post a list of resources on the MT website that directs interested parties to other grant sources that have lower minimum amounts (e.g. REI).
- We were unable to run grant application workshops this past year, but it will be a goal to run three this year with the intention of guiding applicants to fully comply with all requirements which will hopefully result in a robust amount of accurate information including all appropriate maps, budgets, images, ownership forms, etc.
- It is a challenge to use one application for two different grant programs, but we will continue to iron out the wrinkles to make for a better process. (e.g. Accessibility – not required for RTP but strongly supported for MassTrails grants since we are pushing shared-use paths)
- Tom C. will send some suggestions on language to use for Question 3.8.

- DCR lawyers want language inserted into MARTAB Bylaws that defines the recusal process during grant review whereby any MARTAB member that has interests in an application to disqualify him/herself from the review at hand. We will formalize the process, vote on it, amend the Bylaws once approved, and then share with the DCR lawyers. Tom C. made a motion of intent to change the Bylaws for this reason by having the interested party leave the room during all review discussions for the grant in question. Motion seconded by Marianne and approved by MARTAB members. We will work on the wording and circulate prior to next meeting.
- Grant Criteria Review and Updates
 - Bill B. pointed out that many applicants did not fulfill all the submittal requirements. Will we continue the practice of overlooking this? Amanda reports that we will not. Using the example of the Landowner Form, we will revise and formalize all required documents so that there are no questions about what is and what is not truly required. This will include creating a Buy America compliance form so that applicants clearly understand those requirements, too.
 - Dick W. made the point that when applicants were missing information it was difficult to score and thus it hurt the applicant's chance of a positive review.
 - It was also noted that information was sometimes difficult to find amongst all the narrative that the applicant supplied. Amanda noted that we can look at re-organizing questions (e.g. Section 3) and/or revise the Scoring Rubric to make this easier.
 - The Sustainability criteria did not work; most found it not useful. We will consider removing it.
 - It was suggested to make it clearer to applicants that certain sections and/or questions directly relate to the Scoring Rubric, so they need to be answered very thoughtfully and not skipped.

****** Any additional comments, concerns, or suggestions should be forwarded to Amanda by July 5. She will compile all feedback for review and revision.***

- **Other Business**

- *E-Bike Presentation by Jim Bothwell of Hadley, MA*

Jim presented information and data on E-Bikes to be considered when regulating their use on DCR properties. Specific to his discussion were Class 1 E-Bikes which have a max assist cut off at 20mph and are pedal-assist only (as opposed to throttle-assist). Currently, there is a DCR proposal being considered which will restrict use of E-Bikes on its trails and pathways. He is a proponent of EMBTs for many reasons including that they are very popular and permitted in other countries and many US states; they offer those with mobility challenges to be able to ride again; and they leave less of a trace/ground disturbance than a motorbike and in some instances less than a regular mountain bike.

Comments included:

- Current maximum is 15mph on shared-use paths
- Increased interest in E-Bike use on Rail Trails recently
- May be an ADA challenge put forth in the future if E-Bikes are not permitted on shared-use paths
- Upcoming DCR E-Bike Regulations public meetings (TH Jun 27 in Holyoke and TU Jul 2 in Brighton)

Meeting Adjourned