

Groton Greenway Committee

November 16, 2011 Meeting Minutes

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

David Pitkin moved to accept September 7, 2011 minutes, Carol Coutrier seconded, motion carried 4:0.

Partridgeberry Woods (Taisey property)

David Pitkin will ask the Conservation Commission to pursue an enforcement action at this property since littering along the riverbanks is a violation of the existing conservation restriction.

Forestry cutting plans

The Town Forest plan was restricted in some areas as the state deemed the initial plan a take for several endangered species that were within 450 feet of breeding wetlands. The Farmers and Mechanics property timber harvesting has not yet started.

Squannacook land acquisition

Regarding the Vernon Smith property, Ann Gagnon representing Fish and Wildlife may ask the family if they are interested in selling, perhaps using Fran Dillon's name as a part of the introductions.

Nashoba Paddlers update on Nashua River Festival

Peter Carson of Nashoba Paddlers was granted \$1,000 from the Groton Commissioners of Trust Funds to help fund the 2012 Nashua River Festival. The goal is to find a June, 2012 date for the event, volunteers, business sponsors and raise about \$3,000 for expenses. Peter edited and has posted a video clip of the cardboard boat races – a traditional main element of this festival.

Nod Road former dump: protecting grassland habitat for birds

Group discussed possibility of asking the Conservation Commission to manage the property as a grassland habitat for birds. This would be an involvement short of deeded ownership. David Pitkin noted that it may cost as much as \$10,000 to brush hog the meadow. If meadow received periodic attention afterwards, then the cost to mow may drop considerably.

The Conservation Commission would look at when to do the cutting, i.e., least harmful season to cut as well as to evaluate where the parcel may be on the Conservation Commission long list of priorities. Perhaps this group might take the affirmative act of drafting the maintenance plan for Nod Road. The plan could solicit Fish and Wildlife input and having the plan would make it easier for the Conservation Commission to accept the additional responsibility of Nod Road management.

Fitch's Bridge Replacement

David Manugian reported on a promising development with respect to re-establishing a useful crossing at Fitch's Bridge for pedestrians, equestrians and bicyclists. David spoke with a bridge contractor from Canton, MA who would source a concrete prefabricated bridge (perhaps like Kontec out of Maine) to replace the existing steel truss bridge across the Nashua River. The total cost may be under \$600,000 which puts the project in play since residents could vote to spend CPA funds on the project if they wanted to replace Fitch's Bridge. The prior plans to rehabilitate the existing Fitch's Bridge may have cost well over a million dollars and, with no funds likely except local funds that million plus figure was not affordable.

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David Manugian will speak with Russell Wilkins to inform him of the latest possible plans for Fitch's Bridge. If Mr. Wilkins would agree to the use of his land for some of the contractor activities, it might help keep the costs down. However, it appears possible to do the entire project within the existing right of way.

David will attempt to secure two written estimates to replace the bridge along with photos of what the replacement bridge may look like. Perhaps Ray Ciemny could replicate the steel rosettes that decorated the old bridge?

David Manugian outlined the following estimated costs for replacing Fitch's Bridge.

Permitting/ Engineering. \$80,000

Hire engineers to analyze and repair the existing abutments; provide guidelines for the safe removal of the existing bridge; permit the project through agencies including but not limited to the Groton Conservation Commission (work over river), MassDOT (bridge work), and Army Corps of Engineers (stream crossing).

Staging Area. \$10,000

Work with abutting land owner for a temporary area to take down and cut up the old bridge.

Bridge Removal. \$40,000

Hire a crane to lift off the old bridge and cut it up in the staging area.

Repair Abutments. \$100,000

Repair the existing stone abutments so they can accommodate the new bridge.

New Bridge. \$85,000

Furnish and deliver new precast concrete bridge.

Erect New Bridge. \$30,000

Lift the new bridge into place and secure to abutments.

Site Work. \$100,000

Work to the ground around the bridge to improve approaches, slopes by river, etc.

Subtotal = \$445,000

Plus \$135,000 (30% contingency)

Total \$580,000

David Pitkin moved that the Groton Greenway Committee draft a letter to the Board of Selectmen requesting time on the Board of Selectmen's agenda to report on a replacement bridge for Fitch's Bridge after notification of local landowner Russell Wilkins. Marion seconded the motion. Motion carried 4:0.

The Greenway Committee appreciates David Manugian's continued involvement with the Fitch's Bridge project.

Next meeting scheduled for Monday, December 12, 2011 at 7 p.m. at the Nashua River Watershed Association.