

GROTON PARKS FOUNDATION

Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, 1 May 2013

Meeting Minutes

President John Silsby called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM. Present were Treasurer Neil Brown, Secretary Eric Janney (7:16), Directors B. Allyn Copp, Andrew Halsey, Raymond Munn, James Sherrard (7:05), and Domenic Venditti, Groton Parks and Recreation Director Mark Berry, Tri-Town Trails representative David Holdridge, Kent-Frost representative Chad Frost, and Stadia Engineering representative James Rossman.

Neil Brown gave the Treasurer's report: At the time of the GPF Special Meeting on 12 September 2012, the fund balance was \$5029.16. Transactions during the period included miscellaneous interest accruals, a donation of \$1600 from the Litchfield (CT) Adaptive Sports organization, a \$7700 partial payment of the DEEP grant, a \$7700 payment to Kent-Frost for work to date, giving a March 2013 ending balance of \$8230.92. Neil indicated that the GPF is an attractive site for donations, being a 501(c)3 corporation. The Treasurer's report was unanimously accepted as presented, with the annotation from Allyn Copp that the report was "the most exciting treasurer's report" he had ever heard.

President John Silsby reported that fall activity saw the DEEP (originally DEP) grant extended for two years through 3 December 2015, thanks to the work by Eric Janney. Following review of several candidates, Kent-Frost was chosen as the landscape architect for the trails development process.

Parks and Recreation Director Mark Berry reported on the development of the "Events Field" on the Copp property involving to this point the selective clearing of brush and small trees over a five- to six acre area along the northeasterly section of the original farm road, with grade reestablishment, hydro-seeding, and wildflower seeding to follow. The area will be maintained as a natural meadow, and an access from Rt 184 will be preserved. Andy Halsey questioned rhetorically whether we needed to actually host events there, indicating that it would be just as good to leave it passive as a natural area. Mark Berry further reported that there were only two e-mail comments/questions regarding the field, both from Ledyard residents, and that there had been an anonymous posting complaining of the "clear-cutting" of the field, obviously an ill-informed comment and corrected in the New London Day, with no lasting effect.

Kent-Frost representative Chad Frost and Stadia Engineering representative Jim Rossman reported on the status of the trails design. The parking lot would eventually be expanded to four times its present size to accommodate the increased attendance due to the events field and trail awareness. Primary trails would be made ADA trails-compliant include the "Reservoir Loop", developed ten feet in width from the parking lot counter-clockwise to the south around to the original homesite and then continuing north and west back to the parking lot. A "Central Spine" trail would run from the parking lot across the Reservoir Loop southeast to the homesite and beyond and be developed to 14 feet in width. Two additional "natural meadows" would be reconstituted by cutting the trees and invasive species which have appeared in those historical meadows over the past several decades. The trail development strategy would include both the primary trails and the single-track trails through the rest of the property, with the constraint to avoid any encroachment onto private properties and to negotiate with Groton Utilities regarding the possible use of its upland areas far-removed from the reservoirs to allow hiking on the existing trail system on its property. The funding limit of the DEEP grant would define Phase I of the trail development to include

parking lot expansion to only twice its current size (by reclaiming a staging area for this project) and the portion of the Reservoir Loop from the parking lot, out past the dog park to the overlook picnic area and then southeast to and including the first wetland crossing with a wooden structure (with the permitting to include the second wetland crossing), plus trail signage for the entire primary trail system. Neil Brown recounted the history of the Copp property development philosophy which was, and is, trails. It was questioned whether the remainder of the \$42K left-over funding from the original parking lot work and subsequently approved by DEEP to be transferred to the Events Field could be applied to the trail development work. With the realization that the Events Field would certainly need access to it from the public ways, consensus agreed that the creation of access trails to the events field was within the intent of the former grant and that the \$42K could be applied to the development of those trails. Allyn Copp indicated that we should not necessarily close the trails that are not intended to be developed under this project, but rather leave them as they were created and currently used by enough people to have kept them identifiable trails; this idea was agreed to by Ray Munn and Chad Frost, with no disagreement. It was clarified, however, that trails leading off the Copp property, especially to the Rt 117 private properties to the east, would necessarily be closed off.

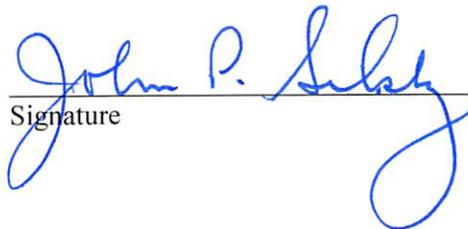
Tri-Town Trails representative Dave Holdridge reported that of identical grant applications from Ledyard and Groton for development of the TTT, the Ledyard application was approved for \$160K and the Groton application was not, presumably because of the current grant for Groton (Copp) trails and other open space grants. Groton Utilities has a long-time position of not entertaining any discussion of use of GU property for the TTT project, but Dave Holdridge is optimistic that an upcoming panel to be convened on the subject may provide cogent independent evidence to dissuade GU's stated concerns; the panel will include representatives from the CT Parks and Forestry Association, the DEEP Forestry Department, the CT Department of Health, and others, including an invitation to GU. Dave will keep us informed.

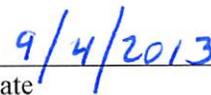
The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM.

Submitted,

Raymond S. Munn, Recorder

Minutes have been approved and accepted.


Signature


Date