

GLOCESTER LAND TRUST  
REGULAR MEETING  
March 28, 2017

The regular meeting of the Gloucester Land Trust took place on March 28, 2017 at the Gloucester Town Hall. Chair Stephen Mitchell called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

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

Members Absent: Steven St. Pierre

Minutes: Judi Rix (absent at meeting, minutes transcribed from recording)

Guests: Eagle Scout Cam Leach, Clayton Wright, Lew Pryeor

### **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 February 14, 2017 meeting; it was seconded by Gene Cavaliere and passed unanimously with Rebecca Schultz abstaining due to her absence at that meeting.

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Roy Najecki provided an updated treasurer's report to the board which reflected the bills approved at the last meeting and the removal of the grant that had expired. Russell K. Gross made a motion to accept the amended treasurer's report; it was seconded by Janine Pitocco and passed unanimously.

### **Approval of Bills**

- a. Janine Pitocco made a motion to pay the recording clerk Judi Rix \$164.00 for the February 14, 2017 meeting minutes and hyperlinking of its agenda; Rebecca Schultz seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- b. Gene Cavaliere made a motion to pay John J. Bevilacqua \$1,000 for services for February 2017; Janine Pitocco seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- c. Janine Pitocco made a motion to pay the USPS \$140.00 for the yearly GLT PO Box Rental fee ; Russell K. Gross seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. This amount includes a \$20 late fee because the Chairman received the invoice for payment too late for it to be placed on the February agenda for approval to be paid by the board. The Chair agreed to pay the late fee under protest.

### **Old Business**

- a. Joe Sweet Trailhead Grant Status and process to commence work: Roy Najecki provided the specs on the project for Attorney Bevilacqua to review and he has indicated the specs were fine. Now Chairman Mitchell can put together an ad to send to Attorney Bevilacqua to review, and then bring before the board, prior to opening the bidding process.
- b. Hunting Regulations for 2017-2018 approval and adoption: Chairman Mitchell summarized the changes made/requested at the February meeting, including the prohibiting of crossbows on all GLT properties. Rebecca Schultz wanted it known that she is not comfortable with the Seldom Seen Farm remaining on the list of properties that allow hunting. She and Janine Pitocco both opposed it last year and remain opposed to it. Roy Najecki made a motion to accept the amended hunting regulations for 2017-2018;

Russell K. Gross seconded the motion and it passed with the following votes: 4 aye votes (Mitchell, Cavaliere, Najecki and Gross) and 2 nay votes (Schultz and Pitocco).

### **New Business**

- a. Election of Officers for 2017: Attorney Bevilacqua ran this portion of the meeting. Russell K. Gross made a nomination for Stephen Mitchell to serve in the Chairman's position, Gene Cavaliere seconded and no other names were brought up for consideration; the motion passed unanimously. Roy Najecki made a nomination for Steven St. Pierre to serve in the Vice-Chairman's position, Janine Pitocco seconded and no other names were brought up for consideration; the motion passed unanimously. Russell K. Gross made a nomination for Roy Najecki to serve in the Treasurer's position, Gene Cavaliere seconded and no other names were brought up for consideration; the motion passed unanimously. The officers of the board will remain the same from last year to this year.
- b. Eagle Scout Project – Cam Leach: Mr. Leach had a conversation with trustee St. Pierre about the supplies he still needed to get to complete his project, and Mr. St. Pierre directed him to come before the board and ask them for help. Russell K. Gross suggested that the board add what he still needs to an order they will be placing for the bridge project for Steere Hill. Chairman Mitchell asked Mr. Leach to submit a written list of needs to Mr. St. Pierre. Since these projects are for GLT properties, and are a service to the board, the trustees feel they should help out with the costs when the Eagle Scout candidate falls short. Russell K. Gross made a motion to proceed with the purchase of the items Mr. Leach needs to complete his project; Roy Najecki seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Gene Cavaliere made a motion to go out of order and address item "e" to accommodate the other guest present; Rebecca Schultz seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

e. Proposed leasing of Phillips Farm field and top of Steere Hill Conservation Area for agricultural purposes: Clayton Wright came before the board to discuss the possibility of using Phillips Farm field and top of Steere Hill for planting of corn for his dairy cattle. Mr. Wright is not very familiar with the land, and is still unsure of how he would like to proceed. His initial proposal would be to go with a no-till operation because it performs much better, feeds the soil and in general is better for the land. The downside is that herbicide is used a little bit more aggressively. With a no-till proposal he would come in as soon as things started to turn green and spray the herbicide to kill any growth/weeds and then plant right on the field with a disc opener. Having that compost on the top of the field helps the crops to grow, protects the soil and helps with keeping the soil moist. After the season is over and the corn is harvested, you plant a cover crop like a winter rye which helps to maintain the soil structure. All that is left is small corn stalk stumps that they plant the cover crop on.

Janine Pitocco asked Mr. Wright what the purpose of applying the herbicide was if he was trying to maintain compost on the top of the field. He responded that it is to kill the weeds and grass to help with the composting. The commercial name is Gly Star plus and manufactured in CT. Mr. Wright would need a soil sample to determine how he would proceed. He does also have fields that he uses the till method on but rocks become an issue. Due to the distance from his business, and the extra costs incurred with tilling he would prefer to do a no-till method. Before anything else is discussed, Mr. Gross offered to escort Mr. Wright on the property to get soil samples and walk the property to see what it is like. Roy Najecki does not have an issue with many of the locations being discussed, but at the summit of Steere Hill he would like to see only the south side used since so much time, effort and expense has gone into making the North side a wildlife habitat. Mr. Wright pointed out that the herbicide only impacts what it touches and does not penetrate the soil. Rebecca Schultz would be in favor of a crop on Phillips Farm, but not on Steere Hill. Russell K. Gross also suggested Kwandran property as a possibility. Attorney Bevilacqua pointed out that it will need to be determined where the locations are that the board may agree to and record that information so when it comes before the board they know what and where they would be voting on for

approval if it reaches that point. A rough survey would need to be conducted on any proposed sites and defined boundaries would need to be established. All of this is just in the early stages because the samples may determine the soil is no good for this type of planting. Mr. Wright will bring the samples to UCONN for soil analysis and that usually takes about two weeks.

