

**Groton Greenway Committee**  
Meeting Minutes

Date: December 11, 2012  
Location: Town Hall, 2nd Floor Kitchen, 173 Main Street, Groton, MA  
Time: 7 p.m.  
Members Present: Carol Coutrier, Fran Stanley (arrived late), Marion Stoddart, David Pitkin  
Other Attendees: David Manugian, Paul Funch (Trails), FST representatives including John Hendrickson, Conservation Commission members, Barbara Ganem, Gary Wilkins

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David M. asked for attendees to offer updates as a sort of round the table reports. Marion shared the upcoming planning, finance and parks meetings she and David Pitkin will attend. David Pitkin shared that Bill Neacy had done some door to door outreach to additional neighbors. Paul Funch shared update on trail that has been made on the West side of the Nashua River. David M. shared the current status with Fay, Spofford & Thorndike (FS&T). The public bidding process is proceeding with bids going out as soon as tomorrow (Dec. 12).

David M. met with the Selectmen yesterday at their 5 p.m. meeting (Dec. 10). At that time, he shared the preliminary cost estimate that had been prepared by the contractor (FST). These numbers are more accurate as each envisioned construction task has had its costs estimated. The Selectmen reviewed the report and found some areas for savings by having the Town's DPW pick up a few of the tasks such as reseeding and concrete barricade removal. There may be \$235,000 worth of demolition and stabilization work with another \$300,000 needed to install a replacement bridge for a total of \$535,000. There is a general expectation that a portion of Fitch's Bridge Road will be discontinued from Pepperell Road to a point one hundred feet past Fitch's Bridge.

At this point, a replacement bridge would immediately benefit emergency fire protection on the West Groton side by allowing hose to be rolled across the bridge and then charged with water drawn from hydrants on the East side of the river. The group discussed the fact that this stretch of the Nashua River has banks that are too high and steep to allow firefighters to draft river water to fight a fire.

A little before 7:45 pm, the Greenway members and other attendees moved from the second floor kitchen to the large second floor meeting room. There, representatives of FST appeared before the Conservation Commission at their regularly scheduled meeting to introduce the previously submitted plan. FST prepared the notice of intent filing and its subcontractors did the wetland delineation and other environmental planning necessary to complete the filing. The plunge pool remediation would diminish the flow and velocity of the water runoff and result in a net gain in compensatory flood water storage. FST expects the project to receive a 'no take' designation from the Natural Heritage rare species habitat agency.

The Conservation Commission members asked questions about ownership of the land containing the Pepperell Road runoff where the plunge pool remediation would be done. The landowner will co-sign on the Town's Notice of Intent application this will indicate awareness of the plan and permission for the work to be done. Other questions went to tree cutting. At this point, tree trimming but no full tree removal is planned as this does not seem necessary for the crane's access to the worksite. FST lead engineer stated that in a similar bridge project the crane pulled the new bridge section off the tractor trailer as the tractor trailer pulled away. Then, the crane slowly drove in to position while carrying the new bridge section. This type of unloading and setting procedure minimizes the clearances needed for the crane.

The high water mark is 207.3 feet. The contractor calculated this number based on certain standard rules of thumb when a review of the topographical contour map shows a flood plain elevation ranging between 207 and 2013 feet. The height of the bridge seat is 210 feet.

Contractor research concluded that there was no need for Army Corps of Engineers permitting (no in water work and bridge is higher than the flood plain). Marshall Giguere of the Conservation Commission asked the FST contractor if the bridge as designed can withstand a flood event. This question was

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answered by John Hendrickson with a simple yes. The construction work time is estimated at one to two months, but that the crane work would be much quicker – from several days to a week. There may be a barge or floating platform used to assist workers while stabilizing the stone abutments. There is less than two percent grade over the expanse of the bridge decking and the bridge will be ADA compliant.

Conservation Agent Barbara Ganem asked to receive the remainder of the 'green cards' – U.S.P.S. return receipt cards showing that the abutters to the bridge were properly notified of the hearing. FST representatives handed across some green cards, had previously e-mailed scanned green card copies and will look to make sure that Barbara Ganem receives the full set.

Abutting landowner and Pepperell resident Gary Wilkins attended the meeting and offered his comments. He said that he has driven over the bridge in the past. In his view, the present bridge is sufficiently sturdy and does not need to be replaced. Instead, the Town might save money by replacing the wood decking. In any event, Mr. Wilkins is dubious about the increase traffic on Fitch's Bridge Road as he has farmed in Groton and Pepperell for many years and has experienced destruction of crops, presumably by vandals.

Upcoming meetings are. December 18, 2012 (public meeting about Fitch's Bridge),  
January 26, 2013 (8 a.m. meeting before Town Meeting).

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Minutes by Fran Stanley with help from David Pitkin.