**TOWN OF GROTON**

173 Main Street

Groton, MA 01450

**Community Preservation Committee**

Bruce Easom, Chair – Conservation Comm.

Carolyn Perkins – at large

Russell Burke – Planning Board

Robert DeGroot – Historical Comm.

Daniel Emerson – Housing Auth.

Anna Eliot – Parks Comm.

Richard Hewitt – at large



**MEETING MINUTES**

Date: Monday, December 12th, 2022

Time: 7:00 PM

Location: Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Members Present: Bruce H. Easom, Carolyn Perkins, Russell Burke, Robert DeGroot, Daniel Emerson and Anna Eliot

Member(s) Absent: Richard Hewitt

Others Present: Peter Cunningham, Patricia DuFresne, Hannah Moller

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chairperson Carolyn Perkins at 7:03 PM.

**MEET WITH PETER CUNNINGHAM TO CONTINUE DISCUSSION OF NEXT STEPS / OTHER OPTIONS AVAILABLE FOR CPA PROJECT # 2024-09 SQUANNACOOK RIVER RAIL TRAIL**

CPA applicant for CPA Project # 2024-09 Squannacook River Rail Trail (SRRT) Peter Cunningham was present. Bruce Easom was not present for this discussion as he is also a member of the Rail Trail Committee.

Mr. Cunningham provided the following memo as part of his presentation for this CPA proposal:

*As you are aware, the SRRT has previously been vetted by this committee and is the subject of CPA project number 2022-06 which is phase 3 of this trail which will link the communities of Townsend and Groton. This section goes from the Bertozzi Wildlife Management Area in West Groton to the northern Crosswinds Drive crossing of the old Greenville Branch RR right of way. The current application is for phase 4 of the SRRT which will go from the northern Crosswinds Drive crossing to the Groton/Townsend town line. The SRRT was also the subject of CPA project number 2007-11, SRRT Environmental Engineering Assessment.*

*I believe the following considerations make this application appropriate for out of cycle consideration:*

*1. CPA funding is essential as the local share of a larger MassTrail grant application which is being applied for by Squannacook Greenways. We have been successful recipients of previous MassTrail grants which have enabled two previous sections of the SRRT to be constructed in Townsend as well as phase 3 of the SRRT which is CPA project number 2022-06.*

*2. If this project is not considered for an out of cycle application this year, the completion of the SRRT, phase 4, will be deferred for at least two years creating a condition where there is an unfinished gap in a trail that is otherwise completed. This gap is comprised of an old RR bed with the deteriorated ties still in place and a surface that is uneven and unsafe to navigate in places. Erosion has occurred in some places and needs to be remediated. While residents may still access the old RR right of way, it is unsafe for those riding bikes who have started from the Bertozzi WMA and have reached the end of the completed phase 3.*

*3. The completed sections of the SRRT have been enthusiastically embraced by trail users and the previous CPA projects strongly supported by townspeople. Since the inception of the SRRT back in 2005, many have waited for the day when construction would finally commence. That time has arrived with the construction of the first 3 phases of the SRRT. Deferring completion of the trail for almost two years would be a disservice to townspeople and contrary to the goals expressed in Groton’s Master Plan as well as the Open Space & Recreation Plan. It would also burden the completion of the trail with increased costs due to inflation in the construction industry.*

Brief discussion ensued. Daniel Emerson and Russell Burke agreed that a time gap with this project would cause some potential issues.

**Russell Burke moved that CPA Project # 2024-09 Squannacook River Rail Trail be allowed to proceed forward as an Out of Cycle application citing the circumstances set forth by the CPA applicant regarding essential loss of matching funds and how a delay would result in two isolated segments of the trail being unconnected.**

**Daniel Emerson seconded and the motion carried by majority vote with Carolyn Perkins, Russell Burke and Daniel Emerson voting for and Anna Eliot voting nay.**

**MEET WITH TOWN TREASURER TO DISCUSS BONDING OPTIONS FOR CPA PROJECT # 2022-14 GROTON DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT MIDDLE SCHOOL TRACK CONSTRUCTION**

CPC member Robert DeGroot joined the meeting at 7:17PM.

Hannah Moller, Town Treasurer and Patricia DuFresne, Town Accountant were present.

Ms. Moller presented a few different scenarios of borrowing options for the $1 million bond for CPA Project # 2022-14 Groton Dunstable Regional School District Middle School Track Construction.

Discussion ensued regarding potential interest rates and which direction that would be moving in in the near future. Based on the current economic climate it is uncertain whether rates will decrease anytime soon.

CPC Chair Bruce Easom joined the meeting at 7:26PM.

Ultimately what needs to be determined is the amount of funds that need to be borrowed, whether we want to combine and permanently borrow the specified amount this fiscal year and if we do choose to permanently borrow this amount, what payment terms and length of time should be considered for the amount borrowed.

CPC members agreed if doable paying down a large portion of the principal balance would be preferred over applying payments to any interest rate payments.

Mr. Easom will forward a few different payment scenarios to the members and they will meet again next week to discuss which payment plan should be recommended to the Town Treasurer.

**REVIEW CPC BUDGET**

Bruce Easom informed members that the Coalition Steering Committee is meeting tomorrow and may have state level updates available.

**REVIEW PROJECT UPDATES IF ANY**

**PROJECT UPDATES – 2021-10 WWI CANNON RESTORATION**

This project is close to completion. The cannon has been placed in front of Legion Hall.

**PROJECT UPDATES – 2022-02 FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR COW POND FIELDS; WOITOWICZ FIELD; CUTLER FIELD**

A report was provided showing the most recent updates (PDF attached). The Park Commission will be discussing potential next steps at their meeting tomorrow.

**PROJECT UPDATES – 2022-04 AFFORDABLE HOUSING SITE ASSESSMENT STUDY**

Trust members are currently focused on identifying the correct procurements to do for additional site work at Fieldstone Drive and possibly Hoyts Wharf too. This topic is on the agenda for the Trust’s upcoming meeting on Wednesday the 14th.

**PROJECT UPDATES – 2023-04 NASHUA RIVERWALK**

Carolyn Perkins informed members that they were in the process of selecting a contractor for the project and also that they were still waiting to hear back from the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

**PROJECT UPDATES – 2023-05 PRESCOTT ELEVATOR DESIGN AND ENGINEERING**

Bruce Easom informed members that they are being awarded the $250K grant, contingent upon submitting all of the required paperwork. They will be meeting with the architect and Town Manager to focus on next steps including getting the bid data out as soon as possible.

**NEW / OLD BUSINESS**

**CPC INVOICES**

Committee members reviewed the following invoice(s):

1. **Anna Eliot moved to approve the invoice from the Groton Electric Light Department for Duck Pond Restoration & Preservation, Phase 2 (CPA Project # 2022-07) in the amount of $333.99 with an Invoice Date of 11/30/2022. Russell Burke seconded and the motion carried by unanimous vote.**

**MEETING MINUTES**

Committee members reviewed minutes from October 24th, 2022.

**Anna Eliot moved to approve the meeting minutes from Monday, October 24th, 2022.** **Bruce Easom seconded and the motion carried by unanimous vote.**

**Bruce Easom moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 PM. Daniel Emerson seconded and the motion carried by unanimous vote.**

Respectfully submitted by Sammie Kul, Inter-Departmental Assistant

**APPROVED: JANUARY 9, 2023**