



**TOWN OF
GROTON**
173 Main Street
Groton, MA 01450

Community Preservation Committee
Anna Eliot, Chair – Parks Commission
Aubrey Theall Vice Chair – Historical Commission
Bruce Easom, Treasurer/Clerk – Conservation Comm.
George Barringer– Planning Board
Daniel Emerson – Housing Auth.
Carolyn Perkins – at large
Richard Hewitt – at large

MEETING MINUTES

Date: Monday, February 3, 2025
Time: 7:00 PM
Location: 1st Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall 173 Main Street
Members Present: Dan Emerson, Anna Eliot, Richard Hewitt, Aubrey Theall, Bruce Easom, George Barringer
Members Absent: Carolyn Perkins
Others Present: Micaela Moore, Rob Foley, Jon Strauss, Tricia Upton, Megan Buczynski, Joshua Pollock, Fran Stanley, Richard Chilcoat, Stephen Woodin,

The meeting was called to order by chair, Anna Eliot, at 7:00 PM.

Planning Board Representative Discussion- New administrator Micaela Moore was introduced. New Board Member George Barringer introduced.

Presentation on Proposal 2026-05 Accessibility, Renovation and Restoration Improvements at Cow Pond Brook Fields by Megan Buczynski, Activitas, Principal Civil Engineer- Highlights- The overview of Cow Pond Park was discussed. It was emphasized that this is not a blank-slate project; there are many obstacles to consider, such as wetlands, vernal pools, riverfront areas, and conservation land, all of which had to be accounted for in the design. With the designs not yet solidified, what will be finalized will depend on the budget and what the public wants for the park. The plan has been scaled back from the initial proposal to focus more on the design aspect of the project. A survey of what people really want would allow the designs to better align with the town's needs. The goal is to present a plan at the fall town meeting that is ready to be bid out. Ms. Buczynski mentioned the \$1 million grant from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, noting that the town would know if the grant is state-approved by late spring or early summer; the grant would then go to the National Park Service for final approval. The importance of parking was also discussed, with heavy emphasis on safety, accessibility, and conservation reasons for its inclusion.

REVIEW OF FY26 COMPLETE DRAFTS

2026-01 West Groton Rail Trail- Jon Strauss shared a PowerPoint on the project. The plan is to go from Cutler down to the river. Essentially, this project is working in conjunction with the Squannacook Greenways project, which has already started. Some of the funding will be used for initial environmental evaluations and engineering assessments. Gaining control of the site is one of the initial steps that will need to be taken, as some of the land is owned by the MBTA. The project is planned to be carried out in phases. The Ayer CPC is being met with to discuss the connection. They are gathering more information before the next meeting about the cost of the project.

2026-02 Conservation Fund 2026- Bruce Easom shared that this application is very similar to those that have been submitted to the CPC in the past. The funds are intended to continue land acquisition and land preservation activities in town. The requested amount of \$400,000 was proposed before the knowledge of

the CPC being oversubscribed. Mr. Easom stated that the Conservation Committee could manage lowering their request.

2026-03 Fiscal Year 2026 Housing Funds Request- Town Housing Coordinator, Fran Stanley, acknowledged that the \$400,000 request is more than what is available in the housing bucket. It was noted that this application differs from previous years, with the major difference being the grant agreement between the Affordable Housing Trust (AHT) and the CPC. The terms of the grant are proposed by the state. Two members of the AHT visited Medway to see their project, which is being used as inspiration for a possible Groton project. The Medway project used federal and state tax credits along with other grants to fund their project, and this would be the model a Groton project aims to follow. Local funds are needed upfront to attract and maintain a competitive tax credit project. The AHT is looking to ensure that most of the funding does not come from Groton. Anna Eliot asked Bruce Easom for the amount in the housing bucket, and the announced figure was \$286,274.67, which is the forecasted amount for FY26. Mrs. Stanley stated that Groton is not aiming for the same scale as Medway. While Medway raised more money for a larger project, Groton would be looking at a smaller scale, with 50 to 60 units being considered as a possible size. Ms. Eliot asked whether the AHT is supporting the waterline on Cow Pond Road, as it could potentially bring water to another lot that might be used for housing. Ms. Stanley indicated that using the mentioned lot might make the waterline too expensive, and a well might be a better option.

2026-05 Accessibility, Renovation and Restoration Improvements at Cow Pond Brook Fields- Anna Eliot brought up to the board that Mark Haddad had sent an email stating his intent to lower the asking cost for this project from \$4.8 million to \$250,000 and phase the project. Megan Buczynski went over what would be included in this phase. Aubrey Theall asked for confirmation that this new phase would take the youth sports leagues' wants and needs into consideration. Ms. Buczynski stated that gathering their feedback was part of the new plan. Richard Hewitt expressed concern that the project has progressed this far without more involvement from the leagues. Anna Eliot stated that the Parks Commission had voted to support this project as a second priority, with the town field being the number one priority. Ms. Eliot would like Activitas to look at the entire 64 acres.

2026-06 Housing Coordinator FY26- Comments were made that it is a recurring expense, and multiple board members agreed that it is money well spent.

2026-09 Bancroft Castle Preservation Work Phase 2- Aubrey Theall informed the board that the project is to repair and preserve the castle. Last year's funding went toward hiring engineers who are developing the plan for the work. Two phases were determined: one addressing immediate safety concerns and repairs, and the second focusing on high-return investment projects. The engineers are working on finding ways to reduce the budget. The state is also involved with the historic preservation aspect of the project. The Webber family is contributing 10% of the project cost. Anna Eliot shared her concern with the board, seeking reassurance that the castle will remain accessible to the public and that the Webber family will maintain the work after the project is completed. Mr. Theall stated he will investigate these concerns. Richard Hewitt requested a more detailed plan and timeline.

