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

**16 July 2024**

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| **Attendees: (**Present = X) | | | **Visitors:** |
| Chair | Paul Funch | X | Bruce Easom |
| Vice Chair | Wanfang Murray | X | Peter Carson |
| Co-Clerk | Britt McKinley | X | Jon Strauss |
| Co-Clerk | Bob Fournier | X |  |
| Members |  |  |  |
|  | Kiirja Paananen | X |  |
|  | Josh LoPresti | X |  |
|  | Steve Legge | X |  |
|  | Richard Lynch | X |  |
|  | Jim Peregoy | X |  |
|  | Tom Montilli | X |  |
|  | Dan Pierpont | X |  |

1. **Called to order** at 7:04 by Funch. Meeting held in The Groton Center, Room 112.
2. **VOTE:** To approve minutes from 18 June 2024 meeting. The motion was made by Funch, seconded by McKinley, and passed by unanimous vote.
3. **VOTE:** To approve the following slate of committee officers for FY25: Chair – Funch, Vice Chair – Murray, Co-Clerks - Fournier and McKinley. The motion was made by Funch, seconded by Lynch, and passed by unanimous vote.
4. **Reports**
5. Trail Maintenance
   1. Stoddart Trail work is close to done. The last delivery of rock is in place.
   2. Keyes Woods - knotweed at Peabody St. entrance cut back; plans made with DCR to improve intersection of trail with Nashua River Rail Trail; project scheduled for July 18th.
   3. Shepley Hills - Paananen trimmed north and east trails, including cutting back an evergreen that partially blocked the trail. Some markers were added/replaced. Erosion on the trails that go over the drumlins was discussed. Funch has discussed this problem with GCT and will pursue it with them again.
   4. Members are encouraged to sign up for parcels and monitor. Please send an email to the committee if work needs to be done.
6. Nashua Riverwalk in Rich SF:
   1. Obtained approval from MA Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP), pending approval of Turtle Protection Plan.
   2. Preparation of specifications for bids is ongoing with Mr. Haddad.
   3. The sign design team (NRWA and Josh Volmar) will begin work in late July for 5 educational signs, in coordination with DCR Interpretive Services. Will need 3 bidders for the physical signs whereas we have requested that the design work be procured with a sole-source contract.
7. CPA Grant – Tools and equipment are being purchased using Town of Groton’s P-card. Each purchase needs 3 quotes and a sales tax exemption form for each vendor.
   1. Ordered: Tracked Hauler from Walmart and a number of tools from Ace Hardware. It is estimated that the tracked hauler will be delivered on July 26th.
   2. Remaining items to be ordered: Trencher, 2 chainsaws, rakes, plus some other hand tools.
8. Sign Subcommittee and Earmark
   1. Two educational signs have been ordered from VackerSign. Delivery is estimated for early September. One is approved for the Pollinator Garden at The Groton Center and the other is TBD.
   2. Trailhead posts have been ordered from Gate City Fence.
   3. Auger has been purchased and picked up.
9. Equipment maintenance
   1. The self-propelled leaf blower is subject to a DR safety recall and is still at Great Road Farm & Garden for free repair.
   2. The blower chute is also being repaired.
10. Shed/Garage at Town Field behind GPL
    1. The work on the work shelf, doors, locks, and exterior repair/painting will start on Monday July 20th.
    2. We have requested electrical service and storage for gasoline; Need to check with the Fire Chief if gas storage is OK; May need a cabinet for the flammables.
11. Liability Forms - signed by all committee members.
12. Keyes Woods
    1. DCR is providing gravel/dirt to cover the culvert and level out the drainage ditch next to the NRRT.
    2. RDA for larger project should be approved in mid-August. George Woods is the Eagle rank candidate who may lead the project; McKinley will contact him about the schedule.
13. Wharton Plantation
    1. The three bridge pieces have been removed and the trail closed.
    2. Burntmeadow trail work will take place on August 5th at 8:30 am to attempt to smooth out the trails that were roughed up by the logging operation over the winter.
14. McLain’s Woods – Tractor work to level field (B. Easom): sinkholes in field were partially filled. Will need to buy some fill to complete the filling of the sinkholes.
15. Finances - $14,481 is in the gift funds as of July 16th.
16. Town Forest Trail Races are scheduled for Oct 13th.
17. Grotonfest is scheduled for Sept 28th.
18. Lyman property off Townsend Road has been purchased by the CC. Trail projects need to be planned.
19. Project Planning
    1. Near-term – Stoddart Trail should be completed soon.
    2. Summer – Keyes Woods, Sawtell
    3. Fall – Nashua Riverwalk
20. Squannacook River Rail Trail discussion - Bruce Easom, Jon Strauss, and Pete Carson discussed their interest in developing the rail trail section from Cutler Field to the Nashua River bridge that goes into Ayer. - The Squannacook Greenways is working on the section of the Squannacook River Rail Trail in Groton that runs from Bertozzi to Cutler Field.

a. The Committee expressed unanimous support for their project.

b. Easom, Strauss, and Carson would like to work on this project as a municipal committee. The Committee discussed the possibility of having this project managed by a subcommittee of the Trails Committee versus forming a separate town committee. All agreed additional information is needed to understand the implications for committee size, quorum requirements, and degree of independence.

1. **Adjournment**

**VOTE:** Motion to adjourn was made at 9:04 pm and passed by unanimous vote.