



# TOWN OF GROTON

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Groton Trails Committee

## **\*\* Monthly Meeting Minutes \*\*** **December 15, 2020**

<b>Attendees:</b> (Present: X)			<b>Visitors:</b>
Chair	Paul Funch	X	Bruce Easom
Vice Chair	Bob Ordemann	X	Wendy Good
Secretary	Jason Remillard		Greg Sheldon
<b>Members</b>	Olin Lathrop	X	
	Jim Peregoy	X	
	Kevin Barrett	X	
	Stephen Legge	X	
	Wanfang Murray	X	
	Laura DeGroot	X	
	Lisa Irelan	X	
	Derek Cianci	X	

### **Call to Order**

Chair Funch called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

### **Approval of November Minutes**

**VOTE:** Lathrop moved and DeGroot seconded the motion to accept the amended meeting minutes. Committee voted unanimously to approve the motion.

### **Trail Project Status Reports**

Gibbet Hill trails –DeGroot reported that the Gibbet Hill Grill (Jed Webber, Owner/Manager) would like to reroute the trail from between the restaurant and function hall to between the function hall and Rte. 40. Hikers are welcome to park in the Gibbet Hill Grill parking lot. There was some question as to swampy conditions to the east of the grill driveway along route 40 and whether the Complete Streets project would bring the sidewalk that far and on the westbound side of the street. But it would make sense if feasible to allow people to have a walking route from the town center (Prescott Visitors Center) up to Gibbet Hill and back. Once the plan is agreed to by Mr. Webber, the Committee can start the work in the spring. Legge will present the Complete Street project proposal for a sidewalk from the center of Town to the Gibbet Hill trail at our next meeting.

Shattuck Homestead (Baddacook Pond) trails – Lathrop reported the trails were all cleared and in good shape.

Fitch-Woods rogue trail –Funch notified Groton Conservation Trust, which was able to talk to the neighbors about closing off the unapproved trail.

Regrading proposal for Brown Trail @Chicopee Row –Funch presented the regrading proposal for Brown Trail at Chicopee Row to the Groton Conservation Commission. Conservation Commission approved the proposal, pending approval by the Dept. of Public Works. Dept. of Public Works subsequently reviewed the work site and is willing to assist with the work. However, approval from the Planning Board for moving the stone wall will also be required and Funch will determine the process for doing that. The work can start as early as April 2021.

Patricia Hallett Trail marking – Funch reported that the Patricia Hallett Trail is in good shape. He obtained the Conservation Commission's approval to install new signs and markers in the spring.

Cost-sharing for leaf blower – Funch reported that Groton Conservation Commission has agreed to co-acquire a DR Leaf Blower for \$1,699.99. The Conservation Commission will contribute \$1,000. The Groton Trails Committee will discuss the remaining amount and the purchase at its next meeting.

Appraisal for Taisey parcel; support for Riverwalk – Funch will prepare a grant proposal for the project design phase if the grant can be submitted without the land purchase having been completed prior to the grant deadline of February 1. It is estimated that the appraisal will not be completed until late January 2021.

Squannacook River Rail Trail – Bruce reported that most of the rails have been removed and shipped out. The trail work can only be done from November 15 to April 15. Stone dust installation may not occur until fall 2021.

Annual Report – Legge requested that Committee members submit materials and photos for the report. Funch reminded members to submit their volunteer hours for trail maintenance to him if they have not already done so.

## **Trail Signs**

Dog rules – Landowner responses (NEFF, GCT, Con Comm, DCR) – Funch reported that NEEF approved the sign, Groton Conservation Trust wants to wait to see what they look like in the field on other properties, Groton Conservation Commission approved the sign but requested a list of trailheads where signs are recommended by the Trails Committee, and DCR is still reviewing the proposed sign.

Priest Family CA (former Trimper) driveway access signs – Funch reported that hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians are welcome to access the trail by taking the private driveway from Martins Pond Road. Lathrop will provide a design of the sign to be placed on the driveway. The Committee discussed the possibility of installing a parking lot near Martins Pond Road in the future.

Wharton Plantation trail markers – Derek has been installing the white, blue, and yellow markers on the trails. Bob raised the question of marking mountain bike trails. Derek responded that the mountain bike trail is in good shape with a lot of twists and turns. Funch commented that mountain bikers have been good about maintaining their trails but the Trails Committee should continue to do any clearing work with chainsaws that is required.

Lathrop presented a design of a river crossing sign. The Committee felt it was well done. The next step is to identify a list of places that can use a river crossing sign.

### **Grant Applications**

MA Recreational Trails Program potential grant applications – Funch encouraged the Committee to apply by February 1, 2021.

Funch proposed some ideas to consider.

- Application for Rich State Forest bridges/bog bridges – Funch reported this application first requires DCR approvals.
- Application for geological landmarks, points of interest, etc. on some of the trails.
- Acquire new equipment for maintenance

Lisa Irelan suggested installing a direction sign in Surrenden Farm to point to where the parking lot is. Lisa would come up with a plan to present to the committee sometime in the future.

Funch will email the Committee the current potential project list for review. Kevin suggested having a training session on preparing a grant application so all members will become familiar with the process and be able to assist with grant applications. Funch will schedule training on Tuesday, January 5, 2021, 6:30 – 8:30 pm.

Greg Sheldon has submitted a CPA application for money to reroute the Whispering Brook trail. Lathrop will help him with preparing a Request for Determination of Applicability for review by the Conservation Commission and he will keep the Committee updated.

### **Adjournment**

**VOTE:** Lathrop moved to adjourn, DeGroot seconded, the motion was approved unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.