

GLOCESTER LAND TRUST  
REGULAR MEETING  
June 13, 2017

The regular meeting of the Gloucester Land Trust took place on June 13, 2017 at the Gloucester Town Hall. Chair Stephen Mitchell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

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

Members Absent: Person to be appointed by Town Council

Minutes: Judi Rix

Guests: Russell G. Gross

**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 May 30, 2017 meeting; it was seconded by Steven St. Pierre and passed unanimously with Gene Cavaliere abstaining due to his 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. Steven St. Pierre mentioned that he thought the Medfield technology charge should be moved to the website line of the budget report because it was the annual fee for the website that was approved. Steven St. Pierre made a motion to accept the treasurer's report as presented; it was seconded by Janine Pitocco and passed unanimously.

**Approval of Bills**

a. Steven St. Pierre made a motion to pay the recording clerk Judi Rix \$328.00 for the May 30, 2017 and June 13, 2017 meeting minutes and hyperlinking of the agendas; Gene Cavaliere seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

b. Steven St. Pierre made a motion to pay John J. Bevilacqua \$1,000 for services for June 13, 2017; Gene Cavaliere seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

c. Russell K. Gross made a motion to pay Art Dionne \$64.00 for four Bird Nesting Boxes; Steven St. Pierre seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. The board will place them on Hawkins Property.

d. Russell K. Gross made a motion to pay the Interlocal Trust \$3,595.00 for the GLT's Annual Premium Coverage, then a discussion followed regarding why the board can/cannot piggyback on the town's insurance. Roy Najecki recalled this coming up in the past as well. Attorney Bevilacqua reminded the trustees that the GLT is a semi-autonomous board; the land they oversee belongs to the Land Trust and the trustees are completely responsible for each of the properties. The Town Council oversees the Land Trust's rules/regulations, but cannot dictate how the board spends their money. Keeping the two entities separate is important. The motion was eventually seconded by Steven St. Pierre and it passed unanimously.

e. Russell K. Gross made a motion to pay Data Frontiers \$576.00 for the GLT's Annual Service Contract which covers computer services and the software on the laptops; Janine Pitocco seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

f. Russell K. Gross made a motion to pay Balloons over RI, BORI Graphics for 6 signs at \$12.95/each for a total of \$77.70; Janine Pitocco seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. These signs were posted at Steere Hill and Sprague Farm to warn the public of possible rabid animals.

g. Russell K. Gross made a motion to pay Scituate Lumber \$312.13 for supplies to aid Cam Leach in his Eagle Scout project; Janine Pitocco seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. There will be an additional charge since the original cost was based on certain wood being purchased, and Mr. Leach needed something a little different. Chairman Mitchell would like to pay this part of the bill and pay the balance in August.

### **Old Business**

a. Update on warning signs placed at Steere Hill and Sprague properties: Russell K. Gross posted three signs at Steere Hill and two at Sprague Farm to warn the public of possible rabid animals in the area, and to keep their eyes open to animals acting strangely. Six signs were made for this purpose, so the board has an extra to use at another location if necessary.

b. Installation of gate at Hawkins Property and cement barrier at western driveway: Steve Mitchell would like to move forward with this proposal, but the other trustees are unsure of how they want to proceed at this time. Russell K. Gross made a motion to reconsider the vote taken at the last meeting regarding putting gates up on this property; Steven St. Pierre seconded and it passed unanimously.

Russell K. Gross does not believe that cement barriers are going to keep out the ATV's and he would prefer to see some type of post with a chain at the dam to keep people off the causeway. He is concerned with people parking on Rte. 44 and having to walk the distance to the pond, and if a barrier is going to be put at the western driveway, he would rather see giant boulders or something more natural looking than giant cement blocks. Janine Pitocco's primary concern is protecting the causeway, and she is not as concerned about the parking aspect of things. Steven St. Pierre suggested a gate across the causeway, and Roy Najecki pointed out that a gate on the western side would also need a gate near the concrete platform.

Mr. St. Pierre then suggested that the board make a site visit to the location in question to see for themselves how they think the problem could be remedied. Chairman Mitchell thought that was an excellent suggestion, and the trustees have been instructed to make a site visit to the location prior to the meeting in August, take notes on their thoughts, and bring all of that back to discuss the issue at the August 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. The trustees can go with another trustee, but cannot plan their visit to include any more than three of them, so they comply with open meeting laws.

c. Agreement to resolve trail issue near Steere Hill Conservation Area: Russell K. Gross recused himself from this discussion, and went to sit in the audience. Steven St. Pierre brought some marked up maps of Steere Hill that showed the portion of the trail he recommends be closed permanently. Mr. St. Pierre would like to see brush be used to fill in the first 100 feet of the trail to hide it from the public. Roy Najecki would prefer to put gates up at the four points that were originally discussed, rather than close the trail permanently. Chairman Mitchell asked if this trail was an original trail to the property, or was it created by the board? Mr. Najecki replied that it was not original, but was one of the last trails created. Janine Pitocco wants to be a good neighbor, but also does not want to dismiss the hard work that went into creating that trail. Russell G. Gross believes closing the trail is the best option, since people consistently ignore all of the signs already in place, but he knows the decision is not his to make. Steven St. Pierre made a motion to close the portion of Ridge Trail, from Stone Dam to Cart Path with brush for the first 100 feet, to help eliminate the trespassing issues taking place; Janine Pitocco seconded and it passed with a vote of 4 Ayes (St. Pierre, Pitocco, Cavaliere and Mitchell) and 1 Nay (Najecki).

### **New Business**

- a. Conflict of Interest and Ethics Policy Discussion: Chairman Mitchell was asked by a trustee to place these documents on the agenda for discussion. The board needs to determine if they wish to continue signing and maintaining these documents going forward. Their original intention was to deal with past bad behavior of former board members, and they were also required if the Land Trust wanted to pursue national accreditation. The documents in question were created with the help of Connie Manes and adopted on January 22, 2014 along with ten other policies. Since that time, the board has given up on getting accreditation since it does not provide them with any benefits, does not bring any “value” to the board and is a lot of work that is required every year to maintain accreditation. Attorney Bevilacqua advised the board that they are already required to abide by the Conflict of Interest Policy and Ethics Policy currently in place for the State of Rhode Island so these documents would essentially be superfluous. Chairman Mitchell asked the trustees how they would like to proceed. The consensus of the board members was to let them fall by the wayside and abide by the policies of the State of Rhode Island they are already bound to. Steven St. Pierre made a motion to eliminate these two policies; Roy Najecki seconded and it passed unanimously. Chairman Mitchell will notify the Town Council of this action.
- b. Volunteer Application – Jim Giarrusso: Mr. Giarrusso has been very helpful with the grate for the Hawkins Pond dam, and the board members suggested to him that he become an official volunteer. Steven St. Pierre made a motion to approve the application of Mr. Giarrusso; Russell K. Gross seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- c. Acquisition of new computers (tablets): Chairman Mitchell placed this on the agenda since the current laptops the trustees have are approximately five years old now, and he thought it may be time to upgrade to the newest technology and use tablets. Money has been put aside in the budget for this purchase, but it would need to go out to bid due to the amount being spent. Roy Najecki is happy with his current laptop and does not see a need for something new. Overall none of the trustees felt compelled to purchase new technology, so this item will be tabled for now.
- d. Set date for 2017-2018 budget preparation: End of June actuals will be available for the August meeting since the fiscal year ends on June 30<sup>th</sup>. Chairman Mitchell would like to set up the 2017-2018 budget at the August 8<sup>th</sup> meeting, and asked Roy Najecki to have the budget sheet template ready for that meeting. He also asked each trustee to look at next year’s budget prior to attending the meeting in August, so they come prepared to move forward and establish next year’s budget. Russell K. Gross made a motion to set next year’s budget at the August 8<sup>th</sup> meeting; Janine Pitocco seconded and it passed unanimously.
- e. Cancellation of the July meetings of the GLT: Chairman Mitchell would like to cancel the June workshop meeting for the board and the two meetings in July to allow the trustees time with their families. Steven St. Pierre made a motion to cancel the June workshop meeting for the board and the two meetings in July; Janine Pitocco seconded and it passed unanimously.
- f. 3D Lawncare Service at Hawkins Property: Chairman Mitchell received a quote from 3D Lawncare Service for mowing and trimming around Hawkins Dam. This expense will not need to go out to bid since the amount is well under bid requirements. It will cost a onetime Spillway maintenance fee of \$375 and then \$120 per month for approximately 3 months of mowing.
- g. Manufacturing of bronze plaque to be placed at entrance of Steere Hill pathway: Chairman Mitchell received an email from the grandson of Mr. Heditsian asking how this project is coming along. His grandfather is getting up in age and would like to be part of the ceremony when the plaque is unveiled. The wording of the plaques will need to be determined. Mr. Mitchell will set up a meeting with them to discuss some details and bring the information back to the board in August.

#### **Correspondence:**

- a. Resignation of Rebecca Schultz: Chairman Mitchell received a phone call from Rebecca Schultz informing him that her family would be relocating to California. She provided the Town Council a

formal letter of resignation on May 30, 2017 (Effective immediately) indicating that she had family obligations that she needed to attend to, and needed to focus her resources on those. Chairman Mitchell asked her to provide him with a copy, which she did, along with an email. The board wishes her well with all her future endeavors.

b. Interlocal Trust monthly claims: There were no monthly claims.

c. Building Inspections for Interlocal Trust: Stephen Mitchell received an email from Robert McMullen, an appraiser for Assetworks LLC, who has been contracted by the Rhode Island Interlocal Risk Management Trust to perform appraisals on all the buildings belonging to the Gloucester Land Trust. Mr. McMullen is scheduled to look at the Hawkins garage and the schoolhouse out in West Gloucester during the last week of June, and Chairman Mitchell will meet him at each of the properties and accompany him on the appraisals.

**Trail Inspection Reports:** None

**Monthly GLT Activities / Reports:** Mike Cavaliere will be leading the vernal pool walk on 6/24 at 1pm at Steere Hill.

**Open Forum:** Janine Pitocco thinks it would be nice if the board sent Rebecca Schultz a letter thanking her for her service to the Land Trust and for all of her efforts over the years. Chairman Mitchell and the other trustees agreed, so Chairman Mitchell will handle that.

**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 8:33p.m. The motion was seconded by Steven St. Pierre and it passed unanimously.

APPROVED AT AUGUST 22, 2017 MEETING.