

# Groton Greenway Committee

March 14, 2011 Meeting Minutes

Location: Nashua River Watershed Association, 592 Main Street, Groton, MA  
Time: 7:00 PM  
Note taker: Fran Stanley  
Members Present: Stacey Chilcoat, Carol Coutrier, David Manugian, Fran Stanley, Marion Stoddart  
Members Absent: Bill Gavazzi, David Pitkin

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## Meetings/Minutes

November 22, 2010 draft minutes were not reviewed.

Our committee lacked a quorum for the meeting that was called for January 10, 2011 at Town Hall to attend the Selectmen's meeting.

Our committee did not meet as planned at the Selectmen's meeting on February 7, 2011 at Town Hall due to a deficiency with the advance posting of that proposed gathering. Regardless, our committee may have failed to meet the quorum requirements for the February 7, 2011 meeting.

## Friends of Fitch's Bridge Subcommittee

Led by David Manugian's report of his subcommittee's progress, the members explored many options for either replacing or restoring Fitch's Bridge. Friends of Fitch's Bridge [FFB] focused on restoration of Fitch's Bridge for use by pedestrians, bicyclists and equestrians. The FFB found that federal funds may theoretically exist as transportation enhancements through the federal Department of Transportation. In practice; however, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts ranks last among the fifty states in obtaining delivery of these monies due both to the Commonwealth's design of its transportation administration and the Commonwealth's great emphasis placed on automobile and truck travel. For example, the state highway comments on the FBB proposal were largely drafted with automobile traffic in mind despite the fact that Fitch's Bridge was never designed or intended to permit motorized traffic. Furthermore, due to the delayed maintenance of the region's highways and bridges, the competition for Transportation Enhancement funding is strong. Therefore, it is unlikely that the Montachusets Metropolitan Planning Organization would ever rank the instant project high enough to win Fitch's Bridge federal funding.

FFB efforts also found that costs for either restoring or replacing Fitch's Bridge were much higher than initially projected and varied tremendously based on funding sources (see Friends of Fitch's Bridge fact sheet). Costs of note include:

- the possible \$1 million price for abating lead paint over the river,
- \$500,000 for bridge removal,
- \$250,000 for a 120 foot concrete prefabricated bridge (ConTech) without installation costs or restoration of the approaches and the granite and fieldstone abutments, and
- \$80,000 to \$100,000 design costs needed if bridge is restored for an estimated \$1.9 million using Transportation Enhancement funds.

Marion Stoddart supports inclusion of the restoration of Fitch's Bridge in the town's updated Comprehensive Master Plan. Carol Coutrier offered that the existing hazard of the leaded bridge extending over the Nashua River might be a lever for drawing funding to the project.

Fran moved that the Groton Greenway Committee support the Friends of Fitch's Bridge plan to return remaining unspent grant monies to the Community Preservation Committee. Stacey Chilcoat seconded the motion and all voted in favor of the motion.

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David Manugian, perhaps with Fran Stanley's assistance, will draft a letter to the Selectmen about the expensive options and intended future planning. David recommended that it be noted that enough funds would need to be assembled to make the project feasible, i.e., the committee and/or Town should not plan for only 'best case', lowest cost scenarios so that project will not founder if the scope of the project turns out to be larger than an optimistic projection might promise.

[David Manugian left the meeting at this point.]

## Membership of the Groton Greenway Committee

David Manugian shared his intention to withdraw from the Groton Greenway Committee at the end of his term. Committee members thanked David for his years of service to the committee and particularly his leadership on the Fitch's Bridge project.

Bill Gavazzi has not attended any committee meeting since his annual reappointment to the committee in 2010.

While the committee is open to welcoming new members who would like to work on greenway issues, members present discussed whether the committee would be permitted to drop its membership total to five members, operating with a three person quorum. Marion Stoddart volunteered to contact town manager Mark Haddad to ask if lowering the membership in this way would be allowed.

## Greenway Priority Properties

### DeCilio Property

Nashoba Paddlers may close on its purchase of a portion of DeCilio's property for its business toward the end of April, 2011.

## Forest Stewardship Update

The Nashua River Watershed Association [NRWA] plans to postpone its grant application for a year. Two Groton parcels that might qualify for forest legacy protection have been identified. This year the NRWA will support the Princeton and Westminster forest legacy land with the Quabbin/Wachusset forest legacy program.

## Jenkins Road Report

The Selectmen decided not to pursue summary judgment motion to recognize public's right to pass along Jenkins Road to Fitch's Bridge.

Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
Draft letter to the Selectmen	David Manugian with Fran Stanley	n/a
Ask Town Manager about Committee size	Marion Stoddart	n/a

## Next Meetings

The committee will continue to meet on the second Monday of each month. Traditionally, the committee has not met during July and August.