

GLOCESTER LAND TRUST  
REGULAR MEETING  
February 11, 2020

The regular meeting of the Gloucester Land Trust took place on February 11, 2020 at the Gloucester Town Hall. Chair Stephen Mitchell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Members in attendance: Stephen Mitchell, Steven St. Pierre, Gene Cavaliere, James Giarrusso, Roy Najecki, David Piccirillo, Janine Pitocco and Legal Counsel John J. Bevilacqua, Sr.

Members Absent: None

Minutes: Judi Rix

Guests: None

**Pledge of Allegiance**

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

**Approval of minutes of previous meetings** (discussions and /or action):

- a. Roy Najecki made a motion to accept the minutes of the February 04, 2020 meeting; it was seconded by James Giarrusso and passed unanimously with Steven St. Pierre abstaining due to his absence at that meeting.

**GLT Treasurer's Report** (discussions and /or action): Treasurer Roy Najecki provided an updated report with all the expenses for January incorporated. There is approximately \$6,300 left in the open space account line and the Board is expecting the real estate tax transfer of approximately \$92,216 to be deposited into the account this month. Member Najecki has heard that the town is considering reducing the percentage of taxes currently given to the Land Trust. Nothing has been determined yet, and Chairman Mitchell hopes the Board will be involved in any serious discussions on the matter. Gene Cavaliere made a motion to accept the report as presented; it was seconded by Steven St. Pierre and passed unanimously.

**Approval of Bills** (discussions and /or action):

- a. Steven St. Pierre made a motion to pay Judi Rix a total of \$175.00 for February 04, 2020 minutes; it was seconded by Janine Pitocco and passed unanimously.
- b. Janine Pitocco made a motion to pay John J. Bevilacqua, Sr. a total of \$1,000.00 for Legal Services for February 11, 2020 meeting; it was seconded by David Piccirillo and passed unanimously.
- c. Roy Najecki made a motion to pay Midfield Technologies a total of \$350.00 for virus repair to website; it was seconded by David Piccirillo and passed unanimously.
- d. Roy Najecki made a motion to pay Norfolk Power and Equipment a total of \$356.07 for tractor brush hog attachment; it was seconded by Janine Pitocco and passed unanimously.
- e. Steven St. Pierre made a motion to pay Northern Landscape a total of \$500.00 for Installation of Sign at Steere Hill and trimming of Cedar Tree; it was seconded by David Piccirillo and passed unanimously.

**Old Business** (discussion and/or action):

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a. Visitor restrictions on Sprague Farm during hunting season: Janine Pitocco had asked Chairman Mitchell to place this on the agenda; she wanted to clarify what was discussed at the last meeting and what was in the draft minutes. Member Pitocco wanted clarified that she does not feel there should be restrictions on who can use GLT properties during hunting season when hunting is allowed on them. Chairman Mitchell thinks the board should talk about this in more detail and it can be revisited when they are establishing the hunting regulations for next season.

b. Signage on GLT property bridges: Janine Pitocco had asked Chairman Mitchell to place this on the agenda; she wanted to clarify what was discussed at the last meeting and what was in the draft minutes. Member Pitocco wanted clarified that she doesn't agree with posting signs for the bridges that say, "pedestrian only" and she would like to discuss this further. Attorney John Bevilacqua stated that there is always an assumption of risk when riding a horse, and the Board could put up signs at the entrances stating equestrians welcome, but you ride at your own risk on the property. Similar signs are used in various locations that equestrians have access to in the state. Member James Giarrusso stated that at this point the project is stalled due to DEM requirements regarding flood plains. Member Giarrusso is working with DEM to ease any concerns they have regarding the bridges being in flood plains and the possibility they could wash away in a flood. If DEM does not give their approval, then signage will not be needed because the bridges cannot be built.

c. Encroachment on Hopkins Woodland Update: Chairman Stephen Mitchell spent time researching the property and was able to determine that the Hopkins family sold the property to the Morin family, who in turn sold it to the current landowner. Member Giarrusso spoke to an individual that indicated the shed that the Land Trust is asking to have removed has been on the property for a while and the Morin family is who built it there for their chickens. Chairman Mitchell also found out that a Class 1 survey had been conducted on the property and that document clearly states where the property lines are located. Attorney Bevilacqua sent the landowner a letter on February 7, 2020 providing him with a copy of that survey and offering to meet with him and go over where the property lines are located since in a previous conversation he had stated he was unsure of where they were. The landowner has not responded to that letter as of today.

d. Placement of sign at Steere Hill Parking Area: Chairman Mitchell is happy to report that the sign is up, and it looks great. Roy Najecki made a motion to table this item since the project is now complete; it was seconded by Steven St. Pierre and passed unanimously.

### **New Business** (discussions and/or action):

- a. Oversight responsibilities of Trails and Maintenance Managers: Chairman Stephen Mitchell provided an updated document for the Board to approve. The third bullet point in the Process section was revised to say, "Maintenance and Equipment Managers shall ensure that all required **non-power** equipment is in good order and available at the site for the use by the volunteer crew." The new document also had an additional section that specifically deals with volunteers and reads as such:

"Property supervisors will select individuals to assist in trail clearing, trail inspections, and other minor projects from an approved list of volunteers maintained by the GLT. Projects are identified and scheduled by the Equipment and Maintenance Managers with a projected timeline to complete the required work. Supervisors will oversee the work of volunteers to ensure the job is completed and accomplished within the best safety protocols and practices.

Adequate notice to volunteers seeking their assistance is to be given by the property supervisors of the work to be conducted with the date and time of the proposed work.

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Volunteers will not use any GLT or personal power equipment or tools while assisting in trail-clearing, trail inspections, and other minor projects. They may, however, use loppers and other hand tools to prune and remove debris. The use of battery-operated hand tools may be necessary depending upon the task to be accomplished.

