
Groton Greenway Committee
Meeting Minutes

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Date: January 3, 2013
Location: Town Hall, 2nd Floor Kitchen, 173 Main Street, Groton, MA
Time: 7 p.m.
Members Present: Marion Stoddart, David Pitkin (late arrival), Carol Coutrier (late arrival), Adam Burnett, Fran Stanley
Other Attendees: David Manugian, Paul Funch (Trails Committee member)

Adam Burnett moved to accept the December 11, 2012 minutes as drafted. Marion Stoddart seconded. Motion passed 3:0.

Fran Stanley moved to accept the December 12, 2012 minutes as drafted. Adam Burnett seconded. Motion passed 3:0.

Ideally, the Greenway will keep minutes for each of its official meetings (posted and a quorum attends). At the December 18, 2012 public meeting, no notes were taken but the meeting was digitally recorded by Groton's cable access channel. Fran Stanley will contact Brendan Crewe to get a link to the recording of that meeting.

Several meetings are coming up that will relate to Fitch's Bridge and may have a Greenway presence. Fran will post those meetings as the timing permits. On January 7th at 7:30 pm, there is a joint meeting of the finance committee and the selectmen to discuss the Special Town Meeting warrant articles, one of which is the Fitch's Bridge article. [David Pitkin arrives.]

On January 8th, the Conservation Commission will consider the permitting of the bridge project. This is a continuation of the public hearing initiated in December. Some attendance from Greenway members would be polite and possibly helpful to the Conservation Commission.

On January 10th, the bidding concludes so the Town will soon have firm estimates for all potential bridge work.

On January 15th, the Greenway is meeting to make plans for the 2013 river festival.

On January 16th, Marion Stoddart and David Pitkin will join members of the Groton Board of Trade for dinner at the Groton Country Club. The Groton Board of Trade is a private group that works to promote business growth in Groton. The bridge project will be discussed.

On January 20th, the Greenway is cosponsoring a guided hike with the Trails Committee. The Watershed association will publicize this walk to its 2,000 or so e-mail list recipients. [Carol Coutrier arrives.]

David Pitkin reported on his meeting this evening with the Finance Committee. Mark Haddad was also present so financial and bidding questions could be answered by him. Finance Committee member Bob Hargraves questioned whether the access to Fitch's Bridge presented a hazard to bicyclists. David Pitkin explained the difference between bicyclists who ride off road on trails and the more conventional road bikes. Road bikes may have trouble with the off road terrain, but none of the bicyclists involved in the project have found safety concerns with the access to the bridge.

Generally, the Finance Committee expressed its desire that projects like this be funded through CPA funds or private funding. David Pitkin considered that sort of comment to be directed more to the Selectmen or Town Manager so did not explain that CPA funding would have probably resulted in a higher priced project due to the strings attached to the state funding.

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The committee generally discussed its presentation plans for Special Town Meeting. The committee will try to stay on message and not dilute or distract from that message by rushing to address every criticism of the project. Besides the confusion that can result for some residents with this form of debate, there is the matter of respecting townspeople's time by keeping the presentation as short as possible. Paul Funch will try to work on a trail map to provide a better visual for the audience. [Fran Stanley left.]

The group discussed the idea of attempting to form an outside group to do voter outreach for Town Meeting from a note that Marion Stoddart had from Jack Petropoulos. It was considered but with the timing and resources not feasible for a vote at the end of the month.

Second we talked about the fact that David M. was going to do outreach to the bicycling and equestrian and running groups in town.

Lastly we spoke of an effort by David Pitkin to get the town meeting vote records for the last five votes and attempt to find the 150 to 200 people who are consistent meeting voters. We would then split that list up among ourselves. David M. and Marion Stoddart will write a script and the result will be our Committee is calling these voters and asking for their vote (up or down) at town meeting. The Town Clerk is aware of this effort and the outreach will be permissible provided the script follows along with the proposal originally vetted by Town Clerk.

David Pitkin moved to close the meeting at 8:30. Carol Coutrier seconded and motion carried 4:0.

Minutes by Fran Stanley with help from David Pitkin.

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