



# TOWN OF GROTON

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Groton Trails Committee

## **\*\* Monthly Meeting Minutes \*\*** **January 21, 2020**

<b>Attendees:</b> (Present: X)			<b>Visitors:</b>
Chair	Paul Funch	X	
Vice Chair	Bob Ordemann	X	
Secretary	Jason Remillard		
<b>Members</b>	Olin Lathrop	X	
	Jim Peregoy	X	
	Kevin Barrett		
	Stephen Legge	X	
	Wanfang Murray	X	
	John Ellenberger	X	
	Paul Riley	X	
	Laura DeGroot	X	

### **Call to Order**

Chair Funch called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

### **Approval of December minutes**

VOTE: December minutes, Lathrop moved, DeGroot seconded, unanimously approved as amended.

### **Guided hikes reports**

A brief update was given on the upcoming hike on Gamlin Esker Trail on Sunday, Feb. 16<sup>th</sup>.

### **Dog Sign status**

There were no updates on signs.

### **Trail projects reports**

Fallen trees reported on High School trail, Gratuity Rd area, and another cited on Groton Trails Network Facebook group (waiting for coordinate location to be reported.)

Squannacook River Rail Trail (Squannacook Greenways) Facebook page reported progress on their trail construction. Legge reported other details about its construction.

### **Social media report**

No report.

## **Website and map reports**

No updates.

## **Eagle Scout project status**

No project update as the prospective Eagle Scout, Hunter O’Toole, didn’t show up for presentation at the Conservation Commission meeting.

## **MassTrails Conference briefings**

Conference briefings can be found on the Trails Committee’s Google Drive site.

## **Groton Conservation Forum Planning (Meeting scheduled February 27<sup>th</sup> at Senior Center)**

Main goal of forum is to encourage communication, share ideas, and meet new people from different conservation groups.

Ellenberger reviewed the meeting process outlined in his document dated 1-13-2020. (see notes) Lathrop to give overview of forum discussion/rules at start of meeting (30 minutes?).

- Attendees will get name tags with pre-labeled table number so tables will be randomly assigned. (assume 50 participants/ 6 per table/8 tables);
- One captain per table to facilitate answers to questions (encourage a volunteer; Groton Trails Committee member is default option);
- Options for questions: a) 2 different questions per table; b) all 12 questions at each table and table picks 2 questions; and/or c) table could come up with one of their own questions;
- Participants have 10 minutes to answer questions on stickies;
- 20 minutes for captains to organize answers by themes and report to their group;
- 5 minutes per table for captains to report to the entire group;
- Ellenberger will help moderate group discussions as they work through their questions;
- Forum results will be summarized for distribution email to forum participants.

In addition to questions listed on Ellenberger’s document, committee members suggested other questions for the forum:

Lathrop: If you were to choose one priority, what is it and how would you handle it?

If you had X amount of money to spend on Groton’s open space system what would you do?

What do you see as the primary threats to Groton’s open space system? (or) Pick a major threat to Groton’s open space system – what would you do to address this? (rephrasing Question #5 on Ellenberger’s document).

Ellenberger: What are the priorities for fostering biodiversity?

Murray recommended a question encouraging volunteer opportunities and education.

How to increase volunteer participation in conservation activities? How can we educate the public about our trails system and natural resource areas?

Funch commented that a final wrap-up question at end of forum could be: is there anything actionable as a group?

Forum questions to be finalized at the February 18<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Members suggested circulating a sign-up sheet for organizing refreshments/snacks to bring.

### **2019 Annual Report**

Legge is still working on the final draft and asked for photos for the report. Deadline is January 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **Trail names**

Postponed discussion of new trail names until next meeting. Funch reported on conversations about naming trails with Groton Conservation Trust members and Dept of Conservation and Recreation. GCT liked the approach of naming the main trails and using names of natural resources and geographic areas. DCR liked the proposed names for the J. Harry Rich State Forest.

The new signs for New England Forestry Foundation's Wharton Plantation, the Groton Town Forest, and the Nashua River Rail Trail, obtained through a grant received by the Nashua River Watershed Association, have been received and will be installed in the spring.

Next trail naming project: Wharton Plantation trails.

There was a brief discussion about updating the Open Space map.

### **2020 Project Priorities**

Legge asked about opportunities for creating walking trails at the Senior Center property. Funch reported that he is on the Grounds Committee (with town employees and other long-time town volunteers). The EMT Association's property (old Sportsmen's Club) includes a Conservation Restriction, so they are researching the possibilities for adding trails, exercise stations, sidewalks, providing water access, etc.

The EMT's building and land can't be used until land is transferred to the Town and there are environmental liabilities that will need to be quantified.

Discussed trails in Hemlock Grove, and the area below Lawrence Park land. Also noted that trail loop needs to be added to map for Flavell Crossing area.

### **Adjournment**

**VOTE:** Ordemann moved, Lathrop seconded. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 8:52 PM.