



MASSACHUSETTS RECREATIONAL TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD

JUNE MEETING - MINUTES

June 7, 2022

Remote Meeting

4:00pm – 5:30pm

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

Larry Tucker – Snowmobiling

Mike White – 4-Wheel Drive Clubs

Liaisons:

Amanda Lewis – DCR MassTrails

Libby Knott – DCR MassTrails

Scott Morrill – EEA OHV Coordinator

Meeting Minutes:

Welcome

- Approve Minutes from March 12, 2022 Meeting and Annual Grant Review
Tom asked for a motion to accept, which was made by Joe and seconded by Larry. A verbal vote was taken among members present. Minutes from March 12, 2022 were unanimously accepted.

MARTAB Membership and Leadership

- Bryce Spare was nominated for the Cross-Country Skiing trail user representation. Bryce was not able to attend. Libby presented his credentials and bio. A brief discussion was held. Larry motion to vote with Joe seconding; verbal ballot taken which resulted in a unanimous vote for Bryce to join.
- Marianne asked to change user representation since she has left her municipal planner position and works now for the Trustees of Reservations. The change is from Municipal Trails Planning rep to Statewide Land Trust rep. Tim made a motion to vote with Joe seconding. A verbal ballot was taken from which Marianne abstained. The vote resulted in unanimous approval to allow the change.
- Mike asked to change his association from national to local 4x4 user representation. Given that the user group remains the same, no vote needed. Change approved.
- Tim was voted in as the new Chair. Larry made the motion with Kathy seconding. A short discussion was held before a unanimous vote was made in favor of this.

- Marianne expressed interest in Vice Chair. Tim made a motion to accept, Mike seconded. Marianne is approved as Vice-Chair unanimously.

Recreational Trails Program/MassTrails Updates

The spring procurement round was just finished. Amanda shared spreadsheet of award winners but cautioned all members that the list is confidential. Awards are not final until approved by the Governor. There was \$11M in ask from 61 applicants. This in just one month's time to apply!

The total funding amount for the given grant round is \$11.4M. That breaks out to \$1.4M in Recreational Trails Program funding and \$10M in state capital funding.

An awards event is in planning stages and awaiting word from the Governor's office for an event date and location.

State capital funded grants from the first round in February are currently completing contracting to be ready for state endorsement as soon as possible after July 1. RTP grants are in the FHWA-required regulatory review process now.

Bylaws Updates

Libby reviewed the proposed changes to the Bylaws. The changes had been previously shared with all members allowing for a Comments Period from May 24 – June 6. No comments were received. After a brief discussion Mike motioned for a vote to accept the changes; Kathy seconded. A verbal vote was taken with unanimous acceptance of the new Bylaws.

Evaluation and Discussion of RTP Grant Review Process

Discussion was held regarding feedback from the 2022 Grant Review in order to address the concerns and issues before the 2023 round. Buy America, quotes, and letters of support were all discussed as whether necessary or not. Amanda responded that they are. Regarding quotes, three are recommended but not required. The goal is to have the applicant understand more fully the cost of any equipment by soliciting multiple quotes. This allows for a more accurate budget in the long run.

Scoring equipment applications was discussed from the perspective of how different they are compared to a planning, maintenance, or construction application. Can something be done to help the applicant as well as the reviewer to better understand both sides of the process?

Application updates / changes / additions were suggested in order to guide applicants in providing more in-depth, descriptive information to best answer each question. The goal is to receive more complete answers, so the reviewers have better information with which to more accurately score.

The confusion over how to accurately score for accessibility was discussed again. Amanda pointed out that there is a handout all reviewers receive that discusses this important item. It was noted again that all proposed projects must meet baseline accessibility and therefore points are awarded on going above and beyond that baseline (whether it is ADA or FSTAG guidelines). We will ensure that accessibility is discussed more fully before the 2023 grant review so that folks are more comfortable in scoring.

Before the new grant round we will again host a how-to webinar for applicants. It was well attended in 2021 with over 100 participants. The Q&A portion was tricky to manage with only two people running the session. This year

we will have three managing the session and expect to capture and answer all questions so that applicants have the opportunity to address specific questions and requirements prior to submitting their proposals.

For the MARTAB review we will also host a how-to session covering grant review guidelines and guidance. This is especially helpful for new members, but all are welcome as a refresher prior to the beginning of the review process. It was suggested that perhaps this be a mandatory session for any MARTAB member that plans to participate in the grant review each year. The idea of performing a mock review of one or two applications (one construction/maintenance and one equipment purchase) was suggested and could be beneficial to all.

MassTrails Conference Update

Libby provided information on the upcoming 2022 MassTrails Conference. Internal planning has just begun, and an event planner has been hired. MassTrails has contracted with Eastern Research Group (ERG) in Lexington to plan the event. A steering committee will be selected soon once an email goes out to gauge participation interest among our members as well as a select few trails advocates. Date and location still to be determined.

Other Business

- Friends of Northampton Trails: MassTrails received a letter from this organization advocating for the addition of an accessibility representative to MARTAB. Libby responded that it's always been the intention to have an accessibility representative but that this position has been vacant for some time. Libby sent information on MARTAB responsibilities as well as nomination papers to both Meg Bandarra and George Kohout (co-signers) requesting that they reach out to their network of trails advocates to help us fill this important position. George responded that they would do so. There has been no follow up since.
- Marianne confirmed that filling the vacancy is important. In addition, the membership should endeavor to enhance trails user representation through DBIE and BIPOC additions to the membership. We will address this in more depth at a future meeting, but it was suggested that a subcommittee could be established to begin outreach and education about MARTAB and its role in the Massachusetts trails community to encourage engagement.
- Libby will send information on the awards event as soon as a date and location have been finalized. All of MARTAB is encouraged to attend if available.

Upcoming Meetings and Events

As a rule, meetings will be held virtually with potential for holding the annual meeting in person, or at least the field trip portion thereof. Meeting dates will be on Tuesdays (except the annual review, which is on Saturday):

- *Fall – October 11, 2022*
- *MassTrails Conference – November 12, 2022 (plenary session); workshops and field trips TBD*
- *Winter – January 10, 2023*
- *Annual Grant Review – March 11, 2023*
- *Summer – Annual Meeting, June 13, 2023*

Meeting Adjourned – 5:27pm

PUBLIC NOTICE: Public Access to this meeting is encouraged. Please email Elizabeth.Knott@mass.gov at least 1 day in advance for directions to a physical meeting; or email at least 2 hours in advance of a virtual meeting to receive meeting link. Meeting platform (in-person vs virtual) is at the discretion of the MassTrails Program Administrators.

