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

**16 October 2024**

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

1. **Called to order** at 7:17 by Funch. Meeting held in The Groton Center, Room 112.
2. **VOTE:** To approve minutes from 17 September 2024 meeting. The motion was made by Peregoy, seconded by Lynch, and passed by unanimous vote.
3. **Report**
   1. Nashua Riverwalk – A site walk occurred with Dept. of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to review potential locations of educational signs. The Order of Conditions (OOC) for our Notice of Intent (NOI) was provided to DCR for approval, but some new requirements came up at the site walk that will require an amendment to the NOI. Informed that a Construction Access Permit is required. It was submitted and should be approved on Friday, 9/18. The contractor will be notified that they can begin construction.
   2. Shed/Garage – Funding was approved at the Town Meeting for improvements to shed as part of the Town Manager’s budget.
   3. CPA Grant – Backpack blower, rakes, chainsaw, and pole saws have been purchased as part of the grant. About $9,000 of the grant has been spent.
   4. Wharton Plantation – Jack Petropoulos came back with his tractor and removed stumps.
   5. Groton Senior Tax Work Off Helpers – Ongoing; three helpers have been working on the trails.
   6. Sawtell Eagle Project - Arthur Johnson. Project is approved and will be done in next couple weeks.
   7. Keyes Woods Eagle Project - George Woods. Project is approved.
   8. Throne Hill Eagle Project - Tim Efrates. Still in discussion with the Groton Conservation Trust to add a kiosk.
   9. Educational Signs (Invasives and Pollinators) – Signs have been received and are stored in the shed, ready to install.
   10. Middle School Cross Country Course Obstruction – A few Groton Conservation Commission border delineation posts were installed within the actual XC course pathway, creating a safety hazard. It turns out that some posts will be moved as they were not in the correct place per the agreement with the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District. While we have little control, we hope the posts that are moved will not be put in the course pathway.
   11. Trail Maintenance – 39 trees removed with a chainsaw. Maintenance work was done on Bates, Blackman, Wharton, Gamlin, Wiewel, Casella, and Meadowview.
   12. GrotonFest - Beautiful day with lots of visitors.
4. **Reports**
   1. Sign Subcommittee (Montilli)
      1. Trail markers are being reprinted with the ink color that we approved. We have not paid for them yet.
      2. Groton Town Forest Trail Race markers are fading and need replacement; it was recommended to use some of the earmark grant for this purpose.
      3. Of the $7,500 grant, we have spent $1,951 for interpretive signs, $1,004 for trail markers, $508 for posts, $549 for the auger, for a total of $4,012.
   2. Stoddard Project Completion Report (McKinley) - Bridge is reported to be a bit slippery for horses. McKinley is trying to get geotextile to put on top to help with traction. The total cost of what was paid so far is $1,670; we received $2,258 in donations. Gravel was donated by Legasse Companies. McKinley is preparing thank you letters to donors.
   3. Website Migration Status (Lynch) - Property descriptions are being written. We are in discussion with website developer Scott Lewis. Hopkinton Area Land Trust provides an example of the type of site he develops.
      1. Discussion on how to show activities supported on each parcel and what activities we should include in the matrix.
      2. Discussion on whether we can maintain our current OpenStreetMaps mapping mechanism. Maybe we can coexist our map with the labeled Google maps as shown on the Hopkinton site.
   4. Design of Wharton Bridge Replacement (Montilli)
      1. The investigation is continuing. Considering using docking over brackets attached to posts (helical piers) to bridge the 5-foot+ channel in middle and a 90-foot total span over the highest water conditions.
      2. The bridge on Williams Lake in Marlborough was suggested as an example. Montilli and Funch will investigate the design of this bridge.
5. **Discussion**
   1. **(VOTE)** Signatures - Reimbursements approved and signatures added to receipts.
   2. (**VOTE**) To approve guidelines for MassTrails Conference Chainsaw Safety Workshop reimbursements. More info at <https://www.masstrailsconference.com/>. The Chainsaw Safety Workshop is two full days, October 21st and 22nd. Montilli and possibly LoPresti are planning on attending.
      1. McKinley made a motion to pay the full fee for the chainsaw workshop; seconded by Paananen. Approved by unanimous vote.
   3. Groton Town Forest Trail Races - It was a successful race on a slightly wet and cool day. Paul set a course record in the 70-79 age group. Squannacook River Runners will probably net about $1,300 from the race and most of that will be donated to the Trails Committee.
   4. Lynch will check on any ways to get donations to the Trails Committee, particularly if this could be added to the new web page. Funch will check to see what the Town Hall’s regulations are regarding this possibility.
6. **Adjournment**

**VOTE:** Motion to adjourn was made by Peregoy at 8:40 pm and was passed by unanimous vote.