Upon the completion of the scheduled work, supervisors will issue a report to the Equipment and Safety Managers.”

Chairman Mitchell reminded the Board that this is a working document that can/will be modified when necessary. Roy Najecki made a motion to approve and implement this policy; it was seconded by James Giarrusso and passed unanimously. Chairman Mitchell will put a footer on the document with the dates it was presented and approved so it will be easier to locate the history of the policy; he will also send a courtesy copy to the Town Council.

b. Hawkins Pond Dam Project Grant Consultant: Chairman Stephen Mitchell and Attorney John Bevilacqua have not had the opportunity to meet with the person yet due to a death in their family. Chairman Mitchell will bring an update back to the next meeting.

c. Baseline Documentation Review: Chairman Stephen Mitchell received an email from Carol Lynn Trocki informing him that she will be teaching 15 URI graduate students a course on Baseline Documentation Reports and wanted to know if the Board would like a graduate student to conduct a report on any of the GLT properties. Chairman Mitchell wanted to mention this to the Board and will notify her that it would be very helpful to have a report done for Phillips Farm and a report done for Steere Hill since each property should have a BDR on file. Once the reports are completed, they become a legal document attached to the deed of the property.

d. Requirement of Hunter Orange clothing: Member Roy Najecki asked for this to be placed on the agenda and he also provided the trustees with some suggestions/examples. Member Najecki would like to see all users be required to wear Hunter Orange clothing during hunting season on the properties that allow hunting. Member David Piccirillo would like to take it a step further and make wearing Hunter Orange clothing mandatory on all GLT properties during hunting season. Chairman Mitchell thinks the board should talk about this in more detail and it can be revisited when they are establishing the hunting regulations for next season.

e. Placement of Conex Container at Steere Hill Parking Area: The board is waiting to hear from MobileMod about delivery date for boxes ordered. During the recent work on the parking area, the neighbor spoke with members of the DPW about the plans for the lot. Since then, he has spoken to Chairman Mitchell and Vice-Chairman St. Pierre because he is concerned about the location of the box and the view from his property. The plan is to place the box in the southeast corner of the lot approximately 30-40 feet from the property line; this location gives the Board the best accessibility and security for the equipment that will be put into it. They met the neighbor at the property and could see what he was concerned about and want to help minimize what he can see if possible. They discussed moving the box over further to the west, but that would require more fill be added for the area to be finished. They also discussed moving the box forward further to provide more coverage from the existing bushes, but this would increase the box's visibility to the public and make it more susceptible to vandalism, possibly people climbing on it and generally increase the Board's liability. The last option they discussed was leaving it in the original selected location and plant some additional bushes to help obstruct the view from the neighbor's property. They can see what natural vegetation grows in the spring and then see how it needs to be supplemented. Roy Najecki made a motion to place the Conex box in the original

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location in the Southeast corner of the parking area and revisit the site in April to decide if additional plantings are necessary to mask the view of the abutter; it was seconded by Steven St. Pierre and passed unanimously.

f. Steere Hill Conservation field mowing: Phillips Farm has been mowed, but the 6-7 dry acres of the large center field still need to be cut. If it is cut now, that will help to tame the invasive plants taking over the field. Northern Landscape provided an estimate of \$800 to mow that part of the field. James Giarrusso believes it needs to be cut down to 4 inches, but Roy Najecki disagrees and doesn't think the management plan allows for it to be cut that short. Member David Piccirillo doesn't remember the front portion of the field ever being cut; the cows used to be put there to keep the field low. Chairman Mitchell will put it on next month's agenda to authorize Northern Landscape to cut the field for a designated amount.

### Correspondence

- a. Diane Brennan (2/5/2020): Chairman Mitchell spoke with the Town's Finance Director Diane Brennan about the purchase of the Conex boxes for Steere Hill and Sprague Farm. Mrs. Brennan was asking why the board decided to order from a vendor that did not provide the lowest purchase price. Chairman Mitchell stated that the price was only one factor that went into the decision of which vendor to select. The board chose Mobile Mod to supply the boxes because they had the stock available immediately, provided free delivery and a 5-year warranty on each box while other vendors did not have immediately available stock, only provided a 1-year warranty and would have also charged for delivery. The Board needs the boxes at the sites as soon as possible to get the needed equipment to each property and have a secure place to store it so work can be done in a timely fashion. With the mild weather we have been having, some of the members have been performing much needed property maintenance and improvements that would have otherwise waited until spring.
- b. Reappointment of GLT Trustee: Chairman Mitchell has not heard anything official yet on this, but Member Najecki said that he was at the recent Town Council meeting and witnessed the reappointment of Trustee Gene Cavaliere for a five-year term and also his reappointment to serve on the Board as the liaison from the Conservation Committee for another one-year term. The next two appointments to expire will be Trustee and Vice-Chairman Steven St. Pierre in 2022 and Trustee and Chairman Stephen Mitchell in 2023.

**Trail Inspection(s) and Maintenance Work Reports:** Members James Giarrusso and Roy Najecki have been exploring the new trail at Sprague Farm. At the new Joe Sweet parking area, they have identified a large rock and a few dead trees that need to be removed; Member Giarrusso will be working on taking care of that project.

**Monthly GLT Activities/Reports:** None.

**Open Forum:** Member Roy Najecki attended the last Town Council meeting on February 6<sup>th</sup> as the GLT liaison and provided them with an update on the Board's activities.

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

There being no further business before the Land Trust, Steven St. Pierre made a motion to adjourn at 8:20pm.; it was seconded by David Piccirillo and passed unanimously.

**Minutes Approved:** March 11, 2020 meeting.