Ashland Upper Charles Trail Committee Minutes January 7, 2021 (210107) Zoom meeting

Present: Joel Arbeitman, Tony Lewis, David Rosenblum, Marty Ring, Preston Crow, Chuck Lidz, Valerie Paul, Rob Scherer

Absent:

Guests: Jenn Ball

Meeting called to order at 7:36 pm.

We discussed future meeting dates. We agreed that we should shoot for first Thursday of the month. Rob and Valerie preferred 7 pm and the rest of us concurred. Rob asked that there be as much notice as possible for meetings.

Joel started to discuss his emails with Jenn. Jenn is the town’s liaison to Bill Paille at BSC. Joel appreciates Jenn doing this. Joel thought that Bill was not done with specs for the Trolley Brook Trail (TBT). Jenn then joined the Zoom meeting. Jenn reported that Bill P. is targeting presentation to the Conservation Commission (Con Com) for 2nd January meeting and it might take 2 meetings to work out TBT with the Con Com. Rob asked who would be writing the notice of intent. Jenn said that Bill P. will be writing it. Con Com meetings should result in the Order of Conditions for the project. Jenn thought that we should wait to put project out to bid until after Order of Conditions is created. Jenn plans to ask the chair of the Con Com if a site walk is needed. Jenn wanted to work this out before the area is covered with snow. Jenn thought that members of the AUCT should attend the Con Com meetings if possible. Jenn said that the town submits grant paperwork. Jenn said that Bill P. will write the request(s) for bid. She thought that this needed to go out by mid-February which might be before notice of intent or order of conditions. It would be good to evaluate and award bids in March. Jenn explained that the Mass trails grant money must be spent by June 30, 2021. She thought that the grant money could easily be applied to parts of the project that would be done in that timeframe.

Joel brought up using the Student Conservation Association to do part of the project. Joel said that the Association does not have heavy equipment. They can and have built fences, steps and bridges and their student rates are less than professional contractors. Joel thought they might be able to do the deck over the water that is not currently part of the project.

We discussed oversight of the progress of the project. Jenn said that Bill P. could do this and that this function was part of the project budget. Tony suggested that we use the Town Planner’s trails experience. Jenn said that he is involved in the project. Tony asked Jenn about help with mapping the trail. Marty commented that we will need more precision mapping at this stage of trail design. Jenn said that the town has internal GIS mapping resources and can contract out GIS mapping if needed.

We discussed easements. Joel brought up applying for construction grants this year. Preston found out that the Peter Zani property and Chestnut Hill mortgage properties are both in tax title. More information from Preston: The town planner is checking arrears on the property. Preston found out that the town generally does not do a taking until what is owed is at least the assessed value. The Town Planner will check the Zani deed for Bay State Trail easements. Joel brought up needing surveying of our easement on Dike Trail next to the Zani property. David thought that this was necessary. Jenn brought up possibility of applying for grant on known easement, possibly building over water and changing plan
to go over land if possible. Preston said that trail with boardwalks over water would not be looked on favorably in grant application. Marty said that he did not think we were ready to apply for a grant on the Dike Trail. Preston thought a letter now to Mass Trails explaining where we are, would help us when we apply for a grant. Jenn said that she would talk to her Mass Trails contact about our situation. And Jenn would look into the Student Conservation Association. If, after Jenn talks to Mass Trails contact, a grant is possible, we can call a meeting to discuss this. Jenn thought it might be possible to find town money for Dike Trail survey this year, so we can apply for grant next year. Preston thought that our goal for 2021 should be to gain control over the property needed for the trail.

Tony said that he will get copies of his maps to Jenn in February after town meeting.

Rob updated us on the property where the public safety building will be built. He said the town is negotiating the taking of about 3 acres with access and that the town is aware of the importance of the trail segment on that property.

Meeting adjourned at 9:37 pm. Motion by Marty, seconded by Preston, 8-0.

Action Items:

List of Documents discussed:
none