

Groton Trails Committee
Minutes of Meeting
May 16, 2000

Location: Downstairs, Legion Hall

Members of Groton Trails Committee in Attendance:

Bruce Easom, Paul Funch, Wendy Good, Edward McNierney, Brad Paul, David Riggert

Members of Groton Trails Committee Absent:

Robert Catlin, Bruce Clements, Stephen Legge, Stephen Prendergast

Guests:

None

- 1) The meeting was called to order at 8:08 p.m.
- 2) Paul Funch made a motion to approve the minutes of the 18 April 2000 meeting as amended. Ed McNierney seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous vote.
- 3) The charter for the Sidewalk Committee will be ending soon. Sidewalk issues might be handled by the Highway Department or by the Trails Committee. The Committee discussed whether or not this is something the Trails Committee would like to undertake. Paul Funch thought sidewalks could be considered trail links and they are sometimes referred to as "urban trails". A future project would be to consider putting a sidewalk along Route 225 from Farmer's Row to the bridge over the Nashua River so people could walk from the center of town down to the river. Members of the committee were generally in favor of taking on this responsibility with the caveat that, if sidewalk activities became excessive, that we would recommend reestablishing the Sidewalk Committee.
- 4) The rail road right-of-way along the western side of the Town Forest and up along the Squannacook River was apparently abandoned by Boston and Maine and taken over by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA). The Committee thought that it would be nice if we could use this right-of-way to connect the trails in Groton with the trails in Ayer, particularly since Ayer is already connected to trails in Harvard. Brad Paul agreed to contact Jean Kitchen to see if she would ask the Selectmen to contact the MBTA to see if they were willing to sell this property.
- 5) Brad Paul passed out some literature about the Community Preservation Act that would allow towns in Massachusetts to vote to raise funds for preservation of open space and historic buildings in their towns. Brad agreed to draft a letter to the Groton Herald to help educate Groton voters about this important piece of legislation.

- 6) Riverfest will be held on Sunday June 4 this year. The Greenway Committee sponsors it and they are looking for volunteers to help set up signs, hand out programs and to help with free canoeing.
- 7) The Committee reported on the status of the monthly projects
 - a) The Committee agreed that May 21st would be the date to finish planting trailhead markers at the Hawtree subdivision. Bruce Easom agreed to make sure that the post position markers he placed in the fall were still in place. He also agreed to call Paul Funch to show him where they were located.
 - b) Ed McNierney described the need to re-route a trail on the Wiewel property that currently goes along one homeowner's driveway and near their house. Ed also described the need to tie a trail into the end of Skyfields Drive. Ed also agreed to correct the Town Forest Map as described in the meeting of 18 April 2000.
 - c) Wendy Good agreed to call the Conservation Commission to give them the Trails Committee's input concerning trails on the Mayfield property (Sorhaug Woods) as they develop the forestry plan.
 - d) The Committee decided that the July project should be the re-routing of the trail on the Wiewel property. The 15th or 16th of July were suggested as possible dates.
- 8) Ed McNierney discussed the issue of discontinued roads. The Town Clerk has indicated she has available 20 years of town meeting records where the acceptance and discontinuation of roads have been noted. Brad Paul asked if there are any discontinued roads that might again be accepted in the near future. Nate Nutting Road was mentioned. This road was abandoned then accepted as a footpath and a bicycle path. Half Moon Road and Dan Parker Road were also mentioned as potential concerns.
- 9) The lands on the Throne that are currently under purchase and sale agreement were discussed. It was noted that time was running out for the town to exercise their options on these properties. Dave Riggert said there would be a special town meeting on 5 June to vote on whether the town should exercise its right of first refusal. Dave suggested that the Trails Committee should inventory existing trails and indicate which important trail links might be preserved or created. Bob Catlin suggested the Trails Committee should put together a list of pros and cons on why we should buy this land. Committee members should email their ideas to Bob. Dave Riggert suggested sending out a "fact sheet" about how many parcels and their sizes would be created by developing this area. It was suggested the question could be posed in the following manner, "What do you want to do? 1) Pay to send someone else's kids to school or 2) give yourself some open space. While there is a sunset for the cost of exercising the second option, residents will be paying for the first option in perpetuity.

10) Paul Funch made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dave Riggert seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous vote and the meeting adjourned at 10:11 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce H. Easom
Secretary

26 June 2000

Date

These minutes were approved as amended by unanimous vote on 20 June 2000.