

Friends of the Northern Rail Trail Minutes, December 15, 2021

Condensed from draft minutes.

The year ends in fine shape for our trail and our Board.

Board Attendees: Alex Bernhard, Amy Chan, Barbara Couturier, Steve Darling, George Heaton, Lindy Heim, Dustin Ladd, Charles Martin, Myra Mayman, Ricker Miller, Don Moyer, Chris Norris, Peter Southworth.

Guests and Committee Members: Audry Barriault (Sanborton, Lakes Regions Ebike); Craig Heim.

Business Matters

Treasurer's Report: Dustin Ladd's report covered past, present, and future financial scenarios, which show substantial balances at the ready to be expended for future maintenance, improvement, and trail-building projects. See reports on specific projects below.

The creation of our yearly budget is underway. Committee chairs are submitting estimates of expenses and inflows, which will be aggregated by Dustin for discussion at an Administration and Finance Committee meeting in January, prior to presentation to the full Board soon thereafter.

Committee Reports

Trail Building and Maintenance Committee: Don Moyer's PowerPoint slides summarized the many maintenance projects and people that are at the heart of our Trail enterprise. Given winter weather, most of the projects are in abeyance until spring. But winter weather also brings special needs for Trail-clearing, enlisting our many volunteers as well as snowmobile clubs – all much appreciated!

Much of Don's presentation focused on projections for the next year. Expenses can be inferred from two components: extrapolations forward from "ordinary" maintenance totals in the past, such as mowing, ditching, and clearing; and specific improvement projects already committed for the near future, or realistically envisioned.

Overall, these projections include five sites in Grafton County, for which plans and funds are in place; applications for new Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grants; and the construction of the long-awaited Trail extension in Boscawen. See more discussion below.

Another aspect of the discussion was consideration of how to cope with "contingency" funds. These are budgeted to cover unexpected cost or scope increases in projects; and in fact, are often required to be provided by grantees (such as FNRT) in grant applications. Whether and how to formalize such a need in FNRT budgets will continue to be considered.

Administration and Finance Committee:

Craig Heim offered a new idea to the Board: an FNRT Capital Campaign. Initial discussion ranged widely over the experience of other non-profits as well as the various possibilities and problems a Capital Campaign could pose for FNRT. The issue will be kept in mind for more discussion.

The Committee will meet next, as is its practice, one week before the scheduled Board Meeting, so as to anticipate and digest issues for the Board at the monthly meeting on January 19. On January 12, the preparation of a yearly budget will be the principal agenda item.

Marketing and Promotion, and Technology Committees: These committees go forward in their work, without specific report.

Other Developments

Boscawen Extension: Approvals of the necessary agreements among various parties – NHDOT, the Governor's Council, PanAm Railways, and FNRT – continue to move toward closure.

With the prospect of building a Trail extension in Boscawen now ever-closer to fruition, the FNRT is grateful to have had funds on hand for many months to immediately cover purchase of the right-of-way and the building of the Trail. The generous donors in this effort, and eager Trail users, can look forward to progress this year.

Grant from RTC: A recent public announcement by the National Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) highlighted FNRT's winning proposal for a grant to cover five high-priority resurfacing projects in Grafton County.

RTC's Trail Grant Program emphasizes strategic investments that support significant regional and community trail development goals – often providing funding for projects that are small in scope and scale and can be hard to finance within traditional funding streams. These projects are essential to building, maintaining, and managing the trails that communities rely upon for recreation, transportation, and economic vitality.

The FNRT is grateful for and proud of this award and recognition.

New Trail Count Project: Following on FNRT's existing initiative to count users at various sites, we are happy to announce participation in a six-state Trail Count Collaborative, whose funding apparatus is managed by the University of Connecticut. FNRT has put in a request for new traffic counters, docking stations, and other equipment as part of the State of New Hampshire request, and we eagerly await the result of the grant process.

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Wilmot Public Library Lecture Series

Dee Ganley, author and dog trainer



Ganley, author of "Changing People, Changing Dogs: Positive Solutions for Working With Dogs," and Flip will visit the library to share their wisdom on communication between dogs and their handlers.

Fri., February 11 at 6 P.M.

11 North Wilmot Road, Wilmot.



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