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

**February 21, 2023**

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| **Attendees: (**Present = X) | | | **Visitors:** |
| Chair | Paul Funch | X | Corey Magliozzi |
| Vice Chair | Wanfang Murray |  | Chris Pincott |
| Clerk | Heidi Charlebois | X | Matthew Valenta |
| Members | Sheila Devereaux |  | Arthur Johnson |
|  | Adam Burnett | X | Bruce Johnson |
|  | Darlene Deschambeault |  |  |
|  | vacant |  |  |
|  | Harris McWade | X |  |
|  | Stephen Legge | X |  |
|  | Richard Lynch | X |  |
|  | Jim Peregoy | X |  |

**CALL TO ORDER -** Funch called the meeting to order at 7:07.

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**VOTE:** Funch moved that Brittain McKinley be recommended to the Town Manager for appointment to the GTC when a vacancy opens up.; Charlebois seconded; motion approved by unanimous vote.

**VOTE:** Peregoy moved to approve the January 17 minutes. Charlebois seconded; approved by unanimous vote; Burnett abstained).

**EAGLE SCOUTS PROJECTS**

Matt Valenta: Looking for projects, cleanup of Keyes Woods might be too much for his young and small troop.

Arthur Johnson: Still probing; interested in bridge building; but voiced ‘ability’ concern. Possibly interested in invasive species removal at Keyes Woods.

Chris Pincott: Planning on building Gamlin trail bog bridges. Moving forward with help from Lynch.

**REPORTS**

**Website**

* Peregoy added photos of trail markers, with descriptions of how the different colors are used.Can be found in “About Us” section, or as a pop-up over Groton Trails Network insignia on Home Page.
* “Polish Cemetery” tag in Wharton Plantation near Burntmeadow Trail will be removed by Peregoy.

**Internet**

* GTC gmail access – need to ensure messages don’t appear as ‘read’ without actions being assigned.
* **Annual Report**
* Legge submitted to Town Manager. Photo copyright issues were raised. Can anonymous photos be published in the report? Need to check with Town Counsel.

**Trail Projects**

* Chain sawing IS ongoing with continual weather impacts on older trees.
* Legge –Noted tree down on Ames Pond Rd.
* Nashua Riverwalk’s rest and observation areas have been disapproved by DCR. This results in discrimination rather than accessibility and conservation education being less effective. The disapproval is due to concerns of adverse effects on the riverfront habitat and increased maintenance load on DCR. The Select Board has drafted a letter to the DCR Commissioner requesting that the decision be reversed. The Board will be discussing the letter at their February 27 meeting. Groton’s State Legislators are also being contacted to add their voices to asking for reconsideration of DCR’s latest descoping of the Nashua Riverwalk project.
* Funch submitted 3 grants to help with expenses for the educational signs on the Nashua Riverwalk project: Freedoms Way National Heritage Area (awarded); Nashua Rivers Wild and Scenic Stewardship Council (awarded), and Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts (April 10th notification).
* Ice Line trail name recommended by GTC for the trail from Fitch Bridge to Groton Town Forest was considered by Stewardship Committee and they voted to recommend it to the Conservation Commission.
* GTC’s recommended revisions to the Stewardship Committee’s QR code signs were discussed and will be incorporated into their design.
* The Conservation Commission is in the process of purchasing the Casella parcel with assistance from a LAND grant. Public trail will be rerouted near Nashua Rd. (to avoid private parcel) and other additions/subtractions to the trails may be made as well. This connection between the Groton Dunstable Regional High School trails and nearby trails on Nashua Rd. (Still Meadow, Northwoods, and Meadowview) is an exceptional addition to the Groton Trails Network.
* Autumn Hills Orchard has purchased abutting land on Reedy Meadow Rd. McWade will reach out to landowners to inquire about using these parcels to access the Walker and McLain’s Woods trails.

**Subcommittee Reports**

* Consensus was that the 8th Annual Conservation Forum was a success.
* Destination Groton Committee – They rolled out their website, which has much interesting information.
* Complete Streets Committee – Legge reports the Committee has received monies from the state for sidewalks along Rte. 40 to Gibbet Hill Grill and along Rte. 225 from W. Main St. to The Groton Center. These projects will be built this year.

**DISCUSSION**

* Freedoms Way’s Hidden Treasures events are being planned for the month of May. Committees/individuals are encouraged to participate in promoting the historical/cultural/economic values of the region (eco-tourism). Their excellent website highlights farmers’ markets, art collaboratives, et cetera. Online submission of Hidden Treasures activities is available on their website.
* Funch reported that the Stewardship Committee would benefit (and vice versa) from having a representative from the Trails Committee. McWade indicated she would be happy to consider it – Meetings appear to be on the first Wednesday of the month.
* Groton Conservation Trust is having a public party at General Field on March 21st – coincides with GTC meeting.
* Legge noted that this is the 25th year for the GTC. Should we do any sort of silver anniversary event?
  + McWade - Donate your quarters idea for a fundraiser for the GTC’s 25 anniversary.
* Magliozzi – Raised the idea of holding a mountain bike race for fundraising. Funch noted that Town committees cannot solicit funds or donations, but that independent non-profit groups can do so. This is the arrangement we have with the Squannacook River Runners who use the Groton Town Forest Trail Races to fundraise for the GTC.

**VOTE:** Lynch moved to adjourn, Peregoy seconded. Motion passed by unanimous vote at 8:59.