

GLOCESTER LAND TRUST
REGULAR MEETING
March 27, 2018

The regular meeting of the Gloucester Land Trust took place on March 27, 2018 at the Gloucester Town Hall. Chair Stephen Mitchell called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Members in attendance: Stephen Mitchell, Steven St. Pierre, Gene Cavaliere, Russell K. Gross, Roy Najecki, David Piccirillo, Janine Pitocco (arrived at 7:15pm) and legal counsel John J. Bevilacqua, Sr.

Members Absent:

Minutes: Judi Rix

Guests: Mr. Robert Billington and Ms. Donna Kaehler of Blackstone Valley Tourism

Pledge of Allegiance

Open Forum Agenda Items Only: No one present wished to speak.

Approval of minutes of previous meetings

a. Russell K. Gross made a motion to accept the minutes of the February 13, 2018 meeting; it was seconded by Gene Cavaliere and passed unanimously with Steven St. Pierre abstaining due to his absence at that meeting.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Roy Najecki provided an updated treasurer's report which reflected all expenses up until the last meeting in February. The town has not closed the books yet, and there has been nothing significant since that meeting. Steven St. Pierre made a motion to accept the treasurer's report as presented; it was seconded by Russell K. Gross and passed unanimously.

Approval of Bills:

- a. Russell K. Gross made a motion to pay the recording clerk Judi Rix \$157.00 for the February 13, 2018 meeting minutes and hyperlinking of agenda; Gene Cavaliere seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- b. Russell K. Gross made a motion to pay John Bevilacqua \$1,000 for Legal Services for February 2018; Steven St. Pierre seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- c. Stephen Mitchell has had several conversations with a representative of the Land Trust Alliance about their accreditation process and how it could be improved to show continuous improvement by a board. As it stands right now, you are a member if you are seeking accreditation or are already accredited. The representative was appreciative of his suggestions, and will consider bringing them to the Land Trust Alliance's Board. If the Gloucester Land Trust is not going to continue the process of seeking accreditation, is it worth the money to just say they are part of a nationally recognized organization? Member Roy Najecki believes that membership with the RI Land Trust Council is more beneficial to the Gloucester Land Trust at this time. After some discussion among the Board members, Russell K. Gross made a motion to **not** pay the Land Trust Alliance Annual Dues for a total of \$600.00 and thus **not renew** the Board's membership; Roy Najecki seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Chairman Mitchell will notify the Land Trust Alliance of the Board's decision.
- d. Steven St. Pierre recused himself from this vote. Roy Najecki made a motion to pay Midfield Technologies a total of \$475.00 for website hosting and support; David Piccirillo seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Old Business

- a. Joe Sweet Property Parking Area RFP: Stephen Mitchell has hired a contractor to drill test holes, but that cannot happen until the weather improves.
- b. Construction of bridges on Phillips Farm Property: Steven St. Pierre met with Ms. Becky Kalagher of the Bay State Trail Riders Association at Steere Hill on February 23, 2018. They walked the property and identified three stone wall openings that would be widened and agreed on the location of three bridges. The bridges would range between eighteen and twenty four feet long, with two other possible bridges in the future in other locations. GLT legal counsel John Bevilacqua offered to help the club find an engineer, but the Board is concerned about who will be paying the engineer to draft the plans if the riding club is not raising funds until they have an idea of the cost of the entire project. Steven St. Pierre does not want a repeat of the Steere Hill parking area project, where a lot of money was spent by the Board and nothing came of it. What if the engineer designs the plans, then the GLT helps to find a local contractor, and then the cost of the engineer and the building supply list is more money than the club thinks it can raise? Chairman Mitchell does not want to “put the cart before the horse”; the Board prefers to get the funding first, then proceed with any plans. Due to the size bridges being considered, the GLT believes this will be an expensive project that will also require D.E.M. permits. Roy Najecki worked on a bridge project, with another organization, on the Wood River and believes he knows of a company that might be able to help with the bridge construction at a reasonable cost.

