

JOHNSON RAIL TRAIL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
MASONIC TEMPLE, JOHNSON PUBLIC LIBRARY
22 PEARL STREET, JOHNSON, VT
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2024

Present:

Committee Members: BJ Putvain, Kyle Nuse (remote), Kim Dunkley, Doug Molde, Peggy Williams (remote)

Absent: Adrienne Stevson, Mary Lou Kopas, Jan Gearhart

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. *Call to Order*

BJ called the meeting to order at 5:38.

2. *Appointment of Chair*

Kim moved to appoint Doug Molde as chair, BJ seconded and the motion was passed.

3. *Approval of Minutes*

BJ moved to approve the minutes of November 29, 2023, Kim seconded and the motion was passed.

4. *Approval of Using Teams for Committee Meetings*

BJ moved to use Microsoft Teams when available for committee meetings.

Kim asked if there is a reason Zoom doesn't work as well. BJ said it is limited to 45 minutes. Teams has no limit on time or number of people. Peggy said she doesn't understand why we have to have a motion about using it. Why can't we just use it without a formal motion? We might find something we like better. Doug said it gives people notice of what we are using. We can change it any time we want to. Kyle said another reason to use Teams is that the town only has so many Zoom links and they are often being occupied. Peggy said she has a Zoom account and she doesn't think hers is limited to 45 minutes. BJ said if she has a paid Zoom account the committee can use her Zoom. If she is willing to set up our meetings he would welcome that. Peggy said she will look into the details.

The motion was passed.

5. *Appointment of AARP Liveable Villages Community Grant Subcommittee*

Kyle moved and Kim seconded to appoint Kyle Nuse, Adrienne Stevson, Mary Lou Kopas and Jan Gearhart to the AARP Liveable Villages Community Grant Subcommittee. Kim

asked if the committee will disband after the grant application is submitted. Kyle said she thinks so.

The motion was passed.

6. *Appointment of Authorized Contact with Randall Szott for AARP Grant Application*

Kim moved and BJ seconded to appoint Kyle Nuse as authorized contact with Community Economic Development Specialist Randall Szott with regard to the AARP grant application.

Doug said it is easier for one person to take the committee's message to Randall. Appointing a specific person gives Kyle authority and gives Randall something he can rely on. **The motion was passed.**

7. *Approval of Committee Meeting Schedule*

BJ moved to hold committee meetings on the third Wednesday of each month at 5:30, Kim seconded and the motion was passed.

8. *Report and Action on the Report of the AARP Grant Subcommittee*

Kyle said the subcommittee has met twice for a couple of hours and also had quite a few email exchanges. Their first meeting was about going back to the map Adrienne had made and expanding on it. They identified businesses and other places that might be interested in bike infrastructure and each committee member contacted some. They came up with an informational flyer and asked each place several questions about what they already have, what they need and what amenities they could provide to rail trail users. Then they came back together, discussed their findings and reported them to Randall. They got good feedback when they were able to talk to someone in person, but they were not able to get hold of someone at every place.

Randall met with Sue Lovering and the Studio Center about what they need and about them potentially applying for the same grant. Sue has decided she is not going to apply for it. Kyle believes the Studio Center is going to apply. Randall got in touch with AARP today. She is waiting to hear how the conversation went.

Kim asked if there is any chance a bike rack could be placed at Dog's Head. Kyle said we had decided not to focus on anything on the rail trail. It seemed like the state was taking care of things at Dog's Head. Our focus on this was Route 15.

Kyle said we can apply for up to \$50K for the AARP grant but the average grant given is closer to \$15K. If we only get \$15K, that is not going to get us as far as we would like. We also included a charging station but she thinks that will be the first thing we cut if we need to cut. She thinks there will be other grants we could use for that. This grant realistically will probably fund 4 or 5 benches and a few bike racks. The recommendation from the village trustees was to try to refurbish the bike racks we already have. She talked to BJ and learned that his powder coating wouldn't work for those bike racks. We probably would have to paint them. BJ said he sent Kyle information on another option we may be able to use that will hold up better than paint. Kyle said the bike racks are in fine shape but need to be freshened up and made brighter.

Kim suggested we could provide the opportunity for people to pay for a memorial bench. Peggy suggested benches could also have signs saying they were donated by or in honor of a certain person. Peggy asked if there is a priority list in case we get less than we had planned on. Kyle said there is a Plan A, a Plan B and a Plan C. The benches really need to be replaced. They are not in good shape. They are definitely a priority. We may be able to fund all of them. The benches the subcommittee likes have a spot in the middle where a plaque can go. The committee also thought we could collaborate with the Historical Society and have interesting facts about Johnson on the benches.

9. *Grant Application Schedule for Rail Trail Committee*

Kyle said as a grant writer she uses a yearly calendar to keep track of what grants are available, what they are for, application due dates, and collaborators. She has all that information in a spreadsheet. She thought it might be advantageous for us to suggest that Randall do the same. We got approval from the town to apply for an AARP grant but Sue Lovering was on the agenda later the same evening asking for approval for the same grant. If we had a town grant calendar that Randall could populate with our suggestions it might prevent that kind of thing.

Kim said she thinks it would need to be a townwide thing. It sounds like good idea. Doug said we can't make anyone else do this but it would be good for the community if all the town organizations developed a plan like this. Kim said she thinks it would be helpful if Randall passed

the information to the town administrator. Peggy asked if we are generating this or asking Randall to generate it. BJ said Randall was hired to deal with grants. He thinks this would fall to Randall and the committees would ask Randall about what was available or maybe there would be a place where everyone could view it. Peggy said we don't have authority to ask Randall to do this but maybe we could suggest it to the town. Doug said he thinks we can have people on the committee develop a grant schedule and then run it by Randall. BJ offered to talk to Randall about this. Kyle said he can reach out to her if there are any roadblocks or questions.

10. Subcommittee to Study Implementation of Secure Parking Areas for Rail Trail Visitors

It was agreed to defer this to the next meeting when more people are present.

11. Google Drive File Management Demo

Adrienne was ill and not able to attend so this will be moved to the next meeting.

12. Informational Handout of Definition Section of Vermont Open Meeting Law

Doug provided a handout with Open Meeting Law information. He pointed out that the reason we have a subcommittee is that if 5 committee members met it would be a violation of Open Meeting Law.

13. Other Business

Kim said there has been a lot of damage on the rail trail. Snowmobiles have kicked up rocks because there is not much snow. She is wondering if that is information we should feed to AOT and VAST or if anything can be done to keep the rail trail in good condition for summer use. Doug said damage reports can be made to Jackie Cassino at AOT.

Doug said the Paddlers' Trail steering committee has talked to LCPC about doing a river and rail trail cleanup of flood debris from Cambridge to Hardwick on Green Up Day. The first step is to get permission from AOT.

14. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths