

GLOCESTER LAND TRUST  
REGULAR MEETING  
February 14, 2017

The regular meeting of the Gloucester Land Trust took place on February 14, 2017 at the Gloucester Town Hall. Chair Stephen Mitchell called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Members in attendance: Stephen Mitchell, Russell K. Gross, Roy Najecki Janine Pitocco, Gene Cavaliere and legal counsel John J. Bevilacqua.

Members Absent: Rebecca Schultz and Steven St. Pierre

Minutes: Judi Rix

Guests: Peter Lesmerises of Connwood Foresters

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

**Open Forum Agenda Items Only:** No one present wished to speak at this time.

### **Approval of minutes of previous meetings**

a. Russell K. Gross made a motion to accept the minutes of the January 24, 2017 meeting; it was seconded by Janine Pitocco and passed unanimously with Roy Najecki abstaining due to his absence at that meeting.

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Roy Najecki provided a treasurer's report to the board to review with actual dollars spent up until February 13, 2017. The finance office has closed the Signe Phillips-Sprague account, and transferred all funds to the ZZ commercial checking account at Citizens Bank. Mr. Najecki also indicated that the yearly real estate tax funds have been transferred into the budget and the amount of \$57,709.04 is about \$9,000 less than last year. Stephen Mitchell asked for the line regarding the trail map grant be removed from the totals since the grant has expired and the funds are no longer available. Russell K. Gross made a motion to accept the amended treasurer's report; it was seconded by Gene Cavaliere and passed unanimously.

### **Approval of Bills**

a. Russell K. Gross made a motion to pay the recording clerk Judi Rix \$150.00 for the January 24, 2017 meeting minutes; Janine Pitocco seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Roy Najecki made a motion to go out of order and move both New Business item "A" and "B" to the top of the agenda; Russell K. Gross seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

### **New Business**

a. Election of Officers for 2017: Chairman Mitchell asked the board to hold off on this item until the March meeting since both Steven St. Pierre and Rebecca Schultz are not present at the meeting. Roy Najecki made a motion to postpone the election of officers for 2017 to the March meeting when hopefully Mr. St. Pierre and Mrs. Schultz will be present; Janine Pitocco seconded and it passed with four votes in favor and one vote by Russell K. Gross opposed.

b. Tree harvesting on Land Trust properties: Stephen Mitchell had invited logger Peter Lesmerises of Connwood Foresters to attend the meeting to provide information to the board about the process involved if they chose to conduct tree harvesting on GLT properties. Attorney Bevilacqua indicated that the cost of the project will determine how the project can be put out to bid.

Mr. Lesmerises began his informational session by saying that the best place to start when deciding on harvesting trees on any property, is with the management plan for the property in question. Typically the landowner would go to the property with a certified forester and look at what is there to decide how to best plan for the future of that particular property. Janine Pitocco asked how long of a process it usually is from the start until cutting begins. Mr. Lesmerises indicated that it is usually not more than a month, but it can vary from town to town depending upon how many boards/people would need to give their approval prior to starting work. The landowner can also put into the contract when harvesting would not be allowed; for example, during hunting season.

Mr. Lesmerises believes that when considering tree harvesting, the board should consider the following types of questions: where is access?, how good is access?, any wetlands?, public reaction to cutting? And how much money hoping to get? Russell K. Gross believes the board will be disappointed with the amount of money that will be gained due to the low price of wood right now. Harvesting would require 50-60 acres at a minimum to make it worth the effort, and ideally 100 acres would be much better. Mr. Lesmerises also recommended clearly marked boundary lines and the board choosing someone they are comfortable with so that person can convey the board's wishes to the loggers.

Attorney Bevilacqua asked if the company was bonded, and Mr. Lesmerises said they were not, but they do carry liability insurance. The company has done considerable work for the state of Connecticut and operate as agents for the landowners. He also provided the board with an example of a Forest Operation Plan and a handout of the timber sale services they provide. Attorney Bevilacqua will scan in copies to send to the trustees and review the documentation. When asked about the cost of such an operation, Mr. Lesmerises indicated that after looking at the properties, the board would be given an estimate of the costs with a flat fee rate and a price not to exceed a certain dollar amount. Mr. Lesmerises will put together written notes on the material he presented to the board and email it to Chairman Mitchell. The trustees will discuss this further at the March meeting, and thanked Mr. Lesmerises for providing them with this information.

### **Old Business**

- a. Joe Sweet Trailhead Grant Status and process to commence work: Roy Najecki provided a revised project area map to the trustees. Attorney Bevilacqua will review and send Stephen Mitchell any suggested changes; then the project can be put out to bid.
- b. Update on donation of property to Land Trust: Attorney Bevilacqua has not heard anything from the landowners, so this item will not be put on the agenda again unless he does hear something from them.

### **New Business**

- c. 2017 Hunting Regulations review: Chairman Mitchell summarized the changes made/requested at the January workshop meeting. Russell K. Gross would like to address the liability issues presented by tree stands. After some discussion, the trustees decided to include a liability statement on the hunting permits that they issue. The trustees have also decided to not allow crossbow hunting on any of the GLT properties and will make the necessary changes in their regulations to reflect that. The regulations will be brought back before the board for a vote at the March meeting.

### **Correspondence:**

- a. Trail Grants (1/24/2017): Chairman Mitchell received an email from Gregg Cassidy of the D.E.M. informing him that the two trail grants the board had received expired in November 2016.
- b. Rupert Friday (1/30/2017): Mr. Friday sent out an email to all RI land trusts informing them of upcoming events and activities they may want to participate in.
- c. Interlocal Trust (2/7/2017): Chairman Mitchell received notification from the Trust that they will be sending out a person to assess the garage and the schoolhouse.

**Trail Inspections:** No official trail inspections were completed.

**Monthly GLT Activities – Reports:** Nothing to report at this time.

**Open Forum:** Roy Najecki asked about the fees to attend the Land & Water Conference. Stephen Mitchell instructed Mr. Najecki to register for the conference and then the board will reimburse him for the expenses. Janine Pitocco informed the board that she and Rebecca Schultz did a walk around at the Hawkins Pond dam about 3 weeks ago, and there were no signs of blockages or of the beavers. Mr. Mitchell is hoping the board receives the most recent dam inspection report before the spring. Mr. Mitchell also wanted to note that he was informed that the owner of Wright's Dairy Farm was looking to contact the board about possibly using some GLT land to grow corn for his cows; this item will be placed on the March agenda.

**Executive Session:** There was no executive session at this meeting.

There being no further business before the Land Trust, Russell K. Gross made a motion to adjourn at 8:20p.m. The motion was seconded by Janine Pitocco and it passed unanimously.

APPROVED AT MARCH 28, 2017 MEETING.