2026-10 Prescott Community Center- Tricia Upton spoke about the scope of work they are requesting funding for. The project includes work around the front doors, restoring failing wall systems, painting, installing a new drop ceiling in room 105, and adding period-appropriate light fixtures. To respect budgetary restrictions, they have discussed removing some items from the original proposal. The goal of the project is to restore the building to its best condition. Richard Hewitt asked whether the work would meet historical standards. Ms. Upton explained that the work would be functional but would aim to be a historically accurate representation. George Barringer raised concerns about the light temperature and the idea of lowering it to make it more historically accurate. Dan Emerson suggested lowering the asking price as much as possible. Anna Eliot asked the board if they wanted the firm that did the Prescott assessment to come in. The board agreed that they would like to hear the assessment.

2026-11 GDYBL Cow Pond Baseball Improvements- Joshua Pollock mentioned that this proposal was created before the Cow Pond Field project was presented. Mr. Pollock stated that the Baseball League supports the larger project. Anna Eliot noted that this project is being given third priority following a Parks Department vote. Aubrey Theall expressed support for integrating this project more closely with the Cow Pond Field project. Richard Hewitt pointed out that acting on this proposal is difficult since it is presented

in two separate proposals for review at the same time. Mr. Pollock clarified that the League does not wish to withdraw this proposal in case the Cow Pond Field proposal is not approved. Daniel Emerson noted that this is a contingency. Mr. Pollock acknowledged the need to lower costs and stated that it will be considered.

2026-12 Town Field Improvements- Anna Eliot informed the board that this was voted as the priority by the Parks Commission. The proposal will need to exclude some of the currently proposed expenditures. Richard Hewitt asked about lighting and whether it was a priority. Mr. Pollock explained that while they would like lighting, it is not a necessity, as only two teams play on that field. Ms. Eliot informed Mr. Pollock that the library has expressed dissatisfaction with all the baseball cars taking up the entire library parking lot, and there is a need to inform players' parents to park near the rail trail.

2026-15 Provide Curatorial Storage-Richard Chilcoat went over the goals of the project. Two interns would be used to help with bringing items down from the attic, archiving, and cataloging. Work would then be done to stabilize the walls, and vents would be installed. Some of the costs could be lowered by ten to fifteen percent. George Barringer raised concerns about the items being stored in a storage pod. Mr. Chilcoat explained that the items have been exposed to heat for so long that the time spent in storage will not cause further damage.

2026-18 FY26 Williams Barn Renovations- Stephen Woodin went over all the repairs needed for the barn. Aubrey Theall asked about the water issues and whether this proposal would fix those problems to prevent them from happening again. Mr. Woodin confirmed that those issues are addressed in the proposal. Anna Eliot suggested that a structural engineer should be brought in to ensure the work is being done in the best possible way. She also emphasized that the building is very important due to its use by the community. Aubrey Theall offered to connect Mr. Woodin with a structural engineer. Richard Hewitt suggested that the urgency of the project should be more clearly emphasized in the application.

CONTINUED PROJECT UPDATES

2025-01 Conservation Fund FY25 (BRUCE EASOM)- No Updates.

2025-02 Cow Pond Play Fields (ANNA ELIOT) – No Updates.

2025-03 Milestone Markers Restoration (AUBREY THEALL) - No Updates.

2025-04 Sustainable Groton Funding (CAROLYN PERKINS) – No Updates.

2025-05 Prescott School Building Assessment (RICHARD HEWITT)- No Updates.

2025-07 Squannacook River Rail Trail Phase II Permitting (BRUCE EASOM)- No Updates.

2025-08 Bancroft Castle Preservation Study (AUBREY THEALL) – No Updates.

2025-09 Property Security, Safety, and Preservation (CAROLYN PERKINS) –

2025-10 Housing Fund Request FY25 (DAN EMERSON)- No Updates.

2025-11 Housing Coordinator FY25 (CAROLYN PERKINS) – No Updates.

2025-12 Tools and Equipment for Building and Enhancing Trails (George Barringer) – No Updates.

2024-04 Rebuild Major League Baseball Diamond (ANNA ELIOT) – No Updates.

2024-05 Construct 2 Softball Diamonds at Cutler (ANNA ELIOT) – No Updates.

2019-08 Duck Pond Restoration (RICHARD HEWITT) – No Updates.

2022-04 Affordable Housing Site Assessment Study (DANIEL EMERSON) – No Updates.

2022-09 Groton Dunstable Natural Field Restoration Plan (BRUCE EASOM)- No Updates.

2023-04 Nashua Riverwalk (CAROLYN PERKINS) – No Updates.

NEW/OLD BUSINESS

- **Budget Discussion-** The committee reviewed the budget and the proposed projects. Discussions were held regarding the size of the deficit with all the projects. The costs were compared to what is in each bucket, but it was ultimately concluded that, without final proposals, the numbers are not accurate enough to make decisions.
 - **Sign Invoices/ Project letters-** The present committee members signed invoices only, no project letters.
 - **Next public meeting** will be February 10th 2025, in the 1st Floor Meeting Room of Town Hall.
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Richard Hewitt moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:09PM. Daniel Easom seconded, and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted by Micaela Moore, Inter-Departmental Assistant

Approved: _____ February 24th 2025 _____