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

**19 September 2023**

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

1. Called to order at 7:01 by Funch. Meeting held in The Groton Center, Room 102.
2. **VOTE:** To approve minutes from 18 August 2023 meeting. Motion made by Peregoy, seconded by Lynch, and passed by unanimous vote.
3. **Reports**
	1. Trail Projects
		1. Nashua Riverwalk

Funch continued to communicate with Jennifer Stowe (DCR), but we still do not have approval for the accessible trail.

* 1. Trail Maintenance
* Casella Preserve – bench-cut the esker incline, blew off trails, cleared trails, de-stumped trails, blocked off deprecated trails, installed trailhead posts, trimmed back trails (including the trail to HS). Trail is now complete.
* Fitch-Best/Priest Family/Patricia Hallet parcel signs - installed crossbars between posts
* Gamlin Crystal Spring – inspected Boy Scout bog bridges
* Groton Woods - replaced trailhead posts @Forest Ln, Little Hollow Rd, Duck Pond & Hidden Valley, and Woodland Pond, trimmed entrances, affixed markers to all trailhead posts; chainsawed 4 trees; additional trailhead post purchased for $56.
* Martins Pond CA - installed parcel sign
* McLain's Woods - replaced "Groton Conservation Commission" sign; chainsawed 1 tree
* MS XC Course – chainsawed 2 trees, de-stumped, mowed, trimmed, and blew off trails
* Northwoods - installed 3 trailhead posts
* Red Line – chainsawed 3 trees
* Skinner Forest – chainsawed 2 trees
* Sorhaug Woods (Mahoney Ln) - installed distance sign
* Tinker Trail - leveled concrete bench, blew off trail, smoothed entrance to parking area
* Town Forest - chainsawed 2 trees
* Walker - chainsawed 1 tree
* Watson Way - installed distance sign
* Wharton Plantation – trimmed trails
	1. Trail Project Approved – Harrison J. Ripley Forest Trail approved by Conservation Commission (pending approval by landowners)
	2. Trail Project Planned – Start of Pollinator Corridor from The Groton Center to the Spencer Circle Trail. Requires survey. The Sustainability commission will get the approvals for the trail.
1. **25th Anniversary, Business Card, Pamphlets, Social Media, Print Media**
	1. Files provided by Montilli and copies put on GoogleDocs.
	2. Will have the business cards by next week for Grotonfest.
	3. Will talk about patches next month.
2. **Website and Interactive Map**
	1. Casella trails were added to the map.
	2. Some people are having trouble reporting their gps location and/or using email functions (Android and iPhone). Peregoy will look into it.
3. **Sign Subcommittee**
	1. Meeting held with members Lynch, Fournier, Paananen, Adams, and Funch
	2. Reviewed spreadsheet of proposed expenses for a year. Included auger, posts, and informational signs. Spreadsheet was extended to a second year to cover backlog of potential trail project expenses. Could seek an additional earmark next year or apply for a Community Preservation Act grant to cover these additional expenses.
	3. **VOTE:** Motion to provide report and spreadsheet to Destination Groton (Greg Sheldon, Chair) made by McWade, seconded by Legge, and passed by unanimous vote.
4. **Discussions**
	1. Stoddart Trail: McKinley developed an estimate of about $1300 for the upgrades and drafted a Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA). Once the analysis is complete, McKinley will get back to the Haleys to discuss the next steps, which will include getting approval for the project from Corey Wrinn of the New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF), submitting the RDA to the Conservation Commission, getting their approval to proceed, and raising money. It was noted that any funds raised for this trail project will be deposited in the Town of Groton’s Trails Committee Gift Fund and then dispensed from there. A suggestion was made to consider using different wood from pressure-treated to make it less slippery. Another suggestion was to cover the planks with geotextile fabric and pea stone.
	2. Grotonfest: Discussion about who will cover what time slots finished with seven members volunteering. Display materials and handouts are all set and Montilli will prepare final products.
	3. Liaisons to Town Boards/Committees/Commissions: Funch created a spreadsheet of who will cover which meetings and asked that members fill in as many spots as possible. All meetings were covered by at least one member but some back-ups are still needed. Members will monitor agendas, attend meetings (in person or virtually) as necessary, and make reports to the full committee.
	4. Parcel Listing and Stewardship: Most parcels have been covered but additional parcels are still open. Funch asked members to inspect their parcels twice yearly at a minimum and report any problems to the Committee that they cannot resolve on their own.
	5. Priorities/Goals for FY24: There was general consensus that having a budget from the Town would be a good thing to allow us to purchase supplies, tools, benches, tables, training, etc. This topic will be pursued in future meetings with the goal of proposing a budget to be included in the FY25 Town Budget that could be approved in April 2024.
5. **Adjournment**

**VOTE:** Motion to adjourn was made at 8:51 pm and passed by unanimous vote.