At this point in the meeting, Chairman Stephen Mitchell asked to go out of order and address New Business agenda item “C” to accommodate the guests that had just walked in; this way they could be on their way. Steven St. Pierre made a motion to move New Business agenda item “C” to the next item to be discussed to accommodate the guests present; Janine Pitocco seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

New Business

- c. Blackstone Valley Tourism: Robert Billington and Donna Kaehler gave a presentation to the Board that involved several maps detailing the current bikeways in RI, where they would like to see the bikeways improved and future plans for expanding them. Eventually they would like to see the Blackstone Bikeway connect to the East Bay Bikeway and are also working on a Circle Blackstone route. Right now they are looking for collaborators, not financing. Chairman Stephen Mitchell thinks those are admiral goals, but knows some communities will pose some significant challenges. Chairman Mitchell also directed them to contact Town Clerk Jean Fecteau to possibly get in front of the Gloucester Town Council for support. The Land Trust will do what they can to help them; both Roy Najecki and Gene Cavaliere volunteered to be contacts for the Board.

Steven St. Pierre made a motion to go back into the regular order of the agenda; Janine Pitocco seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

- c. GLT Strategic Plan Revisions: The plan has been changed to reflect a three year plan, not five years, so it can be reviewed and updated more frequently. Having completed some of the goals on the last version, and agreeing to eliminate a couple of goals, the remaining goals include getting volunteers more involved and completing more baseline documentation for GLT properties. A new goal relating to the maintenance and repair of the Hawkins Dam was added and will be a big focus of the Board over the next few years. Roy Najecki made a motion to adopt the 2015-2018 GLT Strategic Plan and Action Plan as presented; Russell K. Gross seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- d. Summer Youth Program and GLT: Roy Najecki emailed the Board members a copy of the guidelines the Town of Gloucester uses for their program. The town has budgeted their program for approximately

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six weeks with one eighteen year old supervising the other workers for about four hours a day. Last year the town had nobody apply for any of the positions they advertised. Steven St. Pierre asked how the workers would get paid. Roy Najecki believes they would be paid in the same way the recording clerk for the Board gets paid; through the town on a bi-weekly basis and the funds would be deducted from the GLT account. Several of the Board members asked what exactly the workers would be doing to earn their money; Roy Najecki suggested small jobs like brush and litter clean up on the trails. Russell K. Gross expressed concerns over liability if one of them were to get hurt while working; he is afraid the Board is opening a can of worms. Chairman Mitchell asked Mr. Najecki to put together a list of tasks the workers could perform and bring it back to the April meeting for further discussion.

e. Colwell Grant Update and Concerns: Chairman Stephen Mitchell has spoken to both Carol Trocki and the D.E.M.'s Michelle Sheehan regarding the wetlands on the property. There appears to be a discrepancy in the amount of wetland acreage on the property. A report by Scott P. Rabideau of Natural Resource Services, Inc. shows a significant amount of wetland on the property. Depending on what you plan to do to the property, either develop it or conserve it, would require different actions. Developing it may require a bridge to go over wetlands to gain access any buildable upland. Chairman Mitchell believes that if everything is wetlands, then there is nothing that can be done with it except conservation. The Board will need to decide if they wish to move forward with the purchase, and it will be put on the agenda for the April meeting for further discussion.

New Business

a. Election of officers of GLT for 2018: Legal counsel John J. Bevilacqua conducted this portion of the meeting. Attorney Bevilacqua asked the Board if anyone wished to be considered for a position that they did not currently hold, or if anyone that held an elected officer position wished to not be considered for re-appointment; nobody on the board spoke up for either question. Attorney Bevilacqua then made a motion to reinstate the existing GLT officers as follows: Stephen Mitchell as Chairman, Steven St. Pierre as Vice-Chairman and Roy Najecki as Treasurer; Gene Cavaliere seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

b. Recognition of Town Highway Director and Department: There were no members of the department present at the meeting; they will be invited to attend the April meeting. Russell K. Gross made a motion to table this item until the Town Highway Director and members of the department are available to attend a meeting; Steven St. Pierre seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

d. Hawkins Garage painting and door replacement: Chairman Mitchell would like to table this item for this evening. Russell K. Gross made a motion to table this item; Gene Cavaliere seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

e. Seek to secure bid of engineer for Hawkins Dam: Chairman Mitchell would like to table this item to provide Attorney Bevilacqua more time to help identify an engineer. Steven St. Pierre made a motion to table this item to provide Attorney Bevilacqua more time to help identify an engineer; Janine Pitocco seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

f. 2017 Annual Report of Gloucester Land Trust: Chairman Stephen Mitchell made an official presentation of his annual report to the Gloucester Town Council, which was very well received. He recounted to the Council members all of the achievements during the past year and how appreciative he was for the job done by the recording clerk and legal counsel. He is exceptionally grateful to the other members of the GLT Board, and the time and dedication they give to the town strictly on a volunteer basis. Member Steven St. Pierre wanted to thank Chairman Mitchell for compiling a detailed annual report and presenting it to the Town Council; no other board/commission does this for the town. The only required report that needs to be submitted annually is basically an attendance sheet for each board. The Town Council did ask about Hawkins Dam but Chairman Mitchell indicated that some work on the

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part of the GLT needed to be done prior to having a discussion about that project. The Town Council did request that Gary Trembl of the Gloucester DPW be kept in the loop on the project; Chairman Mitchell agreed this would be helpful since Gary was involved in the original project years ago.

g. Volunteer Application – Russell G. Gross: GLT Member Russell K. Gross recused himself from this agenda item. The Board received an application from Mr. Russell G. Gross to become a volunteer, and Chairman Mitchell would recommend approval. Roy Najecki made a motion to approve and accept the application submitted by Russell G. Gross to become a GLT volunteer; seconded by Janine Pitocco and it passed unanimously. Chairman Mitchell will notify him of his acceptance.

h. Laptop computers: Several Members of the Board have expressed frustration with the laptops they have been given, and don't even bother to bring them to the meetings; Chairman Mitchell agrees that it is probably time that they were replaced and reached out to Rob Bonnell of Data Frontiers regarding the purchase of new computers. Diane Brennan at Town Hall referred him to the town IT person, Matt Floor; but Mr. Floor does not oversee the Land Trust's IT issues or requests. Chairman Mitchell will try to bring back more information to the next meeting.

i. 2018-2019 Renewal Exposure Update – The Interlocal Trust: Chairman Mitchell received the questionnaire in the mail, and this will need to be submitted by April 9th. Once The Interlocal Trust receives the completed document, they will send the GLT a bill for services based on the answers provided.

Correspondence

a. Citizen Science Opportunity --URI, PhD student (03/01/18): Erin Harrington, a PhD student in the Biological and Environmental Sciences program at the University of Rhode Island wrote to Chairman Mitchell about a Citizen Science project called "Project Timberdoodle" at URI, where she and her fellow students will be attempting to get better population estimates of American Woodcock in Rhode Island. She was looking for assistance, and wondered if the GLT would be willing to mention the project (with a link she provided) on the GLT webpage.

Trail Inspection and Volunteer Hour(s) Reports: The inspections will begin in April or May, depending on the weather. The winter weather caused many trees to come down, and both Steere Hill and Sprague Farm trails will need a lot of work.

Monthly GLT Activities / Reports: No GLT sponsored activities to report on; the Town Clerk asked for notification of any Earth Day activities the board may be organizing; Roy Najecki attend the Land & Water conference a few weeks ago and found it very beneficial and informative.

Open Forum: No one present wished to speak.

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 8:45p.m. The motion was seconded by Janine Pitocco and it passed unanimously.

APPROVED AT APRIL 10, 2018 MEETING.