

GLOCESTER LAND TRUST
REGULAR MEETING
March 08, 2022

The regular meeting of the Gloucester Land Trust took place on March 08, 2022, at Gloucester Town Hall. Legal Counsel David Ursillo called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Members in attendance: Roy Najecki, Scott Boudreau, Gene Cavaliere, Wil Morin and Janine Pitocco. Legal Counsel David Ursillo was also present.

Members Absent: Chairman Steven St. Pierre, New Member Kimberly Justham

Minutes: Judi Rix

Guests: Town Councilman Steve Arnold

Pledge of Allegiance

At the March 3rd Town Council meeting Chairman Steven St. Pierre's resignation was not accepted and the item was tabled. Vice Chairman James Giarrusso's resignation was accepted, and Member Bruce Payton was not reappointed for another term. Two new members were appointed to the Board: Wil Morin, and Kimberly Justham.

Member Gene Cavaliere made a motion to appoint Treasurer Roy Najecki as presiding Chairman until a new Chairman is appointed; it was seconded by Member Janine Pitocco and passed unanimously. VOTE: Ayes – 5 (Najecki, Boudreau, Cavaliere, Morin, Pitocco)

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

Approval of minutes of previous meetings (discussions and /or action): Member Gene Cavaliere made a motion to accept the minutes of the February 22, 2022, meeting; it was seconded by Member Janine Pitocco and passed unanimously. VOTE: Ayes – 4 (Najecki, Boudreau, Cavaliere, Pitocco) Member Wil Morin abstained from the vote since he was not on the Board at that time.

GLT Treasurer's Report (discussions and /or action): Presiding Chairman Roy Najecki provided an updated spreadsheet with expenses to the trustees prior to the meeting; there was nothing significant to report since the last meeting. Member Janine Pitocco made a motion to accept the report as presented; it was seconded by Member Scott Boudreau and passed unanimously. VOTE: Ayes – 5 (Najecki, Boudreau, Cavaliere, Morin, Pitocco)

Approval of Bills – Consent Agenda (discussions and /or action): The Board took one consent agenda vote to approve the bills for payment listed below. Presiding Chairman Roy Najecki stated that all the bills, except for the invoice from Judi Rix for tonight's minutes and the petty cash replenishment, have already been paid by the Town's Finance Office. Member Scott Boudreau made a motion to pay the following invoices:

- a. Judi Rix a total of \$175.00 for the February 22, 2022 minutes
- b. Postal Service a total of \$260.00 for the post office box HH annual fee
- c. Replenish the GLT Petty Cash account for a total of \$243.57
- d. Stanley Tree Service's invoice 3591 for a total of \$1080.00 to grind 12 tree stumps at Hawkins Pond

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The motion was seconded by Member Janine Pitocco and passed unanimously. VOTE: Ayes – 5 (Najecki, Boudreau, Cavaliere, Morin, Pitocco)

Old Business (discussion and/or action)

- a. Planting of grasses at the top of Steere Hill: Member Gene Cavaliere asked how this item will be handled now that Bruce Payton is no longer on the Board, since he is who requested this. Presiding Chairman Roy Najecki stated that Bruce Payton is still a volunteer for the Land Trust and can still contribute by providing a list for the planting and the associated costs for the project to the Board for review. Member Janine Pitocco made a motion to table this item until the June 14th Land Trust meeting; it was seconded by Member Scott Boudreau and passed unanimously. VOTE: Ayes – 5 (Najecki, Boudreau, Cavaliere, Morin, Pitocco)
- b. 2021 Year-end Report: The annual year-end report was provided to the Board for review. Member Gene Cavaliere made a motion to accept this report as presented; it was seconded by Member Janine Pitocco and passed unanimously. VOTE: Ayes – 5 (Najecki, Boudreau, Cavaliere, Morin, Pitocco)
- c. Clarkville Schoolhouse Repairs: The Board received a quote of \$7,500.00 to make the repairs to the sill, window casings and a small portion of the siding. The quote must be in writing to be voted upon, and they have not received that yet. Attempts to get additional quotes have been unsuccessful so far. Member Janine Pitocco made a motion to table this item until the April 12th Land Trust meeting; it was seconded by Member Scott Boudreau and passed unanimously. VOTE: Ayes – 5 (Najecki, Boudreau, Cavaliere, Morin, Pitocco)

New Business (discussions and/or action):

