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

**19 November 2024**

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

Meeting was held at The Groton Center, Room 112.

**Call to Order** - Funch began meeting at 7:00 pm.

**VOTE:** A motion was made to approve 15 October 2024 minutes; unanimously approved.

**Progress Reports and Next Steps**

* 1. Nashua Riverwalk Trail Installation and Educational Signage
		1. The trail is done! 50 person-hours expended to prepare trail corridor for installation work; Ream Design completed trail installation on November 16; payment from MassTrails grant ($17,972) and CPA funds ($8,637) is in process.
		2. Nashua River Watershed Association’s (NRWA’s) educational sign design work with DCR’s Interpretive Services is progressing well; Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts (CFNCM) grant deadline was October 31; first sign design completed and split payment from CPA and CFNCM to NRWA is in process; need to prepare Final Report to CFNCM for $1,500 grant to support educational signage; three other sign designs are also moving along;
		3. Near-term plans include preparing an adjunct Notice of Intent (NOI) for accommodations required for educational signage, granite curbing, benches, and picnic table.
	2. Shed/Garage -cleaned door; cleared black walnuts off grass; in need of better organization; needs a sign-up list and process for borrowing tools and equipment; reminder signs for locking up, turning off lights, etc. The Committee would like to plan a visit to see how it looks and what is in there.
	3. CPA Grant – Tools & Equipment – nearly spent; final purchases need to be planned. Total spent to date is $10,779.07. The Committee felt that purchase of a garden cart and/or wheelbarrow would be a particularly useful addition.
	4. Sawtell Eagle Project (Arthur Johnson) – Bridge and Trail Drainage – completed; roughly 75 person-hours of effort by scouts, parents, and trail volunteers.
	5. Keyes Woods Eagle Project (George Woods) – Bridges and Trail Drainage – completed; roughly 75 person-hours of effort by scouts, parents, and trail volunteers; also trimmed trails and chainsawed tree.
	6. Trail Maintenance – Wharton Plantation (wildflower garden started by Lynch), McLain’s Woods (blew leaves off sidewalk and grass borders), NRRT (re-opened equestrian path in Groton and part of Pepperell; to continue northward next spring; leaf blowing this Friday morning from Pepperell to the north), Groton Hills (installed rebar to hold bog bridges in position; need to add support blocks and more rebar)
	7. Stoddart Trail project financials and letters to donors will be written and sent by McKinley before next meeting; need to transport 3/8” gravel left over at Sawtell and Keyes Woods to cover the ¾” gravel.
	8. Map Maintenance – Bates; Scarlet Hill; feed discrepancies to Peregoy.
	9. Sign Subcommittee – planning trailhead post and parcel sign installations; planning special signage. Funch encouraged members to look for signs that might need updating.

**Discussions**

1. **VOTE:** To contract with Scott Lewis/Lewis Studios on website development and maintenance.

Our goals are to make the website more sustainable and more modern.

1. Presentation made by the website subcommittee: Scott Lewis Studios was contacted. They do websites for a number of conservation organizations in the local area. A discussion ensued about whether the website should be organized by parcel versus by trails, or by activities. All agreed that pure parcel level is not the way to go. Discussion of how maps can present the trails network to new and experienced users. Two views were expressed: One, for maintaining the interactive map as is, received a lot of support. The second was having the map provide more descriptive information for inexperienced users, and this also received strong support. There was a long discussion about how people use the website and maps. The committee looked at the way the Hopkinton website works as an example. In the end, using both views of the trails network seemed best, and it was decided to have Lynch ask Lewis about the feasibility and implications of this hybrid approach, as well as to ask for a mock-up before proceeding too much further.
2. The cost would be $1200 for the initial website and then $900 a year for maintenance. Question arose as to whether a bid process is required or if a sole source is OK. Funch will check on this with the Town Manager.
	1. **VOTE (Signatures):** Reimbursement Approvals and Signatures – MassTrails Conference fees (Paananen, Fournier, LoPresti, Montilli); tools and equipment (chain saw blades); gravel.
	2. Shed Procedures – Sign-up sheet and reminder signs need to be developed.
	3. The Committee consensus was to not schedule a December 2024 meeting.

**VOTE:** A motion to Adjourn was made at @ 9:04; approved by unanimous vote.