



# TOWN OF GROTON

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Groton Trails Committee

## **\*\* Meeting Minutes \*\***

### **18 September 2012**

#### **Attendees:**

Chairman	Paul Funch	X
Vice Chairman	Joachim Preiss	X
Members:	Ed Bretschneider	X
	Wendy Good	Recorder
	Stephen Legge	X
	Olin Lathrop	X
	David Minott	X
	Scott Stathis	X
	John Wiesner	X

#### **Visitors:**

Bruce Easom  
Helene Cahen

#### **Call to Order**

At 7:30 pm, Chairman Funch called the meeting to order with the above quorum of Committee members present.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

Bretschneider moved to accept the minutes of the 21 August 2012 meeting. Motion was seconded by Stathis. Motion was passed by unanimous vote.

#### **Trail Maintenance Activities**

Funch reported that the 25 August work day completed Wharton Plantation loop near Lowell Road and Old Dunstable Road. Funch, Lathrop and Peter Morrison finished this trail loop. There is still a lot of clearing needed on second loop near Burntmeadow Road. NEFF is going to have a pre-timbering walk of the land on the west side of Old Dunstable Road. It is important that some of us attend and ask them to leave the trails passable. Bretschneider said the Groton Woods trails are in good shape but the access off Paugus Trail needs to be marked and cleared. The Groton Town Forest race course needs to be checked before the race on 14 October.

#### **Guided Hikes**

Minott reported on scheduled guided hikes. Lathrop led a hike for AMC 9 September in the Groton Town Forest and Preiss led a hike of Brooks Orchard and Chestnut Hill 16 September. Lathrop has scheduled a 10am hike of Shepley Hills 14 October, to be cosponsored by AMC and GTC. Lathrop will also lead a hike for AMC starting near the Ayer- Groton Hospital on 23 November. Minott will lead a hike at Gamlin Crystal Springs at 2pm on 21 October and another one on Gamlin Esker at 2pm on 11 November. Preiss will lead a hike on Scarlet and Gibbet Hills at 1pm on 25 November. Minott can add hikes but needs a 3-week notice to get information in the paper. Funch said we should try to coordinate our hike schedule with NRWA; they have a hike scheduled at 1pm on 23 September at Upper Flannagan Pond in Ayer.

#### **QR Code Signs**

Preiss showed mock-up of sign with QR code. It was decided to put Groton Trails Network at top of sign

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rather than bottom as on the mock-up. Then www.grotontrails.org will be on the bottom. Preiss will e-mail Good a cleaned up QR code to use for ordering signs previously approved by the Committee. Preiss asked for input on the website that the QR code takes one to, such as what features it should have. It was suggested that we might add an alphabetical listing of trails/parcels to accompany our interactive trail map. Funch will look into what is involved in doing this.

### **Grotonfest Schedule**

Grotonfest is scheduled for Saturday, 22 September. Coverage schedule was discussed and resulted in the following:

8:30 to 10:00 Funch, Wiesner, Preiss set-up

10:00 to 12:00 Bretschneider, Wiesner

12:00 to 2:00 Easom, Minott

2:00 to 5:00 Preiss (Funch take down)

Minott designed and purchased some trails "business" cards to hand out to booth visitors and we will also provide applications for the Town Forest trail races. Funch will bring some trail tools for display.

### **Website**

Preiss now has management of the website so he is taking edits. Funch wanted to know to whom questions were being directed by the website. Preiss is handling all questions at this time but he indicated they are mostly requests to join e-mail list.

### **Town Forest Trail Races**

Scheduled for 14 October. The new Race Directors need additional volunteers. Committee members were encouraged by Funch to please contact Bob Zanelli.

### **Committee Charter**

Our Charter is on Town Web site. Funch feels we need to update our Charter to reflect what we currently do and handed out two ideas for possible Charter revisions. Lots of discussion followed. It was suggested we need to decide on concepts first. It was suggested we do not need to list everything we do. Some of key ideas were to develop a network of trails (footpaths), maintain and mark trails, advise the Town of all trails issues including planning new trails, balance the many different users of trails, foster public awareness and education, and encourage use of trails. Funch will compile any additional suggestions that he receives from Committee members and distribute them at a future meeting of the Committee.

### **Greenway Committee's Town Meeting Article for Fitch's Bridge Design Funding**

Groton's Greenway Committee requested a letter of support for their Article 19 at Town Meeting, which seeks funding for the design of a new Fitch's Bridge. Town Meeting is scheduled for 15 October. This is our last meeting before Town Meeting so it was felt that we needed to act, but discussion followed about how little information we had on this funding request and how the timing seemed bad. Points that came out in the discussion were that we have been long time supporters of a bridge at this site, we have written many letters of support, we have worked to develop trails on both sides of the Nashua River, and we want to maximize the chances of obtaining the support of Groton voters.

Preiss made the following motion: "The Groton Trails Committee recommends to the Groton Greenway Committee that they indefinitely postpone Article 19 (Funding to Design the Replacement of Fitch's Bridge) at the 15 October 2012 Fall Town Meeting due to inadequate preparation that increases the probability of the article being defeated. We believe that postponing the article in order to make additional time available to provide more information to stakeholder Town Committees and the voters will significantly improve the chances that it will be approved." Motion was seconded by Bretschneider. During debate, arguments were

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presented by some committee members that we should not undermine the Greenway Committee's effort to pass this measure but rather to enthusiastically support it now and in the future, if necessary. Others argued that the success of building a new Fitch's Bridge was too important for the Article to come to a vote at Town Meeting before additional public and committee awareness and education was provided. Motion was passed by a vote of five in the affirmative (Preiss, Bretschneider, Lathrop, Good, Minott,) to four in the negative (Funch, Stathis, Legge, Wiesner).

Lathrop made the following motion: "The Groton Trails Committee authorizes Chairman Funch to write a letter to the Groton Greenway Committee stating why we feel reestablishing Fitch's Bridge is vital to Groton's trail network, including the facts that it will be only one of three bridges in Groton connecting East and West Groton across the Nashua River and the only one that is pedestrian friendly, and that the Groton Trails Committee has supported a Fitch's Bridge crossing since the Trails Committee was created in 1998." Preiss seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

### **Adjournment**

Stathis moved to adjourn the meeting. Motion was seconded by Legge. Motion was passed by unanimous vote.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:45 pm.