A man who identified himself as Mr. Lew Pryeor of Keech Pond, asked to speak at this point in the conversation. The board allowed him to do so, even though it was not at the appropriate time during the meeting. Mr. Pryeor indicated he had been walking by the meeting and overheard the discussion regarding Mr. Wright's no-till procedure. Mr. Pryeor then provided information regarding Gly Star and stated he was concerned about the water supply in Gloucester. (The recording sounded like he was reading from something.) Mr. Pryeor also asked Mr. Wright if he used this herbicide in any other towns and Mr. Wright responded that he has. Mr. Pryeor suggested that the board do some research on the herbicide before they make a decision.

The milkweed attracts butterflies and using herbicides can also impact the bee populations; so there are multiple environmental impacts to consider. There are some goods that accompany its use, but what is the long term impact on the environment? Roy Najecki pointed out that the board has addressed these concerns in the management plan as well. Janine Pitocco asked about location to wells and drinking water, and Mr. Wright indicated that it is a "heavy" product with little run-off and after 40 days it is dissipated into the crop. Rebecca Schultz asked specifically what part of Steere Hill is under consideration, and Mr. Najecki and Chairman Mitchell indicated that the area of consideration would be the southeast corner, not part of the wildlife habitat. Roy Najecki made a motion to authorize Clayton Wright to walk the three proposed GLT property sites with an escort, to take soil samples and see what the property is like for potential farming purposes, and then return to the April 11<sup>th</sup> Land Trust meeting to discuss the results; Russell K. Gross seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Russell K. Gross and Rebecca Schultz both agreed to meet Mr. Wright the next morning to walk the properties.

c. GLT Conflict of Interest and Ethics Statement Signatures: Chairman Mitchell would like to postpone until the next meeting. Russell K. Gross made a motion to table this item until the next meeting; Roy Najecki seconded and it passed unanimously.

d. Tree cutting project discussion: Stephen Mitchell received multiple documents from logger Peter Lesmerises of Connwood Foresters after he attended the February meeting. Attorney Bevilacqua reviewed all of the documentation. Chairman Mitchell wanted it to be known that Mr. Lesmerises was recommended by Greg Cassidy of the D.E.M., and has since found out that Mr. Cassidy is partners with Mr. Lesmerises. Mr. Mitchell is not sure how comfortable he is with the recommendation since Mr. Cassidy would have a fiduciary benefit to the Land Trust hiring Mr. Lesmerises. Mr. Mitchell has also done some research on other companies that do this type of work, and has come up with a few other local businesses. What is the board looking to accomplish with this project? Not going to be a profit move, but would be beneficial to the property itself and healthy for the property in the long run by thinning out the canopy. The Chair asked the board if they want to proceed with this. Rebecca Schultz asked why the board would want to pursue if not going to make money from this. Chairman Mitchell responded that the thinning of the forest would be beneficial to the property and the health of the trees on the property in the long term. The board is responsible for the health of each property as well as the maintenance and use; the goal is to keep the land as viable and healthy for future generations as possible. Chairman Mitchell would like to invite consultant Mark Tremblay to the April 11<sup>th</sup> meeting to discuss possible land management options for going forward and to continue tonight's discussion.

### **Correspondence:**

a. Interlocal Trust Monthly Claims Report: Chairman Mitchell received an email with the monthly report from the Trust. There were no claims to report on, but he wanted to let the board know he had received it.

b. Submission for Property Use – Funds 4 Paws: Chairman Mitchell received an email from Daniel McFarlane asking to use the Steere Hill and Phillips Farm areas for a dog walk. Russell K. Gross asked if

they could pick up after the dogs. Attorney Bevilacqua indicated the board can request whatever it wants from the group, and that the item needs to be put on the agenda for next month for the board to be able to take action on it. Correspondence items are not actionable.

c. Pat Bowie – Signs at Steere Hill and Hawkins: Sent an email to GLT liaison Walter Steere III, and he forwarded it to Chairman Mitchell. She wanted to know why there were no signs at Steere Hill or Hawkins Property. Chairman Mitchell responded to her, and notified her that the Land trust is working on getting signage on those two properties in conjunction with Factory Mutual volunteers. The materials have already been purchased and the signs should be erected later this spring.

d. David Hainley – Tree down notification: Chairman Mitchell had asked Gene Cavaliere to look into this on March 9<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Cavaliere said he was just seeing the email for the first time tonight at the meeting, and had not addressed it yet.

e. Brian Houle – Membership contribution: Chairman Mitchell has not yet seen the check that Mr. Houle submitted. Once he receives it, he will send Mr. Houle a note of appreciation.

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

**Monthly GLT Activities – Reports:** Roy Najecki attended the Land and Water conference a few weeks ago. One of the major talks was regarding pollinators and he has information to share with the board.

**Open Forum:** Russell K. Gross wanted to point out that with all of the discussion surrounding chemicals tonight that without chemicals there would not be food. Janine Pitocco agreed on that point, but she wants to make sure that the board is knowledgeable about what products are used on the properties and it would be prudent of the trustees to do more research on the topic before any action is taken.

**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 APRIL 11, 2017 MEETING.