

Trails Coordinating Task Force

Thursday, June 27, 2013
4 PM – Groton Senior Center
Meeting Minutes

I. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 4 pm.

II. Roll Call.

Membership in Attendance: Joellen Anderson, Mark Berry, A. Neil Brown, June Evered, Deb Jones, Debralyn Marshall-Baker, Bruce McDermott, Bea Reynolds, Susan Sutherland, Rick Steven, Sidney Van Zandt.

Guests in Attendance: Bernie French; Andrew Bowne (Town of Groton GIS Coordinator).

Bea Reynolds, the new representative from the TriTown Trail committee was welcomed.

Not in attendance: Brae Rafferty, Joan Smith

III. Approval of Minutes – May 23, 2013.

Motion to approve the minutes of May 23, 2013, made by Bruce McDermott, seconded by Neil Brown.

Discussion:

- a. Correction to III.3 Old Business, made by Joellen Anderson. The correct sign reads "Leaving Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc. Property".
- b. Correction to VII.a, New Business, second paragraph, made by Mark Berry. The original draft read:

"The Town has received two grants for this project. One is from the Copp Property, represented on this committee by Neil Brown. The other is a grant of \$160,000 from the State through the Groton Parks Foundation".

This statement should be corrected to read as follows: "The Town has received two grants for this project through the Groton Parks Foundation, represented on this committee by Neil Brown. One grant is in the amount of \$150,000 from the State".

The minutes were approved unanimously with both corrections incorporated.

IV. Correspondence/Communication

- Bruce McDermott had sent a memo to all committee members stating that trails and parks information on the Town website is poor. He recommends looking at the Day newspaper's maps and guides on hiking trails. Just about all of Groton's parks are listed on the site and usable, clear maps can also be printed from this website. He adds that a well designed

Town of Groton website and signage might help provide a better sense of these assets for RTM members when budget requests come up before them. Otherwise, there is nothing concrete that he can point to that supports these public spaces. (Bruce is a member of the Groton RTM, the group that makes the final decisions on the Town of Groton budget requests).

IV. Correspondence/Communications (cont'd)

- Rick Steven of Groton Public Utilities reported that the National Flower Administration has asked permission for a naturalist to look over utility property and mark locations where she finds that medicinal plants are growing. This individual grew up in Ledyard, she currently works in France and the U.S. She is an expert on medicinal plants and is presently doing a two-year study mapping them.
- Neil Brown mentioned that he and Mark Berry had discussed the large sign at the entrance to the Copp Property. He had seen nice photo of a man with two dogs at the dog park and felt that publicity like this might be beneficial.
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- Joellen Anderson expressed dismay that a petition had circulated encouraging Governor Malloy to sign into law a bill permitting the use of ATVs on trails. Joellen is very concerned about the considerable damage that ATVs can cause to trails.

Susan Sutherland reported that GOSA's purchase of 91 acres at Candlewood Ridge is now final. Sidney van Zandt added that this acquisition was given excellent front page coverage by the Mystic River Press. She added that she had talked with a person who is a star watcher and that this group is thrilled that they now have some place to go where there are absolutely no town or street lights to interfere with their viewing.

V. Reports. None.

VI. Old Business – Mark Berry.

b. Trail Advocacy. Mark asked that the discussion on trail advocacy be moved up on the agenda out of consideration for our guest, Andrew Bowne. Andrew asked the group what features they would like to see on the Town maps. The following suggestions were made:

1. Contours to be shown by 10 foot intervals
2. Parking availability.
- 3 Signs with photos of scenic spots along the route.
- 4 Mileage.
5. Handicapped accessible trails to be clearly marked as such.
6. An insert on the map showing clearly the location of each trail with directions to it.
- 7 A graphic profile of the trail shown horizontally (Difficulty of the trail?).
- 8 Clear signs as to what is allowed and what is not.
9. Graphics for non-English speaking persons and others who may not be able to read.
10. Locations of restrooms/Porta-Potties.
11. Are dogs allowed or not? If not, have huge sign "NO DOGS".

12. Coastal accessibility.
13. What is available, example, swimming, picnicking, etc.
14. Indicate if there are adjacent places to hike.
15. North arrow to indicate orientation.
16. Indicate lakes, streams, bridges, etc.

Andrew asked for a preferred trail for him to start with and to bring up as an example. All agreed on Pequot Woods. The Master plan map is confusing because it was done in 2004 and much of that data is no longer available. Mark Berry stated that the green and white Groton trail signs will be used for all trails in the Town, no matter who they are owned or managed by.

VI. Old Business – Mark Berry.

a. Trails Maintenance Workshop. Mark will send information out as a PDF. The date is October 16, 2013 from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm, classroom training in the am and outdoors practical experience pm. The cost is \$40 for the day, with a maximum of 20 people.

Groton Parks and Recreation Department is sending 5 employees and 2 people from Ledyard are signed up. Sam Popinchalk, a Groton Town Parks and Recreation employee, was commended for a presentation on chainsaw utilization. Sue Sutherland added that GOSA also provides Game of Logging training on chainsaw safety.

VII. New Business.

a. TriTown Trail. Bea reported that the trail has been awarded one grant for engineering and surveying, for Ledyard. They are waiting to hear from the State the size of the grant and when it will be available. The committee is presently looking at placing signs at both ends of the projected trail. They will be holding a fundraiser in the fall..

b. Grey Rock proposal – Neil Brown.

The Grey Rock Park has essentially been inactive but Neil has observed people mowing the grass and picking up litter. He tracked them down and found that a State division in Norwich is responsible for the park.

Deb Marshall-Baker contacted the Regional Coordinator about the proposed changes to have a gate installed that would allow access to the Copp Property. The answer was a definite no. The reasons given for this refusal are as follows:

1. Grey Rock Park is completely closed off for the winter.
2. It closes at sunset.
3. The area is not designated for long term parking.
4. People are already dumping trash in this area. A gate would exacerbate this.

Neil was informed that the State DOT people can't see an advantage to the State in opening up this park. He was also informed by a Public Works person that the State is under budget restraints and do not want the additional burden of work and liability.

The Copp Property Board members are also members of the Groton Parks Foundation. They both meet on the first Wednesdays in May and September in the Spicer House at 7 pm. Neil

said that Grey Rocks would be discussed at the Groton Parks Foundation meeting, and if directed would contact the State with the request again.

Mark Berry asked that the discussion on signs is postponed. He added that he will bring the Parks and Recreation newly hired special events manager to the next meeting.

VIII. Next meeting – July 25, 2013 at 4 pm at the Groton Senior Center.

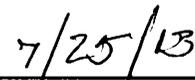
IX. Adjournment.

Motion to adjourn made by Bea Reynolds, seconded by Susan Sutherland.

Meeting adjourned at 5:20 pm.

Minutes have been approved and accepted.


Signature


Date