- d. Purchase a ‘Uprooter/Weed Wrench’ \$245: Presiding Chairman Roy Najecki requested this be placed on the agenda because he believes this tool would assist in removing invasives and other weeds/plants when maintaining trails. He has seen it used by other Land Trusts’ and says it works very well. Recording Clerk Rix stated she had seen a similar tool for less money but was not sure of the quality; Chair Najecki will investigate this option. Member Gene Cavaliere made a motion to authorize up to \$245.00 to purchase an Uprooter/Weed Wrench; it was seconded by Member Janine Pitocco and passed unanimously. VOTE: Ayes – 5 (Najecki, Boudreau, Cavaliere, Morin, Pitocco)
- a. Resume Porta-Sans at Hawkins Pond, Sprague Farm, Steere Hill in April: Last year the three properties had these in place from April until November and believes they were beneficial to people visiting and hiking the trails. Member Janine Pitocco made a motion to resume providing portable restrooms at Hawkins Pond, Sprague Farm and Steere Hill beginning in April; it was seconded by Member Scott Boudreau and passed unanimously. VOTE: Ayes – 5 (Najecki, Boudreau, Cavaliere, Morin, Pitocco)
- b. Hawkins Pond – widen wooden bridge ramps: This would be a good project to complete this year. The ramps to the bridges need to be widened to equal the width of the bridge, which would make it safer for use. Can get GLT volunteers to assist in getting this done. Member Gene Cavaliere made a motion to move forward with widening the ramps to the bridges to equal the width of the bridge itself; it was seconded by Member Janine Pitocco and passed unanimously. VOTE: Ayes – 5 (Najecki, Boudreau, Cavaliere, Morin, Pitocco)
- c. Hawkins Pond – upper parking area - possible hazardous maple tree: Member Scott Boudreau looked at the tree after Member Bruce Payton brought it up at the last GLT meeting. Member Boudreau noticed a big hole in the tree and believes that damage happened after Stanley Tree Service was out there. The Board does not feel the tree is a significant risk to anyone and does not

need to be addressed immediately; this issue can wait until the spring. Member Janine Pitocco would like to take down the three Catalpa trees that have been in question for some time when the Board hires someone to remove the maple tree.

- d. Purchase a Polaris side-by-side ATV for Sprague Farm: Former Vice Chairman Giarrusso had suggested this purchase prior to his departure, so presiding Chairman Najecki placed it on the agenda. There is currently a gator at Sprague, but it gets stuck in the rougher terrain frequently. An ATV would make bringing equipment a mile into the woods much easier, would allow for easier access to the areas currently being worked on and can tow up to 1,500 pounds. There are two versions of the Polaris, a base model and a premium model, and inventory for them is scarce right now. Only one of the five local dealers has in-stock inventory of the premium model, and delivery time for the base model is approximately five months. The premium model has an underbody guard and power steering, with a price difference between the two models being approximately \$1,500.00 with the premium model costing \$13,000.00. Polaris is also increasing their prices on these items in two weeks by 5%, so purchasing in the future will cost more.

Member Wil Morin asked if there was other equipment that the Board already owned that would be helpful to use instead; he is trying to get an understanding of the scope of the work being done. He also asked if equipment like this needed to be purchased new from a dealer. Presiding Chairman Najecki stated that it is not practical or feasible, as well as time consuming to move equipment from one property to another when you have limited time to work. The equipment does not have to be purchased new from a dealer, but it is difficult to find another source that meets the town finance/purchasing regulations.

Member Gene Cavaliere made a motion to purchase the Polaris side-by-side ATV, premium model for \$12,999.00 and a \$400 surcharge; no one seconded the motion and without a second being made, the chair did not call for a vote and instead continued with a further discussion. Member Janine Pitocco is hesitating on this. She knows that something is needed for each property to help with lugging equip to the work sites, but is it necessary at this time? She questions if Sprague needs another piece of equipment? Presiding Chairman Najecki stated they could do without this purchase, but it would make traversing the rough terrain much easier; it is getting to the point where the terrain is too difficult for the gator to handle. Member Janine Pitocco made a motion to table this item until the April 12th Land Trust meeting; it was seconded by Member Scott Boudreau and passed unanimously. VOTE: Ayes – 5 (Najecki, Boudreau, Cavaliere, Morin, Pitocco)

- e. Wetland Biologist support for Haystack Hill and Col. Anthony trail repair permits: Presiding Chairman Roy Najecki would like to rebuild these two trails on the Sprague property. The Haystack Trail has approximately a 750-foot stretch that runs through a swamp. This portion of the trail has been submerged for at least forty years and over that time it has been traversed by motorized vehicles that have damaged the trail and left deep ruts. The Colonel Anthony trail had a stone bridge on it that washed out and he would like to replace that with a new bridge. Both projects would require a wetlands biologist to assist in getting the appropriate permits and provide guidance on how to make repairs that would be acceptable to the RI DEM. Presiding Chairman Najecki reached out to Mr. Scott Rabideau of Burriville, whom he knows and is CEO and President of Natural Resources Services. Mr. Rabideau is a professional wetland scientist and served on the Burriville Land Trust; he provided an estimate of \$4,000.00 to assist the GLT on these projects. Mr. Rabideau would evaluate the areas in question, provide the Board options for how to fix, and submit/handle permits for the RI DEM.

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Member Janine Pitocco asked if multiple quotes would be necessary for this to be awarded. Legal Counsel David Ursillo stated that he believed multiple quotes would be necessary but presiding Chairman Najecki thought it might not be necessary because it is a specialized job. Member Wil Morin asked about the second new member appointed to the Board, Kimberly Justham. Kimberly was appointed to the Board last Thursday but was ill this evening and could not attend. Member Morin thought that she had experience as a wetlands biologist and possibly worked for VHB as an ecologist. Member Janine Pitocco asked if Kimberly is a wetlands biologist, would she be able to help with this process in her role as a trustee? Legal Counsel Ursillo thinks she may be able to but will need to investigate that a little further. Member Janine Pitocco made a motion to table this item until the April 12th Land Trust meeting; it was seconded by Member Scott Boudreau and passed unanimously. VOTE: Ayes – 5 (Najecki, Boudreau, Cavaliere, Morin, Pitocco)

- f. Town abandonment of portions of Joe Sweet and Elbow Rock Roads: Presiding Chairman Roy Najecki provided the Board with a Providence Journal article regarding abandoning roads. Reporter Michael Rubin researched and found that there is a law on the books in Gloucester that if a road is not maintained for twenty years, it is considered abandoned and does not need to go through formal abandonment procedures. The abutters to the abandoned road do not own it but have the right to use it to access their property. Legal Counsel David Ursillo stated that to declare another party the owner of a road/property, an actual public hearing of some kind would need to be held. Legal Counsel Ursillo indicated the GLT would need to hire a surveyor to determine the meets and bounds of the area in question and then petition the Town Council to give ownership of the land to the GLT.
- g. Gift for departing GLT Chair: Member Janine Pitocco would like to include a gift for the departing Vice Chairman as well for all the work he did for the Land Trust. Member Janine Pitocco made a motion to table this item until the April 12th Land Trust meeting and include obtaining a gift for the departing Vice Chairman as well when on the agenda again; it was seconded by Member Scott Boudreau and passed unanimously. VOTE: Ayes – 5 (Najecki, Boudreau, Cavaliere, Morin, Pitocco)
- h. Pavilions for Hawkins Pond and Steere Hill – project and DEM grant update: Presiding Chairman Roy Najecki is completing a questionnaire provided by the state regarding the projects funded by the grant; the funding is being held up pending required paperwork that needs to be submitted. The original plan was to purchase from a Connecticut distributor, but Chairman Najecki has since learned there is a local builder that does the same type of construction. The builder's name is Chris Coutu, he lives in Coventry RI and Chairman Najecki would like to get a quote from him to compare to what Kloter Farms is quoting us now, along with what their wait time is. The Board is not locked into a vendor and can purchase the pavilions from anyone; they are locked into the grant amount. Both locations still need the concrete work done at them before anything can be built there.
- i. Workshop meeting to discuss Hawkins Pond dam repair: The Board would like to have a workshop to discuss where the project stands as of now. Once the membership of the Board has been officially determined, and officers elected, then they will invite Engineer Bob Fairbanks to attend a meeting and make a presentation. Member Janine Pitocco questioned when that may happen since she didn't think the membership would be determined before the second scheduled March GLT meeting. Town Councilman Steve Arnold spoke up and informed the Board that the GLT's membership is on the agenda for the Town Council meeting on 3/16. Legal Counsel David Ursillo suggested that someone reach out to Mr. Fairbanks regarding when he might be available to attend a meeting; Member Janine Pitocco said she would be happy to reach out to him.

Correspondence:

- a. RI Interlocal Insurance questionnaires: The GLT received a questionnaire in the mail that needs to be completed so the Interlocal Trust can determine the level of coverage the Board needs for the upcoming year. Presiding Chairman Roy Najecki will complete the questionnaire.

Open Forum: Town Councilman Steve Arnold was in attendance to show support for the Land Trust. Councilman Arnold has been a supporter of the Land Trust for a long time, even before he was elected to serve on the Council.

Member Gene Cavaliere mentioned the land for sale near the middle school again; he has mentioned this in the past, but the Board has not shown interest in obtaining the land. Presiding Chairman Roy Najecki told Member Cavaliere to investigate the cost of the property if he wanted to, but personally doesn't feel the land fits well into the GLT's objectives. The Board has the expense of a dam to repair, and the land is not located near any other GLT property.

New Member Wil Morin introduced himself formally to the Board and told them a little bit about himself. Member Morin grew up in Gloucester, lives on Tourtellot Hill Road with his family and owns a small vegetable farm. He is excited to join the Board and looks forward to serving the citizens of Gloucester in this capacity.

There being no further business before the Land Trust, Member Janine Pitocco made a motion to adjourn at 8:52pm.; it was seconded by Member Gene Cavaliere and passed unanimously. VOTE: Ayes – 5 (Najecki, Boudreau, Cavaliere, Morin, Pitocco)

Minutes Approved: April 12, 2022 meeting.