



TOWN OF GROTON

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Groton Trails Committee

**** Monthly Meeting Minutes **** **January 18, 2022**

Attendees: (Present: X)			Visitors:
	Paul Funch	X	Wendy Good
Vice Chair	Wanfang Murray	X	Heidi Charlebois
Clerk	Laura DeGroot	X	Sheila Devereaux
Members	Adam Burnett	X	Darlene Deschambeault
	Jim Peregoy	X	
	Harris McWade		
	Stephen Legge	X	
	Derek Cianci	X	

Call to Order

Chair Funch called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

Approval of November and December Meeting Minutes

VOTE: DeGroot moved to accept the November minutes; Peregoy seconded. Unanimously approved.

VOTE: DeGroot moved to accept the December minutes; Murray seconded. Six members approved; Legge was absent from the meeting so abstained.

Miscellaneous Items

Members

Funch reported that Ralph Acaba resigned due to a scheduling conflict with another board he serves on. This leaves three openings on the committee.

Annual Groton Conservation Forum

Forum this year is being organized by Groton Conservation Commission and held via Zoom on Thursday, February 17 at 7 pm.

Signs

Funch sent email to Tom Delaney to offer putting up our “Trail Closed” signs near his property line to help keep trail users from leaving the public property and using Delaney’s land without his permission. To date, he has not responded.

Funch notified the Groton Conservation Trust that someone had put up directional signs to The Bells on the Blackman Field and Woods property. GCT appreciated the notification and will be handling the sign issue..

Squannacook River Rail Trail RTP Grant

Funch prepared a draft letter of support from the GTC for the Squannacook River Rail Trail grant application to MassTrails. Trail will be handicap accessible and will add one mile of the eventual 3.7-mile trail from Bertozzi to Townsend Center.

VOTE: DeGroot made a motion to approve the letter of support; Peregoy seconded. Unanimously approved.

Discussion – Committee Member Candidates

Heidi Charlebois

Charlebois is a 4-year resident and resides in Skyfields Farms. She is an avid trail user and is interested in trails maintenance. She brings grant writing skills as a grant writer for international fundraising which aids developing countries.

Sheila Devereaux

Devereaux is a 14-year resident (lives near J Harry Rich State Forest) and is an active trail user. She has worked with Scouts for a number of years, is a licensed wildlife rehabilitator and has been an elementary school teacher. Devereaux expressed interest in helping with trail interpretation/education efforts and more public outreach.

Darlene Deschambeault

Deschambeault lives near Lost Lake and has a passion for hiking, extreme climbing throughout the world and photography. She mentioned an interest in starting an outing club to take trips beyond Groton.

VOTE: DeGroot made a motion to recommend to the Town Manager that all three candidates for the GTC be appointed to the Trails Committee; Murray seconded. Unanimous approval.

Reports

Website and Interactive Map

Peregoy demonstrated a new map feature that will allow a trail user to map the GPS location of a trail hazard (examples: fallen tree, severely eroded area, etc.), which then generates an email to the GTC. Members suggested adding “hazard” tool icon on the left side of the interactive map view for the user to select. Or add a Hazard selection next to the Trail selection at the top of the website page. Burnett suggested there be a message that states, “your personal GPS location will be sent”. Peregoy will continue to work on this.

Trail Project Reports

Nashua Riverwalk: CPA grant has been submitted. The public hearing is scheduled for January 24. Funch explained final grant application is due on February 24. Funch has discovered that there are changes to the DCR review process that are not documented. The Request for Determination of Applicability now requires DCR review prior to submitting it to the local Conservation Commission ; in fact, a Notice of Intent filing is likely to be required instead. Burnett noted that the proposal does not disturb protected areas; the trail already exists. DCR currently does not support the parking lot expansion. Funch reported that the sign design grant submissions will wait until next year. Burnett offered to review the application cost estimates.

Eagle Scout Projects Catherine Daly is still thinking about her Scout project. Ryan Fish is working on his sign plan that Murray will review. He’s proposed designing 4 bronze signs similar to the historical sign in front of Prescott; these cost \$600/sign which may be too expensive. Members recommended that he do a paper prototype, get comments on the sign design and content, prepare a cost estimate, and contact one property owner. Wendy Good suggested looking at the interpretive materials prepared by a Scout for Hayes Woods.

Volunteer Recognition of the Year Jack Petropoulos was appreciative of the recognition and indicated he was happy to continue helping the GTC.

Bridges at Gamlin Crystal Springs and Keyes Woods Two bridges are needed in Gamlin: a) a second bog bridge in Gamlin Crystal near the bridge over the stream near the rock outcrop due to a widen mud crossing; and b) a new bog bridge along the pond in front of the outcrop. The existing bridge at Keyes Woods has fallen apart, is dangerous for horses crossing it, and needs to be replaced.

Discussions

Groton Herald Article

The article submitted by Legge to the editor last week was not printed but the editor provided information from a year-old set of GTC minutes. Funch will be contacting the editor about this matter.

2021 Annual Report

Legge is finalizing the report and will distribute to DeGroot, Murray and Cianci for review. He will be checking with Lisa Ireland and Cianci to get additional photos for the report. For each photo submission, he asked for location and date taken.

Update on Groton Complete Streets Committee

Legge reported that the state accepted West Main Street sidewalk and the sidewalk along Route 40 to Gibbet Hill for grant funding, noting that the State funds the construction but not the design. Projects are expected to be completed in 2022.

Planning for Town Forest's 100th Anniversary in 2022

Summer to fall events planned for the anniversary include: historical talk about the Town Forest; trail runs; organized hikes; Historical Society presentations; Nashoba Paddlers. More planning discussions to be held at the end of January.

Adjournment

VOTE: DeGroot motioned to adjourn, Peregoy seconded the motion. Unanimous approval. Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.