

Massachusetts Recreational Trails Advisory Committee
MINUTES
January 14, 2015

Location: *Conference Call*
Time: *7pm to 9pm*

Members Present:

Dick O'Brien
Becky Kalagher
Bill Boles
Benton Phelps
Pam Browning
Larry Tucker
Dick Williamson
Bill Riordan
Leslie Robinson
Amanda Lewis

Meeting Minutes:

Welcome

Approve Previous Minutes

Meeting Minutes from 10/8/14 Approved

Nomination of Equestrian Use Alternative

Motion by Bill Boles to approve Sandy Wedge as alternative representative of equestrian use on recreational trails. Seconded by Larry Tucker, unanimously approved. Her term will officially begin as of last summer's MARTAB meeting, when the board typically votes on member nominations.

Education Grant Application and Vote

Northeast Forest and Fire Management, LLC. submitted an education grant application to coordinate and hold three chainsaw safety courses through the course of the next nine months. This application was submitted in December and accepted for review, as education grants are accepted on a rolling basis. The application was distributed to MARTAB members over email, for review and comments.

MARTAB has determined that pledge sheets should be included as a part of the course, with each participant pledging at least 10 hours of volunteer chainsaw work on trails as a requirement for participation in the workshop. The fee should also be changed to \$40.

Motion to approve the grant by Dick W, seconded by Amanda, unanimously approved.

Follow Up: Amanda will contact NFFM for contracting and suggested changes.

RTP Updates

2015 RTP round has been obligated \$800,000 federal share in the STIP, but there are \$949,354 in funds that will lapse next October – DCR and FHWA will ask MassDOT to amend the STIP for the full amount in potential lapsing funds.

There have been no updates within DCR concerning the Environmental Bond Bill appropriation, so this grant round will move forward, at this time, under the assumption that those funds will not be made available this year. Dick O'Brien encouraged all members and their organizations to contact legislators, the Chairs of Ways and Means, the Senate President, the House President, the new Governor and the Committee on Natural Resources, to advocate for this money to be released from the bond bill and spent on recreational trails.

Upcoming RTP Grant Review – Saturday February 28th, 9-5

The grant review meeting will be held at the Holyoke Heritage State Park at 221 Appleton Street in Holyoke. This is an executive session, so is not open to the public.

Letter to DCR from MARTAB: Trail Policies on Watershed Lands

A draft letter was circulated by Bill Boles for MARTAB review and comments, based on discussion at the 10/8/14 meeting. Larry Tucker commented that this might be an opportunity to send a collective message, pertaining to all watershed lands in the Commonwealth, on opening trails up for all users, including snowmobiles. Bill Boles agreed that in watershed areas around the state, trails are being closed, so this is everyone's issue. Dick O'Brien felt reluctant for MARTAB to send a blanket letter requesting to open up all trails to all users, regardless of the design of trails (sustainability). Larry Tucker offered to submit a paragraph to be inserted into the letter, based on this discussion. He will work on it and then circulate a draft to MARTAB over email for review and comments. If MARTAB feels that it is not the message they want to send at this time, the board as a whole can vote to remove it. It was agreed that the letter should be sent in upon the appointment of a new Commissioner, if that is done in a timely manner.

Trails Conference Planning

A Steering Committee has been put together as a result of the sign-up sheet at the last trails conference. Dick O'Brien has scheduled an initial meeting for Tuesday, February 10th at 7pm via conference call. He also sent a list of "considerations" for the next trails conference and circulated before this MARTAB meeting. He asked that MARTAB provide comments, feedback and discussion on those and any other thoughts about the next trails conference.

MARTAB as 501(c)3

Dick O'Brien would like to establish MARTAB as a non-profit organization, but this generally requires a lawyer to finalize the paperwork. This would be needed should MARTAB want to collect and offer tax deductions for donations to the conference. MARTAB as a board is in favor of establishing this, but asked that Dick O'Brien look into alternatives for obtaining the status, other than paying a lawyer. Perhaps there is a guide for non-profits to do this on their own (DIY) or perhaps there is a lawyer in the trails community who will do it pro-bono?

Adjourn