

Groton Trails Committee



Meeting Minutes for 21 January 2003 – Draft

Location: Downstairs in Legion Hall

Members in attendance: Vic Burton, Bruce Clements, Bruce Easom, Paul Funch, Wendy Good, and Stephen Legge

Members absent: Edward McNierney, Brad Paul and Don Torgersen

Guests: H el ene Cahen

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The meeting was called to order at 7:42 pm.

December 2002 Meeting Minutes: Bruce Easom moved to approve the meeting minutes of 19 December 2002. Vic Burton seconded the motion. All voted in favor except for Paul Funch who abstained.

Cunningham Property off Gratuity Road: Paul Funch showed a letter addressed to the Conservation Commission that was drafted by Bruce Easom. The letter described the Trails Committee's recommendations concerning the wording of the trail easement. This letter contained the language approved by unanimous vote of the Trails Committee in their meeting of 17 December 2002. Bruce Clements mentioned that he has copies of Request for Determination (RFD) forms that should be filled out and submitted to the Conservation Commission concerning placement of a bridge over Gratuity Brook. Paul Funch agreed to get the forms to Don Torgersen.

Vic Burton reported on his investigations into the bridge construction. Vic estimated that that the material cost would be between \$1,500 and \$2,000. After discussion about the possibility of getting Department of Environmental Management trails grant money, Bruce Easom volunteered to get information on this program to Wendy Good. Vic Burton volunteered to use his yard to pre-assemble the bridge. Afterwards, the bridge would be disassembled, transported to the Cunningham property and re-assembled on site. Vic Burton stated his preference to use structural lumber rather than telephone poles. Vic believed that a lumber bridge looks nicer and is a better model to show others. Vic also recommended using 8 foot long telephone poles or red oak logs for the bridge footings.

The sense of the group is to proceed in parallel with the following tasks necessary to get the bridge installed.

- 1) Design the bridge

- 2) Get the required approvals from, among others, the building inspector, Tom Delaney at the Highway Department and the Conservation Commission.
- 3) Order materials
- 4) Get trail easement approved

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High School Cross-Country Course: Paul Funch reported on his presentation to the High School Building Committee of the plan for the cross-country course on the new high school site. Paul reported that Mr. Rob Juusola looked over the plan and, although the exact course has not been determined, Rob saw no problems in routing the trail around the property perimeter. Paul reported that this trail concept has been introduced early enough into the planning process that it should be easily incorporated into the site. For example, an additional gate through the fence around the track will be requested by the Athletic Director David Robinson to allow runners easy access to and from the course. Paul reported that the Trails Committee's work on this task is now done and that this action item is now closed. Once the construction work on the new high school is completed, the Trails Committee will once more need to be involved to help clear the old and new trails in the woods around the high school property that will be used by the public as well as the cross-country teams.

Public Education Initiative: Steve Legge reported on the progress of the public education initiative that was prompted by Kathleen O'Connor's visit to the Trails Committee last year. Steve passed out the second draft of a letter that had already been reviewed by Vic Burton, Wendy Good, and Kathleen O'Connor and that had their comments incorporated. Steve recommended giving a copy of the draft letter to the Conservation Commission for their comments. Paul Funch recommended mentioning that the effort to establish a Groton trails network flows from the Town's Master Plan and its Open Space and Recreation Plan. Paul Funch agreed to get the relevant language from the Master Plan to Steve Legge and Bruce Easom agreed to get the relevant language from the Open Space and Recreation plan to Steve. Steve also reported that he has solicited more comments and that he would incorporate them into the final draft of the letter.

Trail Map Development and Publication: The committee noted that the issue of map development and publication has been talked about since the inception of the Committee. Vic Burton passed out a draft of a map for McLain's Woods and Fitch-Woods and asked that the Committee consider the following questions.

- 1) What will be the format of the final Groton trail maps? Are they to be individual sheets or bound into a booklet? Are they to be in color, etc.
- 2) What trails should be on the maps? Should we show trails on private property or just show those on Conservation Commission, Groton Conservation Trust and New England Forestry Foundation properties?

- 3) What is the schedule for releasing the maps? Should individual maps be released as they are finished or wait until a booklet is ready?
- 4) How should the maps be published? Should they be available at Town Hall and/or on the Internet?

A mapping subcommittee is being formed by Ed, Vic, and Steve, and Paul to address these questions and to begin to produce trail maps.

Gibbet Hill Orchard Subdivision: The upcoming subdivision of the Gibbet Hill Orchard on the Groton-Ayer town line was discussed. The Committee asked Bruce Clements if he would ask Michelle Colette to put the Groton Trails Committee on her list of Committees that would like to review the plans submitted to the Planning Board. Bruce Clements agreed.

West Groton Rail Trail: Steve Legge reported on the meeting at the Nashua River Watershed Association concerning efforts to build a Squannacook River rail trail. Steve reported that the proposed trail would begin at Hollingsworth and Vose, run northwest along the western boundary of Groton, pass through Townsend and connect to an existing rail trail in New Hampshire. Steve reported that it would take about 6 years to complete the project and that the toughest part will be getting the support of abutters in the two towns. Steve thought that the section of the trail on the western edge of Groton might be a relatively easy section to complete. The cost is estimated to be well below the \$250,000 per mile cost of the Nashua River Rail Trail. This is because it will not be paved and will not require extensive bridge and safety fence construction. Steve reported that a brochure was currently being designed to introduce abutters, trail users and town officials to the idea of this new rail trail.

Adjourn: Bruce Easom made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Steve Legge seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 10:15 PM.

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