

Groton Greenway Committee

October 21, 2010 Meeting Minutes

Location: Nashua River Watershed Association, 592 Main Street, Groton, MA
Time: 7:00 PM
Note taker: Fran Stanley
Members Present: Stacey Chilcoat, David Manugian, David Pitkin, Fran Stanley, Marion Stoddart
Members Absent: Bill Gavazzi
Other Attendees: Peter Carson (Nashoba Paddlers), Bruce Easom (Conservation Commission), David Tully (Dunstable Rural Land Trust), Al Futterman (Nashua River Watershed Association), Carol Coutrier, Kara Sanford (Americorps employee at the Nashua River Watershed Association)

Agenda distributed.

NRWA Americorps Employee

Al Futterman introduced the idea of having Kara Sanford, its new Americorps employee, focus her efforts on a forest legacy program. The forest legacy program is a federal grant program with a minimum threshold 1,500 acres available through the Forest Service. The state must be eligible and each year the federal government awards \$70-\$80 million on a 75/25 split with the federal government contributing the 75% and the localities to contribute the 25%. A locality's contribution is counted either as cash or the assessed value of a conservation restriction on land already publicly owned.

Al suggested that this program may interest the Groton Greenway Committee because there may be woodland parcels bordering the Nashua and/or the Squannacook rivers that might be included in the NRWA's forest legacy application. Only a portion of Groton is within the area identified as a "forest legacy area".

Al Futterman explained that his familiarity with the program arose from the Southern Monadnock Plateau forest legacy plan that was submitted previously. In that case, much forest land worth upwards of \$2.5 million was preserved through aggregations of certain qualifying parcels and progressive acquisitions of lead partners.

Kara Sanford introduced herself to the group. She has been a volunteer in the Lancaster area and is interested in land preservation. Her efforts to identify qualifying parcels might be termed bio mapping. Both Kara and Al noted that target parcels would not be set aside to revert to the wild as the Forest Service is funding a forest stewardship program. Therefore, the land protected must be harvested for wood. Due to expensive federal appraisal standards which can cost \$20 -- \$30,000 to appraise to so-called yellow book standards, the minimum practical size for a forest parcel will be 40 to 50 acres. When planning for the grant application, the NRWA and other lead partners will try to negotiate full public access. For conservation restrictions, it is typical for the landowner to be designated to receive the value of all timber harvests.

Nashua River Festival

Peter Carson led a discussion about Groton's past river festivals as the group explored whether to work to help put on a festival for 2011. One year more than one thousand people attended. In past years, the festival relied on donations from the audience and unpaid contributions from local artists. Admission was always free to the public. Charges for food were minimal (about \$2) and the proceeds went to the Boy Scouts. The river festival would be held in June and the location would be Petapawag.

A 2011 river festival would need to have funds on hand to pay the cost of police details and portable toilets. The budget for the 2003 river festival was \$4,000, half of which was provided by the Groton Trust Funds. Peter Carson volunteered the free use of Nashoba Paddlers' canoes for the event.

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Marion Stoddart noted that working on the river festival would meet goals number 2 and 3 of the Groton Greenway Committee's stated goals. As the discussion evolved, it was clear that some committee members have other demands on their time and the Groton Greenway Committee would not have enough committee person power to take on large responsibility for the event. Some individual committee members may have the time, talents and energy to devote to the event.

As a next step, a list will be distributed to at least 15 people in an attempt to gauge the level of support for the event. The list will be comprised of recommended tasks that would be necessary to ensure a reasonably organized event. Either Fran Stanley or Marion Stoddart will distribute the list.

Completing the Vision

Stacey Chilcoat provided the group with the welcome news that she and Luke Moisson have completed the digitized version of the film Completing the Vision. Stacey shared a copy of the file burned to a DVD with David Pitkin. David will make a copy of the file as a step toward further broadening access to this work.

[Stacey Chilcoat left the meeting at this point.]

Minutes

September 2, 2010 draft minutes were reviewed. David Manugian moved to accept the minutes as received. David Pitkin seconded that motion. The remaining committee members in attendance voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

No minutes were produced for the proposed September 20, 2010 meeting as there was no quorum.

Reports on Warrant Articles 25 and 26

Bruce Easom of the Groton Conservation Committee and also the Groton Trails Committee reported to the group about proposed Warrant Articles number 25 and 26. The group was surprised to learn that approval of Article 25 would allow for public access from the Town Forest all the way up to the West Groton side of Fitches Bridge. Bruce offered to distribute a public copy of the Land Court Appeals brief that was filed on behalf of the town of Groton. Bruce Easom also discussed proposed Warrant Article 26 and its relevance to the resolution of the continuing dispute over the Jenkins Road access issue.

Discussion ensued regarding appropriate wording to represent the Groton Greenway Committee's position on these two warrant articles. Fran Stanley moved that the Groton Greenway Committee support the following two statements to be shared at Town Meeting by David Manugian. Marion Stoddart seconded and the remaining committee members in attendance voted unanimously to approve the motion. The approved statements are as follows:

- The Groton Greenway Committee supports Article 25 because it directly connects Town Forest with Fitch's Bridge via the old railroad bed and the Groton Greenway Committee supports public access along the greenway to promote the enjoyment of this natural river resource.
- The Groton Greenway Committee supports Article 26 because this limited survey may produce helpful information to help resolve the Jenkins Road access issue.

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DeCilio Report

Peter Carson of Nashoba Paddlers stated that Nashoba Paddlers appeared before the Planning Board, but the Planning Board members were not supportive of a half (½) acre split off of the main 2.9 acre Groton Nursery business parcel.

Possible New Member

Carol Coutrier introduced herself to the group. Carol is a business person who has a long term interest in silviculture. She also has a variety of marketing skills and an interest in the objectives of the Groton Greenway Committee. The committee members were pleased to meet a person whose interests and skills may prove particularly beneficial to the work of the Groton Greenway Committee.

Fran Stanley moved that the Groton Greenway Committee recommend that the Selectmen appoint Carol Coutrier as an additional member of the Groton Greenway Committee. David Pitkin seconded this motion and all remaining committee members in attendance voted unanimously to approve the motion. Members of the Groton Greenway Committee asked Marion Stoddart to send a letter in support of Carol Coutrier's volunteer appointment to the Groton Greenway Committee.

Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
Sent letter to Selectmen in support of Carol Coutrier's appointment to the Groton Greenway Committee	Marion Stoddart	n/a

Next Meetings:

Tuesday, November 16, 2010 6:45 p.m. at Groton Country Club, 94 Lovers Lane, Groton

Monday, November 22, 2010 7 p.m. at Nashua River Watershed Assoc., 592 Main Street, Groton