



MASSACHUSETTS RECREATIONAL TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD

WINTER MEETING - MINUTES

January 11, 2022

Remote Meeting

1:00 – 2:00pm

Members Present with Representation:

Tom Chamberland, Chair – Local Land Trust/Non-Profits

Tim Craig, Vice-Chair – Youth Corps

Bill Boles – Mountain Biking

Liam Cregan – Hiking

Joe Geller – Rail Trail Users

Marianne Iarossi – Municipal Trail Planners

Becky Kalagher – Equestrian

Ben Phelps – All Terrain Vehicles

Larry Tucker – Snowmobiling

Mike White – 4-Wheel Drive Clubs

Liaisons:

Amanda Lewis – DCR MassTrails

Libby Knott – DCR MassTrails

Ellen Huffman – DCR Trails and Greenways

Scott Morrill – EEA OHV Program

Other Attendees:

Becki Linhart – Appalachian Mountain Club

Meeting Minutes:

Welcome

- Approve Minutes from October 12, 2021 Meeting
Tom asked for a motion to accept, which was made by Larry and seconded. A verbal vote was taken among members present. Minutes from October 12, 2021 were unanimously accepted.

Tom Chamberland Retirement

- Tom will be retiring and moving to Pennsylvania to be closer to family. His last official participation as MARTAB Chair and member will be at our June Annual Meeting. Per the MARTAB Bylaws Tim Craig, as Vice-Chair, will be appointed Chair at the June meeting. He will “shadow” and meet with Tom between now and the June meeting.
- We will nominate and elect a new Vice-Chair at the June meeting.

MassTrails Update

- There are two major modifications to the RTP grant application for the 2022 grant round. Both pertain to the applicant needing to provide certain documentation during the registration process. This new requirement applies to:
 - Buy America
 - Landowner permission / Conservation Restriction permission
- This first year we will be somewhat lenient with this requirement. However the word is out and we have been receiving calls regarding this new requirement and advising each inquiry as it comes in. This requirement will allow us to manage these compliance and permissions at the onset of a grant project rather than rely on the grantee to provide information later.

MassTrails Conference

- We are endeavoring to hold the trails conference this fall and looking to hire a consultant to manage a hybrid event. Initial thoughts are to hold outdoor workshops and field trips on one day, and host an all-day virtual session in place of the typical plenary sessions. We will keep you updated on progress as it evolves.

2022 Grant Review

- **Overview** – We will be holding the review virtually using Microsoft Teams for the third year. Joining us this year are Liam Cregan as our new MARTAB hiking representative, and Ellen Huffman from our DCR Trails and Greenways team.

Amanda and Libby are preparing the updated guidance docs and review spreadsheets. Once complete, they will set up individual shared folders for the reviewers to access their score sheets and the applications they've been assigned to review. This process may move from DropBox to a Microsoft cloud-based file share (One Drive or SharePoint) as either of those allows for a much higher file storage limit than our current DropBox setup does. Any new information you need regarding access and login for the platform used, will be sent to everyone. If you have trouble, reach out for assistance.

As always, please do not assign a zero score to any application. If you are having difficulty with a particular application, reach out to Amanda for guidance before scoring it a zero.

- **Prep** – We will hold a grant review tutorial for our new reviewers, and anyone who wants a refresher on the review process. It will be held on Thursday, January 20 from 11am to noon. We can also have another meeting closer to the review day event for anyone who needs/wants it to answer specific questions or points. In advance of the review, Amanda reviewed the FAQs within the guidance doc, which answers quite a few of the more common questions that arise while you review.

You can also look at the MassTrails website to see the application template and applicant guidance documents to (re-)familiarize yourself with the application process.

- **Annual Conflict of Interest Disclosure** – Annual COI forms will be emailed to all MARTAB members soon. Please complete and return to Libby as soon as possible as we need this information prior to assigning each reviewer their set of applications.

