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

**16 January 2024**

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| **Attendees: (**Present = X) | **Visitors:** |
| Chair | Paul Funch | X |  |
| 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 |  |  |
|  | Tom Montilli | X |  |
|  | Ken Adams | X |  |

1. Called to order at 7:46 by Funch. Meeting held using Zoom due to weather.
2. **VOTE:** To approve minutes from November 21, 2023 meeting. Motion made by McKinley, seconded by Lynch, and passed by unanimous vote.
3. **Reports**
	1. Trail Projects
		1. Stoddart Trail - NEFF unable to review RDA during end-of-year crunch but assurance from Beth Gula (Stewardship Manager) that she and Corey Wrinn (Stewardship Associate) would address it shortly.
		2. Nashua Riverwalk - Zoom meeting with Zach Crowley (DCR’s Government Relations), Kevin Rowe (Sen. Cronin’s Chief of Staff), Gerry Autler (DCR’s Director of Trails and Greenways), maybe Al Tourigny (DCR Ombudsman), and maybe Priscilla Geigis (DCR Deputy Commissioner for Conservation and Resource Stewardship), plus Sonia McCallum (Legislative Aide to Rep. Scarsdale). Expect to hear back from Gerry Autler by January 19th. Still no progress.
	2. Trail Maintenance - Since the last meeting, the following has been accomplished:
		1. Bates - Cleared limbs and improved markers for trail up Indian Hill
		2. Gamlin Crystal Spring Area – Cut buried wire fencing; removed 4 trees along the esker; removed 4 trees around the Boulder Loop.
		3. June's Woods - helped GCT begin to clear field of trees
		4. NRRT - blew leaves and pinecones off trail from Rte. 119 to the NH border
		5. Red Line - removed 6 trees
		6. Wharton Plantation – cleared Burnt Meadow trails; inspected post-NEFF harvesting; cut thorny growth along yellow loop; rerouted trail around beaver pond. Will need to address the bridge in spring.
		7. Mahoney Ln. – removed 3 trees
		8. McLain’s Woods – removed 2 trees
		9. Town Forest – removed 2 trees
	3. CPA Fund Application
		1. Submitted Draft Project Application Proposal (PAP)– January 11th
		2. Letters of Support from Destination Groton Committee, Groton Conservation Commission, Groton Conservation Trust, NEFF, Town Manager Mark Haddad. Letters of Support were sent to the Community Preservation Committee for the following projects: Sustainability Commission’s “Pollinator Corridor Project” and The Squannacook Greenways’ “Phase II Squannacook River Rail Trail.” The latter requests funds for the design and permitting stage of the project from Bertozzi south toward W. Groton Center.
		3. Town Field Shed Use (one full bay) approved by Town Manager and Park Commission. Will also allow parking of storage trailer. Clean-up of the shed is needed and will be coordinated with DPW and TM.
	4. Committee Budget
		1. Funch talked to Mark Haddad about getting a line item on the town budget for the committee. He agreed it was a good idea, but not this year.
		2. Network Solutions - Bill for the domain name renewal for 3 years, $119.97; private registration for domain name for 5 years, $64.95; expiration protection, $9.99. Total of $194.91 for the renewal.
		VOTE: Motion to reimburse from checking account made by Fournier, seconded by Murray, and passed by unanimous vote.
		3. Grotonfest Spring - May 19th, $50 by March 1st. McKinley volunteered to lead the event.
	5. Sign Subcommittee
		1. Reduction in money for signs by 50% from the state. Will now get $7500.
		2. Lynch will set up a subcommittee meeting to reprioritize the list with the lesser value.
	6. Website Refresh Subcommittee
		1. Committee met and created presentation
		2. Reviewed other local hiking/conservation websites (Concord, Westford, etc.)
		3. Discussed with Scott Lewis - his business designs and maintains trail websites
			1. uses WordPress with common plugins
			2. easier to maintain
			3. used by many other local conservation websites
			4. would allow committee to edit content
		4. Next steps - subcommittee to get firm quote from Scott Lewis
		5. Between $500 and $1000 for one time setup.
		6. Annual cost is $800-$1000.
		7. Waiting to set up meeting when Peregoy can join.
	7. Eagle Scout Project Completion - Matt Valenta. Completed Groton Woods bog bridges off Paugus Trail. Christopher Pincott donated $320.19 to the committee from the unspent money he raised for his Gamlin Crystal Spring bridges Eagle project
	8. Town Forest Committee Seat Open – several new people are interested.
	9. Groton Conservation Forum - Feb 15th @ 6:30. Organized by GCT and to be held at The Groton Center. The speaker is TBD.
4. **Discussions**
	1. CPA Grant Request
		1. Determine best quality price-point
		2. Access to the Town Field shed supports a workable plan for storage and accountability of committee purchased tools and equipment.
	2. Annual Report – Project data summary
	238 Projects, 44 volunteers (6 from GTC), 487 person-hours (355 by GTC), 163 trees chainsawed off trails, 8 property signs installed, 10 trailhead posts installed (new plus replacements)
	Major projects:
	 Middle School XC course re-opening
	 Casella trails development
	3. 25 Special places - Will pick size of patch and order them soon.
5. **Adjournment**

**VOTE:** Motion to adjourn was made at 8:49 pm and passed by unanimous vote.