**\*\* Meeting Minutes \*\***

**September 20, 2022**

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

**Call to Order -** Chair Funch called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm. Meeting was hybrid, using Town Hall’s Second Floor Conference Room and Zoom.

**Approval of June 21 Meeting Minutes**

**VOTE:**  Legge moved to accept the August minutes. Murray seconded. Motion approved by unanimous roll-call vote.

**Reorganization of Committee for FY23**

**VOTE:** Funch called for nominations for Chair, Vice Chair, and Clerk. Charlebois nominated Funch for Chair, Legge seconded; Funch nominated Murray to continue as Vice Chair. Peregoy seconded; Charlebois nominated herself as Clerk, but noted she travels for work. Devereaux offered to support Clerk duties as a backup, Entire Committee seconded co-chairs. Charlebois moved to accept the slate of nominees, Murray seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

**Reports**

**Interactive Map**:

Peregoy developed new feature to search for properties or points of interest on interactive map. Peregoy also created a button on interactive map for sending an email to trails@grotonma.gov with a photo and/or text that automatically provides the user’s location. Peregoy will check with Town IT Dept. about adding email addresses to the proxy server. Murray suggested a QR code be made available for Grotonfest. Funch will look into it.

**Trail Maintenance:**

* Good noted there is an approximately 1 foot diameter tree at a 45 degree angle on the Shattuck Easement near the gravel path to Wallace Rd. cul-de-sac.
* Lynch noted that the Burntmeadow Trail near route 40 has 2-4 planks that are rotted out. Funch will get the lumber and coordinate the repair.
* Cianci indicated he could donate some excess Trex boards to help repair bog bridges as needed.
* Murray noted that fences along the trail going up to the summit of Scarlet Hill have been covered over by invasives. There is no room on the narrow trail for all the clippings to be cleared. Murray wondered what the best way might be to sustain the trail. Funch will check with owner of land, Meredith Scarlet.
* Murray wondered about the condition of the race courses in the Town Forest for the October trail races. Funch has cleaned up all that he is aware of , but he will check with the race directors to get an update on the trail conditions.
* McWade asked about marking and maintaining trails in General Field. Funch noted that an agreement was reached earlier this year with Groton Conservation Trust but implementation details need to be worked out. For example, when exactly the grass can be mowed by the Smigelskis and/or by the GTC, where signs need to be installed, the manner in which the signs are posted, the size and text of the signs, etc. McWade agreed to take the lead on working out a plan for the details. Funch will send McWade the agreement that was reached and connect her with the Groton Conservation Trust steward for General Field (Chuck Vander Linden).
* Funch noted that trail markers need replacing throughout town. Funch has materials and instructions and asked for help from all committee members.
* Good noted that Ryan Fish‘s Eagle Scout project is coming along. He is making historical signs for points of interest on several trails in town. The first one completed is in Shepley Hills.
* Funch noted that the old Groton Sportsman’s Club (currently Groton’s Emergency Medical Service is the owner) parking area is being used by the company contracted to do the lead remediation on the property.
* Funch reminded committee members to be pro-active and tackle your favorite projects. There is a lot of volunteer help to assist you, but you need to do the up-front planning (approvals, scheduling, work planning, organizing volunteers, etc.)

**Mowing**:

* Hurd parcel needs to be mowed.
* Keye’s Woods got a second mowing, as did Still Meadow.

**Chainsawing:**

* Seems the drought is damaging the root systems of large trees, and many are falling down in light winds and heavy rains.

**Gamlin Crystal Spring Bog Bridges:**

* Challenging due to Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) requirement to submit Mass Endangered Species Act (MESA) checklist. Fee for filing will be $300 for a $100+ project. Committee discussed the extra work and money required to do simple projects in a timely and cost-effective manner. Bog bridges aid in resource preservation and can be viewed as mitigators of damage, not as damaging themselves.

**Nashua Riverwalk:**

* MassTrails and Community Preservation Committee grants have been awarded.
* Notice of Intent (NOI) was submitted to Dept. of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) for review and has been posted on their Green Docket. There it is reviewed and approved/disapproved by DCR staff. There is currently concern about three aspects of the project: additional parking area, terminal loop trail, and the observation area. Funch led a site walk for DCR to alleviate their concerns. Others who participated in the site walk were Murray, Stacey Chilcoat and Marion Stoddart of the Nashua River Watershed Association (NRWA), Marina Khabituyeva (Greenway Committee), and Matt Pisani (Select Board). All concurred that DCR’s concerns seemed fully addressed by the information they were provided. DCR Trail Planner Paul Jahnige and Ellen Huffman indicated they will discuss their findings with the other DCR staff. Project is on hold until decision on scope is made by DCR. The delay might push this project to spring 2023. DCR marked boundary lines that do not align with GIS maps; DCR will recheck for validity of ownership. Ellen Huffman expressed her concern about damaging tree roots when using Bobcat

**Town Forest Re-route From Parking Area Toward Nashua River**:

Completed in three hours with 15 volunteers. The old trail was blocked with trees and branches at the ends of the re-routed section.

**Fire on Tinker Trail:**

Legge reported that a patch of Tinker Trail had been burned, approximately 50 feet along the river from the first bench, roughly 4 weeks ago.

**Complete Street Committee:**

Legge reported that two projects were approved by the state: Continuation of sidewalk on West Main St. to The Groton Center; and sidewalk from the center of town to the Gibbet Hill parking lot. Projected completion estimated to be late spring 2023. These projects will connect sidewalks and trails for increased accessibility.

**Destination Groton:**

Jeff Gordon will be doing a video interview on Tinker Trail with Funch. Funch is unsure of how the video will be used.

**Large Trash:**

Harris noticed a small refrigerator near Bancroft Castle trailhead and wondered who is responsible for removal? No conclusion.

**Free Tire Disposal:**

Upcoming free tire disposal will be offered at the Transfer Station by Bruce Easom. Lynch noted that there are quite a few discarded tires at Wharton plantation.

**Subcommittees Reports**:

* Devereaux and Murray – December Town Forest hike is being planned. There is a Thursday talk at Prescott regarding Town Forest history. Groton Historical Society holds all GTF information. Volunteers for October and November walks needed. Devereaux and Funch are willing to help. Murray will post activities on Facebook and Nextdoor. Sundays at 1 has been a good time in the past for hikes.
* Derek is handling social media. Send posts to him to put up. FB metrics indicate ebb and flow of traffic. Derek will post Grotonfest promotion this week.

**Open Discussion**

**Bates-Blackman Parcel:** Wendy reported that Bates culvert has been repaired; Groton Conservation Trust is constructing a handicap trail and wildflower field.

**Staffing for Grotonfest:** 9-12, including set-up, Cianci, Peregoy, Funch; 12-4, including break-down, Legge (12-2), Murray, Lynch, Funch. Charlebois will be MIA due to broken foot. McWade has other booths to support.

**Priorities:** Funch noted that listserver of approximately 400 people can be used to recruit help for projects large and small. Advocate for the projects you want to accomplish. Trail marker parties, hikes, maintenance, pruning, etc. GTC needs to get out to ensure trails are in good condition; if issues are identified, the committee and listserver can be mobilized to get things done.

**Adjournment**

**VOTE:** On motion by Funch, seconded by Peregoy, meeting was adjourned at 8:42 pm by unanimous roll-call vote.