

Groton Trails Committee

Minutes of Meeting

April 20, 1999

Location: Downstairs, Legion Hall

Members In Attendance:

Bruce Clements, Paul Funch, Wendy Good, Stephen Legge, Edward McNierney, Brad Paul, Stephen Prendergast, David Riggert

Members Absent:

Robert Catlin, Bruce Easom, Douglas Furciniti, Richard Lodge

Guests:

Larry Swezey

1. Ed McNierney called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.
2. Stephen Prendergast moved to accept the minutes of the March 16, 1999 meeting. The motion was seconded by Wendy Good and unanimously approved.
3. Paul Funch made the following motion:
That the attached resolution be approved by The Groton Trails Committee and presented at the Special Town Meeting for school-related articles that will be attached to the April 26, 1999 Annual Town Meeting.
Discussion on the motion noted the following:
 - a) The land has great value for expanding the trails system in the Mayfield Farms-Fitch's Woods-McLain's Wood local area. It was noted that some re-routing of the existing trail on the Walker land would be necessary because of the proposed locations of some playing fields.
 - b) It was questioned whether the resolution was appropriately within the purview of the Trails Committee since the Walker property would not be formally conservation land if it were to be purchased by the school district. It was noted that the School Committee has informally sought the assistance of the Trails Committee in helping to develop the trails system on the Walker property should it be supported as the site for the high school by the district.
 - c) Even if the Walker property was not used as the site for the high school, parts of it could be preserved for trails by actions of the Planning Board if the land was presented to them for development.
 - d) It was questioned whether the political climate was too contentious for the Trails Committee to comment at Town Meeting without appearing to have a hidden agenda.

The motion was rejected by a vote of 2-5-1. In favor: Paul Funch, David Riggert. Opposed: Bruce Clements, Wendy Good, Stephen Legge, Brad Paul, and Stephen Prendergast. Abstaining: Edward McNierney.

4. Brad Paul moved that the Trails Committee support Bruce Clement's citizen petition warrant article at Town Meeting that will seek up to \$25,000 for the Williams Barn on the Mayfield Farms conservation land. The money will be used to apply for matching funds from the State Historical Commission. The \$50,000 will be used to stabilize and reinforce the barn to keep it intact until additional funds are obtained to refurbish it.

Discussion on the motion noted the following:

- a) It has potential value as a nature or trails center.
- b) Concerns were raised that there was no clear end point (goal) for the barn.
- c) The Conservation Commission was not taking an active role in preserving it.
- d) It was too early to know whether its use would be related to the charter of the Trails Committee.

The motion passed 7-1-0. In favor: Bruce Clements, Wendy Good, Stephen Legge, Edward McNierney, Brad Paul, Stephen Prendergast, and David Riggert. Opposed: Paul Funch

5. The following progress reports were presented:
 - a) Ed noted that the computer data for the Assessor's Office is 60 days behind schedule, which translates to delivery at the end of June.
 - b) Ed noted that there had been no news from the Selectmen regarding the Friedrich's land issue.
 - c) Brad contacted Michelle Collette for getting on the mailing list of Planning Board documents, but he said he had not received anything from her to date.
 - d) Paul gratefully acknowledged the volunteer efforts of Bruce Clements, Brad Paul and his entire family, and Steve Prendergast, who helped clear all the trails in McLain's Woods and Fitch's Woods on Saturday, April 10.
 - e) Dave noted that the proposal for restoring Fitch's Bridge will depend upon the amount of money that is available to the granting agency. Funding for either just preliminary design work, for about \$50K, or the full project, an additional \$300K, will be requested.
6. Wendy suggested the idea of having the Highway Department put Trail Crossing signs at some key/dangerous intersections, such as on Route 225 near Groton Woods and at the rail trail crossing on Sand Hill Rd. It was generally agreed that this would be a good issue to raise with Tom Delaney. She also reported that the wooden signs at the entrances to the Groton Conservation Trust properties cost \$150-175, including installation.
7. Steve Legge volunteered to investigate trail signage options and costs. It was generally agreed that a unique and identifiable Groton Trails logo/marker should be used. Approximately \$800 in signage can be donated from the proceeds of the 1998 Groton Town Forest Trail Races.
8. Ed requested that the Committee be prepared to present nominations for officers (Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary) at the next meeting, on May 18. The election of officers will take place at the June 15 meeting.

9. Stephen Prendergast moved, and Brad Paul seconded, that the meeting be adjourned.
The motion was approved unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul G. Funch
Secretary

Date

These minutes were approved unanimously on May 18, 1999.