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

**18 July 2023**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Attendees: (**Present = X) | | | **Visitors:** |
| Chair | Paul Funch | X | Wendy Good |
| Vice Chair | Wanfang Murray | X | Bruce Johnson |
| Clerk |  |  |  |
| Members |  |  |  |
|  | Kiirja Paananen | X |  |
|  | Harris McWade | X |  |
|  | Britt McKinley | X |  |
|  | Steve Legge | X |  |
|  | Richard Lynch | X |  |
|  | Jim Peregoy | X |  |
|  | Tom Montilli | X |  |
|  | Bob Fournier | X |  |
|  | Ken Adams | X |  |

1. Called to order at 7:00 by Funch. Meeting held in The Groton Center, Room 102.
2. **Reorganization of Committee for FY24** 
   1. **VOTE:** Funch for Chair, Murray for Vice Chair, Co-Clerks McKinley and Fournier. Motion to accept slate of candidates made by Funch, seconded by Lynch, and passed by unanimous vote.
3. **VOTE:** To approve minutes from 20 June 2023 meeting. Motion made by Peregoy, seconded by Legge, and passed by unanimous vote.
4. **Reports**
   1. Members

WelcomedFournier and Adams to the Trails Committee**.**

* 1. Trail Projects
     1. Nashua Riverwalk

Meeting with new DCR Commissioner Brian Arrigo has been moved to July 21st.  
Although DCR has funded the Riverwalk project, they have not approved the additional parking area, the observation area (needed for the educational signs), or the rest areas (needed for an accessible trail). The process seems stalled. As a compromise, Funch proposed moving the educational signs to the end of the Tinker trail but has not heard back if that is acceptable.

* + 1. Trail Maintenance

Town Forest (chainsawed 5 trees); MBTA in W. Groton, Johnston, Keyes Woods, Sawtell, Sorhaug Woods, and McLain’s Woods (mowed trails); installed 4 Conservation Commission (CC) property signs (Patrica Hallet, Priest Family, Fitch-Best Woods). Rain has caused delays in maintenance projects. Lynch looked at the Bates land and noted that the Groton Conservation Trust (GCT) work there is ongoing.

* + 1. New Trails Projects
       1. Casella Preserve and Priest Family Trail Proposals: Presentations to CC will be given on 7/25. Trails have been flagged for review. Proposed trail plans have been given to CC and GCT that show the new proposed trails and some old ones to be deprecated. GCT approved the Casella Preserve proposal with some minor adjustments but had concerns about the Priest Connector Trail along Martins Pond Rd. With the recent heavy rains, there is a lot of water at the drainage area and elsewhere as well. CC got a firm “no” on obtaining an easement across a 200-foot section of private property, so trail would need to go up to the road or possibly on top of the culvert to get around the private property. Area east of the culvert is largely high ground and would present no problem for creating a trail.
       2. Harrison Ripley Forest Trail Proposal: MassWildlife will hold the CR for this area and has suggested that trail should be done before the CR is signed. Discussions are being planned with the Black family and CC. CC is asking how soon the Trails Committee could have the trail completed. A spur trail with a gradual slope down to the pond is proposed to guide trail users away from the steep side of the esker to prevent erosion. McWade expressed concerns about wildlife disruptions created by a new trail.
  1. Complete Streets Committee Report: Legge explained that the State has set up a grants program for Complete Streets projects. State pays for construction and towns pay for design. More towns have applied for projects so it is getting harder to get projects funded. The Town received approval last year for sidewalks from end of the downtown sidewalk on Rte. 40 to the Gibbet Hill Grill and from West Groton to The Groton Center. The design was finished this spring, but a higher cost was estimated. The Department of Public Works offered to do some of the work to bring the cost down. Town asked the State to postpone construction funding to next year and that was approved.
  2. 25th Anniversary Planning
     1. Murray will update the form for reporting sites visited to not be editable. QR code will point to the webpage with the list of the sites and the link to the form for reporting. Murray and Montilli will generate the social media and Groton Herald press releases. McWade will work on finding a vendor for the patches.
  3. Website and Interactive Map Updated
     1. Peregoy updated a number of pages on the website based on member reviews.
     2. Funch asked that members continue to give feedback on the website text.

1. **Expense Reimbursements**
   1. **VOTE:** To pay Grotonfest registration fee for a booth from Gift Fund. Motion made by Funch, seconded by Lynch, passed by a unanimous vote.
   2. **VOTE:**  To reimburse Funch $46.94 for hedge trimmer repairs. Motion made by Funch, seconded by Lynch, and passed by a unanimous vote.
   3. Pry bar - McKinley will donate one and Funch will return the one he bought.
2. **Discussion**
   1. Stoddart Trail Enhancements: Danielle and Peter Haley have requested the Trail Committee’s assistance in upgrading the Stoddart Trail. Funch has estimated that roughly $3-5,000 will be required to upgrade the trail. There was consensus that the Trails Committee could at least provide an advisor to the Haleys for the planning on how to proceed.
   2. Liaisons to Town Boards/Committees/Commissions: Funch asked members to sign up to keep track of the agendas of other committees. File is on GoogleDocs.
   3. Parcel Listing and Stewardship Updates: Funch asked members to fill in which parcels they would like to monitor and maintain. File is on GoogleDocs.
   4. Potential Projects: Funch provided a list of projects for members to consider taking on. File is on GoogleDocs.
3. **VOTE**: Motion to Adjourn was made and passed by a unanimous vote at 9:06