

Friends of the Northern Rail Trail: Minutes of June 17 Meeting

Lawrence Street tunnel to get upgrades

George Heaton, FNRT

Condensed from draft minutes

Board Attendees: Alex Bernhard, Steve Darling, Tom Frantz, George Heaton, Craig Heim, Lindy Heim, Charles Martin, Myra Mayman, Jack Shields.

Loyal Trail Supporters: Ricker Miller, Patrice Rasche, Steve Rasche

With warm weather upon us, the community is out on the Trail, and the Board focuses its attention on a raft of summer projects to keep the Trail in good shape.

Budget

Consideration of the proposed 2020 budget necessarily required discussion of all major projects to be undertaken – particularly maintenance of bridges and ditching – in order to evaluate scope,

timelines, personnel, and funding. As some of this information had not yet been fully obtained from contractors and Board members, it was agreed to postpone budget approval until full information was available.

Nevertheless, a general framework for prioritizing and executing the projects was established. We expect to expend between \$20,000 and \$25,000 this year for bridge, culvert, and ditch maintenance, from funds generously contributed by our Friends and other supporters of the Northern Rail Trail.

Given the time-critical nature of these proposed projects, the Board further agreed to hold a special session to approve a new budget as soon as possible. The date is yet to be determined.

Ongoing Projects

FNRT-MC Annual Appeal: Although the schedule of our usual Annual Appeal was

postponed due to COVID, a mailing will be coming to all in the near future. Lee Carvalho, a stalwart Trail supporter from Connecticut and usual orchestrator of the mailing event, has the envelopes stuffed and ready to go in her home. Watch for an important letter in your mailbox!

Lawrence Street Tunnel, Andover: Tom Frantz has made final plans with contractor Jon Champagne for grading and resurfacing and will soon conclude arrangements for the lighting plan. The Granite State Wheelers awarded us a grant of \$2,500 in response to a proposal submitted by Lindy Heim and Tom Frantz that will cover this work. These long-awaited improvements are now imminent.

E-bike signs: George Heaton, Jack Shields and a Danbury Selectman will meet this weekend to sign the Danbury Country Store as an e-bike charging station and to consider better arrangement of signs in the Danbury Rail Trail Parking Lot.

Eagle Pond Culvert, Andover: Jack Shields and Lindy Heim happily reported the culmination of their long efforts with formal submission of the FNRT-MC proposal to the New Hampshire Trails Bureau to rebuild the culvert that has for years caused Trail flooding. The submission was made on June 15, and we eagerly await the State's decisions at a hoped-for early date.

New Initiatives

"Riding" Leaf Blower: The task of blowing leaves from the Trail – currently accomplished by Steve Rayno from Franklin with a hand-held leaf blower – presents a large challenge. Ricker Miller proposed a possible improved approach:

a "riding" leaf blower. The Board authorized Ricker to undertake this as an experiment at an appropriate time, with a short-term rental of this new machine.

Picnic Tables: The fire station in East Andover has unused picnic tables which could make an attractive rest stop on the Trail. Alex Bernhard was designated to ask the Fire Department for the use of the tables, and to assure them of reimbursement in the event of any damage to the tables.

FNRT-Grafton County: Charles Martin reported on discussions with the Grafton County FNRT about coordination of efforts between the two Trail groups. Use by Grafton County of the FNRT-MC logo on their website would help provide a unified identity to the two county sections of the Trail.

Matters of Interest and Concern

Extension of Trail: Patrice Rasche, member of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail Board, reported on ongoing discussions within the City of Concord about acquiring the PanAm right-of-way within the City to the Concord/Boscawen line. FNRT-MC appreciates this news and hopes for a fruitful outcome.

ATVs on the Trail: There continues to be clear evidence of ATV traffic on the Trail in East Andover and Franklin. Such motorized vehicles are not permitted on the Trail and can be a hazard to other users as well as the Trail surface. Anyone observing such unauthorized travel should report it to 1) the local Police Department and 2) New Hampshire Fish and Game at 271-3361.

Next meeting: Wednesday, July 15, at 5 PM via Zoom.

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The Trail...Get On It!