



# TOWN OF GROTON

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Groton Trails Committee

## **\*\* Monthly Meeting Minutes \*\*** **April 20, 2021**

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

### **Call to Order**

Chair Funch called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

### **Approval of March 16 Minutes**

**VOTE:** Lathrop moved to approve the March 16 minutes as amended, and Ordemann seconded; motion unanimously approved. Legge and Peregoy abstained.

### **Riverwalk Project – Land Purchase and Grant Status**

The seller considered the appraisal value too low. The land purchase is at a standstill unless the owner reconsiders. MassWildlife continues to be interested in the project and will be contacted if the purchase offer expires on May 21.

### **Signs**

Lathrop reported that 40 dog signs are in the trailer. Surrenden directional signs to be installed on May 7<sup>th</sup>. Stream crossing signs also need installation. Legge asked if the Squannacook River Rail Trail sign was paid for by GTC and offered to reimburse if

necessary.

**VOTE:** DeGroot moved that the GTC donate the sign cost; Peregoy seconded; motion unanimously approved.

### **Website and Mapping**

Funch noted that the website map needs trails updated (examples: Priest Trail, Groton School area, Academy Hill). He will contact Remillard about sharing website maintenance duties.

### **Leaf Blower**

Funch reviewed functionality of the new blower; there were some minor issues but overall he's pleased with the purchase.

### **Scenic Road Permit for Brown Trail Re-routing**

Funch received preliminary approval from the DPW director on the trail excavation to reduce the slope. On April 22 the permit will be reviewed by the Planning Board and Tree Warden (DPW Director).

### **Fitch Estate (Wallace Rd Subdivision)**

The Shays received ANR approval to create a second lot fronting on Wallace Rd. from their Pepperell Rd. parcel. The parent parcel has a conservation restriction (CR) on the old railroad right-of-way and one going across the parcel to provide access to the railroad right-of-way. But, according to their attorney, the CR was never signed and therefore expired. The owners were unaware of the need for the 30 ft trail easement on the east side of their parcel to connect to Fitch's Bridge. Both easements were discussed with the attorney and will be incorporated into the new deed. Easom responded that ConsCom has an obligation to defend the CR. Funch noted that the rerouted trail will require gravel fill to cross a drainage easement near the railroad right-of way and he has asked the parcel owner, via their attorney, to pay for the gravel.

### **Project reports**

1. Gamlin Esker Trail: The old trail that went up the esker was deprecated due to severe erosion and new switchbacks were added off to the side. Cyclists have complained about the sharp switchbacks. Ireland asked if switchbacks could be longer. Funch responded that space was limited in the triangle footprint. He thought that widening the trail might help. Pelletier offered to install the trail post at the foot of the trail.
2. Sorhaug (Brooks Orchard) Loop: The trail loop is scheduled to be laid out next weekend; Funch suggested walking the new route and discussing at next meeting.

3. Hallett Trail: The main trail has been marked out by Funch.
4. SqRRT: Easom reported he will be installing posts and rails to create a fence along the trail. Meeting at 9 am behind the Sterilite building next Saturday.
5. Gibbet Hill Bridge: Will be working on the Sweet and Easy Bridge plan second week of May. Plans include installing signs and ordering sensitive ferns for underneath the bridge.

### **Groton Conservation Forum**

The GTC discussed the Northeast Wilderness Trust (NEWT) presentation and how little wilderness land is preserved in New England.

### **Whispering Brook status**

Lathrop has been monitoring the wetness of the proposed trail area and said it's not as wet as originally thought. GTC could do a trail without detailed engineering drawings. He recommended observing the wet areas through the end of April; then file a RDA with ConsComm for the trail design. Sheldon wants to meet with Lathrop and Ordemann before the May GCT meeting.

### **Misc. Items**

Funch recommended new white trail markers (1000 markers @ 43 cents/marker).

**VOTE:** Lathrop moved to approve ordering 1000 markers, expenditure not to exceed \$460; Peregoy seconded; motion unanimously approved.

Funch reported that one of the Scouts (Chris) is seeking service hours which requires a GTC supervisor. Murray offered to supervise trail maintenance projects; Legge suggested service hours on the SqRRT which he could supervise.

Funch announced that Erik Tobies will be awarded the Eagle rank at the Scout Court of Honor on June 6<sup>th</sup> to be held at the Smith Pavilion on the Town Field. The GTC is invited.

Funch asked if a GTC member could take on the management of GTC's Facebook page. Irelan volunteered to manage; Ellenberger (former GTC member and FB manager) has offered to help with the transition.

Funch discussed a letter to the editor he authored regarding the storybook trail that was part of Groton Reads celebration of John Lewis. The book signs were removed from the trail without permission and he wrote a response to the local paper's coverage of the theft.

Ordemann reported that the Gratuity Rd trail near Fitch's Bridge was rerouted by property owners (trail didn't follow the easement and was too close to wetlands).

Legge asked about trail maintenance of Indian Hill Rd to Autumn Ridge Trail. Unsure of ownership; Easom will ask Nik Gualco (ConsComm administrator) about this.

**Discussion – Priorities for 2021**

1. Chestnut Hill Loop
2. Gamlin Esker trail
3. Whispering Brook Trail
4. Reroute Brown Trail
5. Fitch Estate – gravel for rerouted trail

**VOTE:** Lathrop moved to adjourn, and Peregoy seconded; motion unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM.