

GLOCESTER LAND TRUST
REGULAR MEETING
March 10, 2020

The regular meeting of the Gloucester Land Trust took place on March 10, 2020 at the Gloucester Town Hall. Chair Stephen Mitchell called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

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

Members Absent: Steven St. Pierre

Minutes: Judi Rix

Guests: Mr. Bruce Payton

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. Janine Pitocco made a motion to accept the minutes of the February 11, 2020 meeting; it was seconded by David Piccirillo and passed unanimously.

GLT Treasurer's Report (discussions and /or action): Treasurer Roy Najecki provided an updated report which reflected the recent deposit of the real estate tax funds (\$92,216.03) and all the expenses for February. David Piccirillo made a motion to accept the report as presented; it was seconded by Gene Cavaliere and passed unanimously.

Approval of Bills (discussions and /or action):

- a. Janine Pitocco made a motion to pay Judi Rix a total of \$175.00 for February 11, 2020 minutes; it was seconded by David Piccirillo 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 March 10, 2020 meeting; it was seconded by David Piccirillo and passed unanimously.
- c. Norfolk Power and Equipment bill was authorized at the last meeting so it should be removed. Janine Pitocco made a motion to remove this agenda item; it was seconded by Gene Cavaliere and passed unanimously.
- d. David Piccirillo made a motion to pay Northern Landscape a total of \$1,000 for Mowing part of Phillips Farm Field; it was seconded by Janine Pitocco and passed unanimously.
- e. David Piccirillo made a motion to pay James Giarrusso a total of \$132.36 for reimbursement for supplies from staples and Home Depot; it was seconded by Janine Pitocco and passed unanimously.
- f. Janine Pitocco made a motion to pay Pare Corporation a total of \$847.69 for working on the DEM required paperwork for the Hawkins dam project; it was seconded by David Piccirillo and passed unanimously.
- g. Janine Pitocco made a motion to pay Norfolk Power and Equipment a total of \$424.64 for replacement of brush hog blades and clutch; it was seconded by Gene Cavaliere and passed unanimously.

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Old Business (discussion and/or action):

a. Conex Boxes placed at Steere Hill and Sprague Farm Properties: The Conex boxes have been delivered and are at the two sites; the Board is hoping to get them painted soon.

b. Repair work to equipment performed by Public Works Personnel: Member James Giarrusso had asked the DPW to make some repairs to the brush hog, and he believes one of the employees actually caused damage to the machine that resulted in the bill listed as agenda item “g” above. He does have some additional work that he has asked the DPW to perform, and he was very specific as to what he wanted done and provided it in writing. Member Giarrusso is hoping this repair goes better.

c. Progress report re: bird and animal habitat construction partnership with Ponaganset High School agriculture students: Chairman Stephen Mitchell and Member James Giarrusso have met with the administration at the high school three times to discuss the proposed program. All involved did not feel it would be practical to put eggs into incubator this year since none of the other pieces are in place yet. They all did agree that the construction of the portable enclosures and the site preparation for their habitat locations could begin. Member Giarrusso prepared a plan for the remainder of this semester for the students to follow, and the GLT has agreed to pay for the necessary supplies. Even though the incubator will not be used until next year, Member Giarrusso would like to include that in the purchases now so the program will be all ready to start next academic year. The Board believes this is a great opportunity to work with the high school students and contribute to conservation efforts on Land Trust property. Authorization to purchase supplies will be brought before the board at the April meeting for a vote.

d. RI Preliminary Determination Application Update: Member James Giarrusso continues to work on this, as the process is quite complicated. He was hoping to get a DEM wetlands biologist out to the site, but they were not available to do that. Member Najecki indicated he knew a wetlands biologist and he would speak with him regarding the project. Member Giarrusso is going to continue to move the request forward and submit the application.

e. Update to tractor repair at Padula Tractors – radiator leak and overfilling of recovery bottle – unexpected discovery: Member James Giarrusso was not aware of the problem with the radiator before it was brought to Padula Tractors for repair, and believes it may be the same issue as the recent damage to the brush hog and caused by the DPW employee. This is an expensive repair and will probably add another \$900 to the bill.

New Business (discussions and/or action):

a. Accomplishments of work in progress and/or completed: A handout listing the accomplishments was provided to the trustees. (Appendix A) Chairman Stephen Mitchell is especially happy about the trail being available again for the tractor to access Phillip’s Farm fields without having to travel on Route 44.

b. Establishing project priorities on GLT properties for spring 2020: Member Roy Najecki believes trail inspections are his top priority for the spring. Member James Giarrusso would like to get the trees cut and the habitat sites ready for the students to begin their project. Chairman Michell believes the weed control at Hawkins Pond might be a good project as well and Member Janine Pitocco will go out to the Hawkins Property and see what other projects could be included.

c. Hiring of Hawkins Pond Dam Project Grant Consultant: Chairman Mitchell and Attorney Bevilacqua have a meeting scheduled with the consultant on Monday. If they believe the consultant can be helpful to the Board in obtaining grant funding for the dam project a workshop meeting will be scheduled and they will invite the consultant to make a presentation to the Board, discuss the possible hiring of the consultant and bring it back to the board in April for a vote.

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d. Authorization to secure a Debit Card with specific guidelines for use of purchases up to \$500: Chairman Mitchell is very uncomfortable with any trustee expending their own money for Land tRust expenses. Many times, small items need to be purchased and it would much more convenient to have a debit card available for use. The Finance Director would keep the card at Town Hall and any of the trustees could take it out; the trustee would have 24 hours to make a purchase with a local vendor and return the card with a receipt. Overall, the Board was in favor of pursuing this. James Giarrusso made a motion to authorize Chairman Stephen Mitchell to meet with the Town Finance Director regarding securing a debit card to make Land Trust purchases; it was seconded by Janine Pitocco and passed unanimously.

e. Discussion for mowing and maintenance services of large fields: Chairman Mitchell believes the equipment the GLT currently owns is not adequate for mowing the large fields at Phillips farm and Steere Hill. Northern Landscape has been terrific to work with and the Chairman is always in favor of hiring local vendors when at all possible. Member James Giarrusso wanted to make a motion for Chairman Mitchell and himself to negotiate with Northern Landscape to mow the large fields, but Attorney Bevilacqua and member Najecki would rather the motion be for them to meet with the vendor and bring a written proposal back to the Board for a discussion and a vote. Member Janine Pitocco believes it needs to be clear what work exactly will be done and if it will be on a set schedule or on an as needed basis; the trustees also would like to get separate quotes for each of the three fields that would be mowed. Chairman Mitchell and Member Giarrusso will schedule a meeting with Northern Landscape and bring the information back to the Board.

f. Hydraulic Mower and TB-Flex Mower discussion and consideration: Both Member James Giarrusso and Member David Piccirillo provided the Board with information on a piece of equipment that could attached to the tractor and would help with brush cutting, especially on the trails. Both attachments can mow in different directions, including sideways. Member Piccirillo believes the TB-Flex Mower would be a better option because it does not require the tractor's hydraulic system to operate; it has its own power pack that performs this function. The estimated cost of the TB-Flex is \$7,000. Member Giarrusso likes the TB-Flex but he has reservations about it. He is concerned that since it is a new product there are not parts readily available if it needed to be fixed, it is more expensive than the hydraulic mower which would cost \$3,800 and it believes it will put a strain on the tractor because it will have to work harder. Roy Najecki made a motion to table this item for further study/review; it was seconded by Janine Pitocco and passed unanimously.

g. Champion Power Equipment model 73536i gasoline powered portable inverter generator request to purchase: This would be purchased to provide power for the Steere Hill Conex box and is available for \$499 at Runnings in Putnam, Connecticut. To make this purchase a W-9 would need to be filled out and provided to the Finance Office so they could be added to the available vendor list. Chairman Stephen Mitchell will go there and speak to the manager to get this accomplished. Roy Najecki made a motion to authorize Chairman Mitchell to do what is necessary to complete the required paperwork and make this purchase for \$499; it was seconded by Gene Cavaliere and passed unanimously.

h. Update on development of safe passages to Phillips Farm Fields: This item was discussed above in New Business agenda item "A". Member Roy Najecki wanted to mention that possibly additional signage or something may be needed if the public starts using the trail. The trail is specifically for the tractor to have access to the properties and he is concerned that it would impact the neighbor's privacy.

i. Weed control at Hawkins Pond: Member James Giarrusso knows of a bio-degradable pellet that once added to the pond would help eliminate weeds. Member Roy Najecki believes a DEM permit may be needed before anything could be added to the pond. Mr. Bruce Payton stated that when he was on the Board they used to do a winter draw-down of the pond; this was done on an annual basis and helped to control the weeds. Mr. Payton stated that DEM will not allow for pellets to be put in the pond, and that the draw-down

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method is the DEM preferred method for weed control. Chairman Mitchell will review the management plan.

Correspondence

- a. Michelle Wood – Hull Products – Forestry Management Work 03/02/20: Ms. Wood emailed the Board to offer her services on some of the GLT properties. Members Roy Najecki and Gene Cavaliere would like to invite her to the April meeting; Chairman Mitchell will reach out to her.
- b. Lori Banno – Interlocal Trust – Policy Renewal – 02/27/20: Chairman Mitchell asked Member Roy Najecki to review what was received. Member Najecki approved the document and then Chairman Mitchell re-submitted it.

Trail Inspection(s) and Maintenance Work Reports: Member Roy Najecki will be conducting trail inspections this month at Sprague; Steere Hill is good right now.

Monthly GLT Activities/Reports: Members Roy Najecki and Gene Cavaliere attended the recent Land & Water Summit; neither brought anything from that to this meeting.

Open Forum: Former GLT Board Member Bruce Payton was recently reviewing past minutes from GLT meetings and found it noted in one of the documents that Mark Karmozyn, a former Chair of the GLT stated that he believed Mr. Payton had stolen a drill bit that was property of the Board. Mr. Payton found the unopened drill bit in a bag at his house and wanted to return it; he also had a disc with original GPS points and photos of the Dahlquist property. Mr. Payton also advised the Board that they should consider saving more money because if they get a grant for the dam project, they will need to have funds to match the gift. Mr. Payton believes a gentleman named Tom Cook prepared a document that gave the GLT suggestions on how to lower the dam hazard classification; Roy Najecki will look for that document.

Members Janine Pitocco and Gene Cavaliere are still having issues with their iPad. Chairman Mitchell told them to reach out to Rob Bonnell for assistance, and to notify him if they do not get a response.

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

There being no further business before the Land Trust, David Piccirillo made a motion to adjourn at 9:01pm.; it was seconded by Janine Pitocco and passed unanimously.

Minutes Approved: April 14, 2020 meeting.

Appendix A

GLT PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND IN PROGRESS MARCH 2020

- Bridge Design
- DEM Wetlands Proposal for Phillips farm and Steere bridge installation
- 5 trips to DEM for meetings with Head Biologists plus numerous phone conversations
- Steere Hill trail head improvements
- Steere and Sprague Farm trail inspections and new trail layout with Roy
- Cutting of Phillips Farm pastures with Northern Landscape assistance
- Installation of Conex boxes at Steere and Sprague
- Inspection of JD Tractor and repairs at Padula Bro's.
- Inspection of Brush Hog cutter. Ordering and delivering repair parts to DPW
- Directions to DPW in writing for the necessary procedures to ensure tractor mower is safe for use.
- Laying out a trail for the tractor to safely access the fields of Phillips Farm from the woods to avoid travel on Putnam Pike.
- Purchasing Kubota RSUV to enable future tasks in the field to be more efficient and safer for the trustees involved with the work.
- Meetings with Ponaganset High School FFA teacher and principal to propose a joint partnership for construction of bird and wildlife habitats on Phillips Farm, and to raise game birds for release to the area.
- Preparatory site work at top of Steere Hill to clear concrete slab and area for future reconstruction of building that was demolished several years ago.