**MEETING MINUTES**

**Ashburnham Rail Trail Committee**

**Thursday, Jan 3, 2019**

**Lower Meeting Room @ 6:30 PM**

**Town Hall**

In attendance: Rosemarie Meissner, Cec Snow, Chris Picone, Jessica Caouette

1. Approved the October minutes with minor revisions.

2. Updates:

The bank had charged an inactivity fee of $20, but JC and RM are getting that removed.

M. Dymek’s property will be auctioned Feb 26. Auction held at the property.

Feasibility study. RM, CS and Anna Wilkins walked the Cheshire line and Old County Rd in Nov. with Jeff Legros, Gardner Conservation Agent and Community Development Director.

At last month’s MRTC Monthly Meeting, Sheri Bean of MRPC recommended an update to the Ashburnham Rail Trail Vision Plan.

While at the MRTC Meeting, RM spoke with Dick O’Brien, Chair of MARTAB. Dick recommended a feasibility study to assess a connection to the North Central Pathway in Winchendon increasing the likelihood that the Ashburnham Rail Trail would receive DOT funding. The path would use the Cheshire Line and then may turn onto Old County Rd. towards Winchendon at Teel Rd. Alternatively it could continue straight on the Cheshire line connecting with the North Central Pathway at North Asburnham Road.

A MassTrails grant is a reimburseable matching grant. The Town needs to contribute a minimum of 20% in matching funds but preferably on the higher end to make us more competitive. The feasibility study would cost $25,000-30,000, estimated from Weston and Sampson. The BoS has agreed to go forward. But the Town cannot apply for the grant until Pan AM gives permission to access the property. The MassTrails grant is due Feb 1. Heather R. has gotten all the abutter info already. If the grant is awarded, the $15,000 Town match would come from the AEDC, so it does not need to go to Town Meeting.

3. Review old rail trail records, photos, etc. and discuss what to save, and how.

CS has 4 boxes of materials, including gold-painted rail pins, photos, and books of historical info.

We will sort these materials at the next (March) meeting.

Next meeting **March 7, 2019**