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

**April 18, 2023**

**Room 112, The Groton Center**

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| **Attendees: (**Present = X) | | | **Visitors:** |
| Chair | Paul Funch | X | Matthew Valenta (Scout) |
| Vice Chair | Wanfang Murray | X | Kiirja Paananen |
| Clerk | Heidi Charlebois |  |  |
| Members | Vacant |  |  |
|  | Vacant |  |  |
|  | Corey Magliozzi |  |  |
|  | Brittain McKinley | X |  |
|  | Harris McWade | X |  |
|  | Stephen Legge | X |  |
|  | Richard Lynch | X |  |
|  | Jim Peregoy | X |  |

1. Call to Order – Funch called the meeting to order at 7:00.
2. Minutes of March 12, 2023

**VOTE:** Motion to approve minutes from March 21 was passed by unanimous vote.

1. Reports
   1. Members Burnett and Devereauxhave resigned due to other time constraints.
   2. Recommendation for appointment of new member Paananen

**VOTE:** Motion to recommend Kiirja Paananen to the Town Manager for the open seat on the Trails Committee was passed by unanimous vote.

* 1. Committee Member Interest Form - Kellie Walsh expressed interest in joining but was unable to attend this meeting. She has been invited to the May meeting.
  2. Trail Projects
     1. Nashua Riverwalk
        1. Funch provided an update on the progress of the project. DCR has not approved the observation and rest area components, which compromises the accessibility of the trail.
        2. A Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts (CFNCM) grant of $1,500 was awarded.
        3. Emails have been sent to our local legislators (Cronin, Scarsdale, Eldridge, Sena, and Kennedy) asking for their support of the observation and rest areas. All have agreed the project should go ahead. Eldridge replied that he will let Cronin and Kennedy take the lead.
        4. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee, the Commission on Accessibility, and the Select Board have written letters to the DCR Commissioner objecting to the cutting of the rest and observation areas.
        5. Design of the signage is ongoing with staff at the Nashua River Watershed Association (NRWA) and with historical input from Josh Volmar.
     2. Matthew Valenta’s Eagle Project
        1. Project is 4 bog bridges on the Paugus Trail in Groton Woods.
        2. A presentation was given by Valenta with pictures and map of the bridge locations.
        3. McWade asked if the trail was used by horses and it was confirmed that it was not.
        4. The bridges will be 3’x10’ with 6” wide decking boards and a rail on the sides, supported by concrete blocks.
        5. Project timeframe is to have them installed by the end of the summer.
        6. The Committee recommended that stains not be used on the wood.
        7. The Committee approved of the project.
  3. Trail Clearing
     1. A large tree has fallen near the castle at Gibbet Hill. A path through it has been cleared by Lynch but the tree removal will be done by the Gibbet Hill Grill once the ground is hard enough for machinery.
     2. Numerous other fallen trees were reported and some have been removed by Committee members (Lynch, Funch) at several locations.
     3. The Committee’s backpack leaf blower is in for maintenance because it would not start. Expected to be repaired in May.
  4. Maintenance List
     1. A discussion about how to organize the list of maintenance projects occurred. The emails generated by the interactive maps currently go to three Committee members so others are not aware of the projects. It was suggested that a google sheet be used to track the jobs. McKinley will set up a sheet and send it to the Committee for review.
  5. 25th Anniversary Planning
     1. A discussion of options for the 25 places / trails / miles occurred.
     2. An example list of sites was presented by Peregoy ([www.grotontrails.org/25years.html](http://www.grotontrails.org/25years.html)) that links places of interest to the interactive map. It was generally agreed that this was a good way to go and Legge will review before the next meeting to finalize. Suggested locations list from members is [here](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1AWl4oMUmmWwiZ_7FPUeUdvlsqdmQF4eo7fZ3EVaAUWc/edit?usp=sharing).
     3. Patch Discussion
        1. The proposed patch would be based on the current trail logo (green circle and the “tree” arrow) - two color patch, dark green and white.
        2. Proposed text would have 25 years (in white) in the green arrow and 1998-2023 in the outer ring (white text on green background)
        3. McWade will work with the Nashoba Valley Artist Guild on a final design and get pricing.
  6. Finances
     1. Squannacook River Runners donated $900 to the Gift Fund from proceeds of the 2022 Groton Town Forest Trail Races.
     2. Current Gift Fund balance is $7,277.
  7. Website
     1. The Ice Line Trail has been named on OpenStreetMap but it is not showing up for some unknown reason.

1. Discussion
   1. 2023 GCT Volunteer Form
      1. A liability release form for Committee members working on Groton Conservation Trust properties in 2023 was signed by all members present.
   2. Orientation Sheet for New (and Old) Members
      1. Funch drafted a sheet with information intended for orienting new members to the mission and high-level procedures of the Trails Committee. It was met with general approval.
   3. Parcels Listing
      1. The [parcel lis](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1vB_eAG5aZQ_ndDMCPte4JaJ11T2tqR1F/edit?usp=share_link&ouid=104901807557492693139&rtpof=true&sd=true)t was shown with data about the various parcels and who are the designated maintainers.
      2. McKinley noted that the grid locations and code did not match current GCT maps and that some of the parcels were difficult to locate. Hyperlink to the pinpoints of the interactive map would help and he offered to work with Peregoy to figure out how to do that. A link to the parcel data on the town GIS would also be useful.
   4. Grotonfest
      1. Funch reported that the non-profit fee for setting up a booth at Grotonfest has doubled this year to $150. The Committee agreed that this seems excessive and would like to join with other local non-profits to draft and sign a letter to The Groton Herald and/or the Grotonfest organizers to ask that the fee be reduced.
      2. Discussed if skipping Grotonfest would be warranted due to the increased cost, but a conclusion was not reached.
   5. Proposed New Trails
      1. Martin’s Pond Road – Members had a short discussion about a possible trail along Martin’s Pond Road to connect the Priest Trail to Shattuck Street.
      2. Connection from Torrey Woods to Floyd Conservation Area – This would require a boardwalk but consensus was that it would be a worthwhile link. Area needs to be studied to determine best/shortest route for a boardwalk.
   6. Attention to Other Committees / Boards
      1. Funch noted that the Committee needs to pay attention to the work of other town organizations (e.g., Planning Board, Conservation Commission\*, Stewardship Committee\*, Complete Streets Committee\*, Sustainability Commission, Park Commission, Town Forest Committee\*, Greenway Committee, Williams Barn Committee, Destination Groton Committee, Groton Conservation Trust Stewardship Committee\*, Friends of Nashua River Rail Trail, Squannacook Greenways). Those noted with an asterisk are most closely aligned with the Trails Committee’s work. The discussion will continue at the next meeting.
   7. Town Meeting - Conservation Restrictions Articles
      1. Articles at the Spring Town Meeting involve conservation restrictions on some properties in town. A brief discussion about this noted that existing and potential future trails on the parcels involved should be identified by the conservation restrictions and the Committee should be involved.
2. Adjournment

**VOTE:** A motion to adjourn the meeting was passed by unanimous vote at 9:05.