

Friends of Northern Rail Trail Meeting

November 15, 2017

Condensed from draft minutes

Members Present: Directors Alex Bernhard, Steve Darling, Craig Heim, Lindy Heim, Myra Mayman, Chris Norris, Peter Southworth, Nita Tomaczewski, and guests Patrice Rasche and Steve Rasche.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Steve Darling reported that all bills have been paid and we are up to date. The cost of mowing the entire Trail last summer was over \$3000. After all the planned and emergency repairs to the Trail we have a bank balance of \$30,788.51. Chris Norris added that we have committed \$2100. to Jon Champagne for further emergency repairs north and south of the Potter Place overpass to be done next week. These questions being answered, the Treasurer's report was accepted.

Old Business: Lindy reported on technology. Cathe Lisk is still pursuing business sponsors for our web page. If anyone wants to suggest changes to the web page they should send them to Lindy, who will forward them to Cathe.

Tom Frantz has asked that we keep alive the idea of doing a Trail usage count. Patrice reported that other groups have a Trail counting day when volunteers go out and count users by the hour with paper and pencil, without elaborate equipment.

Lindy brought 18 x 24 temporary laminated signs showing the location of all our restored mileposts. These are to be put up on kiosks until we produce permanent free-standing signs in metal. There are two possible extensions of both north and south ends of Trail, which we may want to add.

FNRT-Grafton has completed a beautiful extension of their end of the trail in Lebanon and are planning a grand opening on National Trails Day (June 2) in 2018. We would like to support FNRT-Grafton with this event. Patrice said this extension is a good talking point for extending Trail in Concord.

Lindy proposed we give two temporary signs to Dick Mackay for the Grafton group and all agreed.

Maintenance: Chris reported that Jon Champagne and Rodney Judkins recently completed the work to restore ditches, clean out blocked culverts, and repair bridge railings. South of Danbury four culverts were buried but Jon dug them out, and during the recent 7-inch rain they were effective in keeping water off the Trail.

A few weeks after Jon cleared the four-pipe culvert the recent seven inches of rain buried the entire culvert under two feet of debris. Chris and Jon reviewed the damage and Jon pledged to clean out the culvert. However the next day an AT&T crew appeared to fix the damage, to protect their fiber optic cable. They cleaned out the culvert and brought a large quantity of riprap. Chris believes

that culvert is not big enough to handle flash floods. It is entirely cased in concrete, a significant challenge to free.

The other big storm problem was the Route 4 overpass, near the Park and Ride at Potter Place. The trail surface was completely washed out. Today one of Jon Champagne's workers was clearing out trees to reach an old railroad ditch. Jon is going to do the entire job for \$2100. Jon has been very helpful, committed and contributing. He'll also extend the ditch by the bridge just south of the Potter Place Depot. We voted to increase the expenditure authorized for the Potter Place overpass area by \$600 to allow extending the ditching south another 100' from the Park and Ride Access path to a former railroad discharge ditch.

Next summer's work: Chris's priorities are to continue repairing the bridges. Three bridges over Sucker Brook between Dyer's Crossing and East Andover have no rails or very weak rails. He recommends bridges with wings. Rodney is working on estimates on those three plus the Roy Ford Bridge in Danbury. There is a total of six bridges between Danbury and Franklin that need work including these four. Chris knows they can do three in a season since that's what they completed this year. Bridges are not a problem for Chris in terms of oversight.

Craig would like to submit a grant application by the end of April. His concern is safety. Estimates for the four bridges done this year was \$17,000; all the work ended up at \$23,000 so we need to apply for a larger amount of money then we previously estimated in order to do next year's work.

Alex reported on the on going efforts to connect the end of the Trail in Boscawen to Concord. The city of Concord was going to put in an application for federal funds [TIGAR] to purchase six miles of rail bed abandoned by Pan Am. They needed a letter from Pan Am confirming Pan Am's intention to sell but no letter was forthcoming, so they could not complete the application. The good news is that the City of Concord is interested and behind this. The idea is in the right place, and Alex is confident it will work, but it will take time.

Franklin Falls Recreational Plan: Lindy, Alex and Myra attended an event in Franklin to announce progress on the Franklin Falls recreational plan. Franklin Savings Bank is donating \$250,000, and they have received a grant of \$180,000 for design and engineering of the kayaking park.

Cease and Desist Order: Peter Southworth provided a copy of a Cease and Desist order sent from DOT to Lenny Caron demanding that he cease using the bridge south of the Potter Place Depot to move his equipment. Alex reported that the new lock and locking pin at the gate at this bridge has

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FNRT-MC is hopeful that project leader Chris Norris, contractor Jon Champagne of Andover and AT & T were able to solve the problems of a failing 4-pipe culvert drainage system under the rail trail at Eagle Pond. Final repair work was completed on Sunday, December 4, 2017. The culvert design has been problematic because of changes over time in the volume of runoff, the sections of pipe are misaligned and cemented in place, and the pipe work is not continuous across the 28 foot span.

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