- **Review Date Specifics** – The review will be held on Saturday, March 12 from 9am until approximately 3pm, or whenever we have completed the review. The Microsoft Teams invitation has already been sent out twice, but will be sent again on Friday, March 11. Please be ready for this extended meeting time frame by having your review sheets at hand, computer and phone charged (or plugged in), and coffee/water/tea/soda and snacks at hand. We will take a break for lunch.
- **State Liaison Role in Review Discussion** – We are reviewing the current Conflict of Interest language in the Bylaws and may choose to amend or enhance the existing language to help clarify a state liaison's participation in the various tasks associated with the annual grant review process. For the purposes of 2022, we will adhere to the existing Bylaws.

MARTAB Membership

- **Introductions** – Liam Cregan and Becki Linhart, both of the Appalachian Mountain Club, joined the meeting. They took a moment to introduce themselves and to provide a brief trails interest/skills background.
- **Nomination and Vote** – After Liam introduced himself, and MARTAB members had reviewed their nomination paperwork, Joe Geller made a motion to appoint Liam to MARTAB as the hiking representative. Bill Boles seconded the motion. Tom Chamberland oversaw the vote and verified it was unanimous with no one abstaining. Liam Cregan is now a full MARTAB member.
- **Vacancies** – Becki Linhart will be nominated as the hiking representative alternate member. She is working on her nomination paperwork with the idea of having it ready for a review and vote at the beginning of the March 12 annual review meeting.

Two potential additional members have been referred by Tim Craig. They are Dave Ciernia (Youth Corps alternate) and Kathy Baugh (Community Trails and Greenways full member). Both have submitted their nomination paperwork which will be distributed to MARTAB member prior to the March 12 annual grant meeting in order to review and vote upon their nominations.

Libby reviewed the current vacancies and will follow up with an email listing the same. MARTAB members are encouraged to draw support and assist us in filling these vacancies.

- **Renewal of Members** – Since moving to a fully remote and digital management of the MassTrails program it appears some historical data on membership has been lost. It was decided that all current members will be re-nominated for 5 years on a rolling basis according to the last known term for each so that we can get up to date with terms and nomination paperwork. The exceptions here are with Bill, Tim, and Liam as they are all documented and up to date in this regard. Libby will send out re-nomination forms to all after the grant review has taken place.

Other Business

- **Bylaws Revisions** – Amanda and Libby have recently been reviewing and making suggested amendments to the Bylaws language. A copy of the Bylaws with these proposed revisions will be sent to members after the annual grant review has concluded. There will be a comments period prior to the annual meeting during which feedback from members will be collected, reviewed, and distributed to all with anticipation of voting on a finalized version of the Bylaws at the June annual meeting. As to the revisions proposed, they include:

- Terms, and language regarding “indefinite” membership participation if the process of replacing a member is followed and exhausted with no new nominee
- Nomination time of year – amend the language that in its current written form can be misconstrued that nominations can only take place at the June Annual Meeting
- Revise with inclusive language
- Propose an email campaign to utilize if and when we need to fill vacancies
- Insert the now branded MassTrails as the lead (rather than DCR and MassDOT) in the language at the beginning of the Bylaws
- Meetings being held virtually (3 of 4) with the option of holding the annual review remotely too, if needed

- **Upcoming MARTAB Meetings**

As a general rule, fall and winter meetings will be held virtually with potential for holding the annual review and annual meeting in person depending on the current public health conditions. Meeting dates will be on Tuesdays (except the annual review, which is on Saturday):

- Spring – Grant Review Meeting, March 12, 2022
- Summer – Annual Meeting, June 7, 2022

Meeting Adjourned – 2:00pm

PUBLIC NOTICE: Access to the Massachusetts Recreation Trails Advisory Board meetings is encouraged. Please email Elizabeth.Knott@mass.gov at least 2 hours before any future meeting time to receive a link to the virtual meeting platform.