

Friends of the Northern Rail Trail April 20, 2022

Board Attendees: Alex Bernhard, Amy Chan, Barbara Couturier, Steve Darling, George Heaton, Lindy Heim, Craig Heim, Cody Hussey, Dustin Ladd, Myra Mayman, Don Moyer Jack Shields, Peter Southworth.

Welcome Guest: Gary LeBlanc, Scenic RailRiders, Concord

Business Matters

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Dustin Ladd's report both presented the current financial picture of FNRT and offered the 2022 Budget for Board approval.

The recently accomplished transfer of \$110,000 to the State of New Hampshire for purchase of the Trail extension in Boscawen has significantly altered FNRT's cash position. Nevertheless, we are in a good shape to undertake planned projects with current funds.

Planned uses for the approximately \$76,000 on hand are: 1) approximately \$46,000 committed to Recreational Trails Program (RTP) projects for Trail improvement; 2) \$19,400 for use in constructing the Boscawen Trail extension; 3) a \$10,000 reserve.

With input to this year's budget projections being submitted to the Treasurer over the last few months, Dustin has been able to construct a detailed budget for 2022. This was unanimously approved, with the realization that it is a projection rather than a constraint.

One particularly happy development is the inflow of funds in response to our Annual Appeal. The FNRT thanks all those who have already donated, as well as those to come.

Committee Reports

Technology Committee: With our Squarespace subscription now committed and paid, FNRT is deep into the redesign of our website. Cody Hussey is undertaking the final review of this project.

Trail Building and Maintenance Committee: Chair Don Moyer presented, first, a comprehensive overview of "where we are" in terms of current and planned Trail maintenance projects, and then put a number of action items before the Board.

Six projects in Grafton County are at the heart of our current agenda. While it is unsurprising, but nevertheless dismaying, inflation is affecting the costs of these projects, particularly in materials. Our resolve is to move forward as fast as possible with these projects – which focus on ditching, raising the trail-bed, and culvert work – as they are urgently needed.

We are pleased to announce the approval of two new RTP projects: at Plains Road in Andover, and the Punch Brook bridge in Franklin. The Board

was pleased to unanimously authorize Ricker Miller to represent FNRT as Administrator on these two projects.

Plans for the Boscawen Extension of the Trail are proceeding apace. Don is in constant contact with New Hampshire Department of Transportation (DOT), working toward a Temporary Use Agreement (TUA) to govern the work process. One clear development – consistent with inflation – is a significant increase in construction cost estimates.

Don is gratified to report a big response from chainsaw volunteers for work on the Trail – with seven new recruits, our total is 19. Bravo! All should note that chainsaw certification from the State is necessary – but not an onerous process.

Progress is being made on the draft of a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOA) with the State of New Hampshire that governs procedures for FNRT's work on the Trail. This document is now with the State and will be brought to the Board in due course.

Looking to the future, the Board authorized Don and the Committee to submit applications for next year's RTP grants. Our clear priorities are Potato Road and the Route 4 overpass, both in Canaan.

Lastly, Don emphasized the need for liaison and cooperation with all the towns along the Trail. All readily agreed, and began making plans in this direction.

Administration and Finance Committee: Chair Craig Heim reported the intention of the Technology Committee to be absorbed into Admin/Finance. This was agreed to by the Board.

The issue of uniform signage along the Trail prompted discussion, and a resolve to keep abreast of current efforts at the State level to put forward a new policy.

Marketing and Promotion Committee: Amy Chan reported on various outreach efforts. Two grant applications are now in the works for a "Cycling Without Age" project, which, in collaboration with Lebanon Recreation, would provide assistance to bring more seniors onto the Trail. LaVallee's hardware has offered the donation of a shed for storage. And on May 6, a "Walk on the Northern Rail Trail" moment is planned for 10 AM.

Things as diverse as Community outreach, the natural beauties of the Trail, and kids on bikes are covered with pleasure and pictures in our monthly newsletter "Get On It!"

The Board's next meeting will be on May 18 via Zoom.

FNRT Wins Generous Grant from Granite State Wheelers

One of 10 best bicycling improvement projects

Press release

On Sunday evening, May 15, the Granite State Wheelers announced the winners of their annual grant giving project. The Wheelers give out \$2,500 grants to each of the 10 best bicycling improvement projects proposed by New Hampshire groups competing for the honor.

Friends of the Northern Rail Trail (FNRT) won one of these generous grants

to help fund an ambitious project that will start in Lebanon and hopefully be adopted by other cities and towns along the Northern Rail Trail. It is called Cycle Without Age (CWA) and is being spearheaded by FNRT board member Amy Chan in partnership with the Lebanon's Park and Recreation Department.

Cycle Without Age is an international volunteer-based program that connects seniors or less abled individuals with pilots (cyclists) who take them for rides on an electric passenger trishaw. The program aims to increase access to the Northern Rail Trail and the bike-friendly streets of Lebanon for those who have mobility restrictions. A side

benefit will be that volunteer piloting gives older adults who need e-assist but don't own an e-bike an opportunity to continue cycling by participating in our volunteer program.

Amy notes that "most of our passengers will be aged 80+, so those who grew up in this region will remember the railroads. I believe this will be the first CWA program associated with a Rail Trail. FNRT has always valued and invested in preserving our railroad history. What better way to preserve railroad history than to give

those who lived it a chance to tell their stories to a younger generation while out enjoying the Trail together?"

FNRT will raise the funds to purchase the electric trishaw and work with Lebanon Park and Recreation to build a storage shed onto a city-owned garage near the Lebanon trailhead. FNRT will build a team of volunteer cyclists and train them. Lebanon Park and Rec will facilitate the program with their online sign up and participant waiver system and will provide background checks for volunteers.

This generous award by the Granite State Wheelers validates our efforts to encourage safe and fun outdoor recreation for all ages in our area.



BOSTON CIVIC SYMPHONY

Dvorak New World Symphony
Mozart Piano Concerto in D minor
Jonathan Bailey Holland NH Premiere

Saturday JUNE 25

SAWYER CENTER THEATER
Colby-Sawyer College
New London
7:00 PM

TICKETS: \$25
Students \$5 with ID
SummerMusicAssociates.org
603.526.8234 or at the door



TOO GOOD NOT TO REPEAT

"You make a living by what you get.
You make a life by what you give."
- Winston Churchill