



# TOWN OF GROTON

173 Main Street  
Groton, Massachusetts 01450-1237  
(978) 448-1111  
FAX: (978) 448-1115



Groton Trails Committee

## **\*\* Monthly Meeting Minutes \*\*** **October 19, 2021**

<b>Attendees:</b> (Present: X)			<b>Visitors:</b>
Chair	Paul Funch	X	Wendy Good
Vice Chair	Wanfang Murray	X	Bruce Easom
Clerk	Laura DeGroot		
<b>Members</b>	Adam Burnett	X	
	Jim Peregoy	X	
	Harris McWade	X	
	Stephen Legge	X	
	Lisa Irelan	X	
	Ralph Acaba	X	
	Derek Cianci		
	Jeanne Ciampa	X	

### **Call to Order**

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

### **Approval of September 21 Minutes**

**VOTE:** Peregoy moved to accept minutes, McWade seconded; Unanimously approved.

### **Reports**

#### Signs

Have signs from Olin Lathrop for Surrenden Farms; Funch and Legge have put 6 signs up on location and reviewed locations with Committee. Additional few may be needed. Question about whether dogs allowed on Farms land. McWade clarified dogs allowed per kiosk signage. However, dogs not allowed on Groton School land.

Committee discussed General Field area. Paths noted as trails on [GrotonTrails.org](http://GrotonTrails.org) are in need of mowing, but GTC would need to coordinate with Groton Conservation Trust (the Trust) regarding timing due to bird nesting and/or haying efforts. Exceptionally wet conditions this summer have hindered summer/fall mowing. Next Steps: GTC to notify the Trust to inform them GTC can mow it, but the Trust needs to provide permission and communicate viable time. Chair Funch to contact landowners to discuss.

### Social Media

Irean updated Committee regarding discussion with Russ Harris of the Groton Herald about a "Trails Report".

Irean walked through Harris' suggested guideline for content:

- Two subject areas: informational, educational
- Content must be short and to the point, bullets. Not intended to be a story. Consider Animal Control report and/or Police report as examples.

### Informational

- Bullets about trails - project status (Committee/Funch indicated we submit only completed projects)
- Animal sightings along the trails e.g., bears - what to do if you see a bear
- Point people to email address for questions or more information  
Committee discussed the possible need for Gmail account if emails sent to town account not reliably forwarded

### Educational

- Trail of the Month - which trail, where, why
- Timely topics such as information about hunting season
- Description about how trail work is performed - how Committee goes about designing and building a new trail, bridge design, etc.

### Photos

- Committee encouraged to submit photos. Must be submitted in separate email. Indicate which go with Trails section and which he may want to use elsewhere in the paper. Harris may or may not be able to use what gets submitted at the time submitted depending on available space in issue.
- Legge commented on the need for good photos to use in Annual Report.
- Irean commented on the need for good photos with locations for Facebook postings.

### Website and Interactive Map

Peregoy changed the default zoom level. Updates needed: Priest Trail trailhead on private drive off Martins Pond – discussed that there was no area for parking so adding a parking icon to the trail map was unnecessary.

Peregoy discussed option to put Trail Report icon in upper right menu area to allow trails community to submit information about trail maintenance concerns. Functionality would read user location on map when sent so Committee would have exact location relating to trail concern.

Peregoy discussed ideas communicated by booth visitors during GrotonFest: ability to download.

Funch reviewed some areas on map noted as a trail that are not and vice-versa. To submit to Peregoy for map updates.

Murray asked whether Lathrop provided description about how he has been capturing GPS locations to upload into Open Street Map for GTC trail map updates. Lathrop did offer to sit down with anyone interested to walk through his process.

## **Project Reports**

### Whispering Brook

Proposed trail connects two existing trailheads - one NW one SE. Murray did walkthrough to survey area conditions for new trail suitability. Small section in NW section is wet and problematic. Murray suggests first best step is to perform some general trail maintenance within the existing trail corridor to clear low-lying brush from high area. Follow-up with logs to be placed to guide trail users to high area.

Burnett questioned whether anyone had reviewed documentation from Conservation Commission regarding what they will allow in this area - what are the restrictions? Funch explained the RDA previously submitted and approved by Conservation Commission is for a trail in that area, for which no restrictions were identified, but that the addition of any structure would require another RDA to be filed.

### Sorhaug Loop Trail/Sorhaug Woods

New bridge complete. One beam was completely broken, other beam exhibited rot, so bridge deemed unsafe for any travelers, particularly horses. Required Wetlands Protection Act Emergency Certification Form.

Conservation Commission met last Tuesday to discuss landowner concern about new loop trail location and property boundaries. The Conservation Commission reaffirmed it as a good idea to have a trail in the location but will send a letter to the landowner stating their understanding of property boundaries and requesting feedback from owner on the same.

Easom explained he was unaware whether the letter has yet been sent. Easom also indicated the Conservation Commission has not put a stop to trail work in this area.

### Marion Stoddard Riverwalk Trail

Funch and Burnett surveyed J. Harry Rich State Forest and the area of the Old Town Dump. Soil in Town Dump area would need to get tested for safety. Burnett to put together a plan to submit (ground water pits, soils) in order to make some decisions about safety of this as a location for a trail. May require additional soil cap or other remediation steps before it's ready for use.

The southwestern-most part of Rich State Forest is an excellent location for another accessible trail along the Nashua River. Idea would be to connect the Marion Stoddard Riverwalk to the John Tinker Trail. Eventually the Rich State Forest trails may be connected to the Petapawag Canoe Launch through the Town Dump area if the cooperation of a single landowner can be obtained.

Peregoy questioned the potential for flooding in the area. Burnett explained it's all pretty high in the area.

State GIS map has border of J. Harry Rich State Forest boundary marked along Nod Brook even though other maps show the boundary being further to the east, near the most westerly trail that connects to Nod Rd.

Funch reviewed proposed routing of trail in this area. Suggests stone dust trail alongside the horse/hiking trail for roughly the first 600' west of the John Tinker Trail. There is at least 12' of space for two trails to coexist. Would include two seating areas along the trail and have educational signage in an observation area at the end of the trail explaining why the land along the river is an important area to protect and the efforts of Marion Stoddard to do so.

Recreational trail grants from the state are feasible for this area until you include observation areas, which changes the classification to a park.

Funch has started the form to request CPA funds to support this project. Rough funding estimates: \$55K for entire project, to include \$24K from state grants with remainder requested from CPA.

**VOTE:** Burnett motioned to support new Marion Stoddard Riverwalk project in SW corner of Rich State Forest to submit 2-page summary to request CPA funding. McWade seconded motion; Unanimous approval.

### GrotonFest

Significant ongoing walkthroughs at booth.  
8-9 additional people signed up for volunteer listserv.

Brown Lane Bridge Proposal/Design

Easom provided update. Proposed bridge location: northern section of Fritz and Helen Walker Conservation parcel on the trail that connects the McLain's Woods and Watson Way parcels. Bridge to accommodate all pedestrian traffic including horses.

**Discussion**

Sorhaug bridge behind Williams Barn needs same anti-slip treatment as recently placed on Gratuity Brook bridge.

Chainsaw Course - anticipated date: second weekend in November (11/13-14).

Funch passed around 3 invoices needing additional signatures for reimbursement.

Topics for Groton Herald:

Gratuity Bridge improvement - intro of geotextile used for anti-slip protection w/ gravel on top; Sorhaug bridge rebuild.

**Adjournment**

**VOTE:** Ireland motioned to adjourn, McWade seconded the motion; Unanimous approval. Meeting adjourned at 9 pm.