



## ARTICLE 19: FUNDING TO DESIGN THE REPLACEMENT OF FITCH'S BRIDGE

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow a sum or sums of money for all professional design services, including surveying, engineering and permitting, related to the construction of a new pedestrian, equestrian and bicycle (non-vehicular) bridge over the Nashua River at the location of the current Fitch's Bridge that will connect Fitch's Bridge Road and Pepperell Road, or to take any other action relative thereto.

September 18, 2012

From: Groton Greenway Committee

Re: Request for Letter of Support for a new Fitch's Bridge

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On October 15, 2012 an article will come before the Groton Town Meeting which represents the first of two warrants necessary to commit the Town to construction of a new bridge. An attractive, pre-fabricated bridge, in a style that honors the style of the old bridge can be constructed for a total cost of \$650,000 to \$850,000, including removal of the old bridge. At October Town Meeting, the bridge project can proceed if two-thirds of residents vote to spend approximately \$100,000 on the engineering and design for the new bridge. That same two-third level of support will be needed at January's Special Town Meeting when the bulk of the bridge spending is due to be proposed.

The Groton Greenway Committee is requesting your help in the form of a **letter of support** for this initiative, resulting in a replacement project to remove the old deteriorated Fitch's Bridge and replace it with a new, safe, esthetically pleasing bridge.

### **Where is Fitch's Bridge?**

Fitch's Bridge spans the Nashua River and can be reached by heading west on Rt. 119 and taking a left turn onto Fitch's Bridge Road (just before the Rt. 119 bridge). Fitch's Bridge is at the end of the road, barricaded and closed to travel of any kind. It is an unsafe structure, presenting an ongoing town liability and responsibility.

### **A Vision**

A vision for Fitch's Bridge is that it again will become a valued benefit to our Groton community by offering an esthetically pleasing passage over the Nashua River for pedestrians, equestrians and cyclists, connecting trails and providing an emergency water interconnection for the town. The new bridge fulfills one of the goals set forth in the Groton Master Plan.

### **Funding for the Project**

Local funding is required. (It has been determined that there is no available non-local funding.)

If the Town can borrow for the bridge at the same time as the issue for the fire station, the likely effect of the bridge project on the tax bill would be in the range of \$15 per year for a house valued at \$400,000.

### **Why Now?**

Construction costs are relatively low in this current recessionary environment. Pressing issues surrounding the bridge are timely:

1. Ongoing trespassing by youth presents a potentially hazardous situation and liability for the town.
2. Lead paint on the bridge presents a potential problem for contaminating the river and affecting fish.
3. The bridge continues to deteriorate, and the dangers inherent in its weakened condition increase as time goes on.

Your support of this initiative is very important. Essential in fact because Fitch's Bridge cannot be replaced without robust support from residents and boards and user groups who appreciate the value of undertaking this project.

Please send your letter of support to the Groton Board of Selectmen, Attn: Patrice Garvin at [pgarvin@townofgroton.org](mailto:pgarvin@townofgroton.org) with a copy to The Groton Greenway Committee: [fstanley@mail@yahoo.com](mailto:fstanley@mail@yahoo.com) .

Thank you. Your support is deeply appreciated.