

GLOCESTER LAND TRUST
REGULAR MEETING
April 12, 2022

The regular meeting of the Gloucester Land Trust took place on April 12, 2022, at Gloucester Town Hall. Interim Chairman Roy Najecki called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

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

Members Absent: David DeCost

Minutes: Judi Rix

Guests:

Pledge of Allegiance

Open Forum Agenda Items Only: No guests present to speak.

Approval of minutes of previous meetings (discussions and /or action): Member Janine Pitocco made a motion to accept the minutes of the March 8, 2022, meeting; it was seconded by Member Scott Boudreau and passed unanimously. VOTE: Ayes – 5 (Najecki, Boudreau, Cavaliere, Morin, Pitocco) Member Kimberly Justham abstained from the vote since she was not at that meeting.

GLT Treasurer’s Report (discussions and /or action): Presiding Chairman Roy Najecki stated that on the last bank statement he received, the Board had approximately \$360,000.00 in its account. Chairman Najecki then provided the new members of the Board with a brief overview of how the finances work for the Board. He explained the petty cash account for small purchases, town charges that hit the account, how some charges can be delayed when they flow through the finance office and an alternate form of payment is used, and that because the board is tax exempt, no purchases should have taxes paid on them. Member Janine Pitocco asked Legal Counsel David Ursillo to explain in greater detail the relationship between the Town and the board.

Legal Counsel Ursillo stated that the Land Trust is a quasi-independent municipal entity that is overseen by the Town Council. The Board gets its funding from the town by receiving a portion of the real estate transfer taxes collected each year. The members of the Board have over 2,200 acres of land to steward, and they are trying to maintain and improve the land they already own; not actively looking for new land to acquire. If an appropriate property were to present itself, then the Board would investigate whether it would be a good purchase to make. Maintaining and fixing the Hawkins Pond Dam is a high priority right now and the Board needs to have funds available for that.

Approval of Bills – Consent Agenda (discussions and /or action): The Board took one consent agenda vote to approve the bills for payment listed below. Member Scott Boudreau made a motion to pay the following invoices:

- a. Judi Rix a total of \$175.00 for the April 12, 2022 minutes
- b. David Ursillo (Law offices of Gregory Schadone) a total of \$1,500.00 for work done between Dec 2021 – Feb 2022
- c. David Ursillo (Law offices of Gregory Schadone) a total of \$1,050.00 for work done March 2022
- d. Midfield Technologies a total of \$475.00 for the annual website hosting fee.

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- e. Debug Pest control a total of \$410.00 for annual renewal for carpenter ant & termite protection at Clarkville Schoolhouse.

The motion was seconded by Member Janine Pitocco and passed unanimously. VOTE: Ayes – 6 (Najecki, Boudreau, Cavaliere, Justham, Morin, Pitocco)

Old Business (discussion and/or action)

- a. Clarkville Schoolhouse Repairs: The Board received a quote of \$7,571.00 from Catcon, LLC to make the repairs to the sill, window casings and a small portion of the siding. Only quote received, attempts to get additional quotes have been unsuccessful. Member Scott Boudreau mentioned that he may know of another contractor that would be interested in making the repairs. Legal Counsel Ursillo stated that if they table this item to follow up with that contractor, they will need to follow up with the other contractors that did not respond previously. Chairman Roy Najecki will reach out to former Member Bruce Payton to see who he asked to provide a quote. Member Janine Pitocco made a motion to table this item until the April 26th meeting to allow for additional follow up with various contractors; it was seconded by Member Wil Morin and passed unanimously. VOTE: Ayes – 6 (Najecki, Boudreau, Cavaliere, Justham, Morin, Pitocco)

New Business (discussions and/or action):

- a. Election of GLT Officers: Member Janine Pitocco provided a brief overview of the positions for the new Members. The elected GLT Officers are the Chairman, the Vice Chairman and the Treasurer with their appointment running concurrent with the calendar year; elections should be held in January if possible. The Chairman is the primary point of contact for the Board, gathers the information for the agendas to send to the recording clerk for posting, makes materials available to the Board members to review, and runs the meetings. The Vice Chairman fills in for the Chairman when they cannot perform their duties and the Treasurer keeps track of spending, provides updates on the budget, and works with the Finance Office to ensure bills get paid. Presiding Chair Najecki stated he wished to remain Treasurer. Member Janine Pitocco made a motion to reappoint Roy Najecki as the Treasurer; it was seconded by Member Kimberly Justham and passed unanimously. VOTE: Ayes – 6 (Najecki, Boudreau, Cavaliere, Justham, Morin, Pitocco)

New Member Wil Morin thought the Chairman should be someone who has been on the Board for some length of time. Presiding Chairman Roy Najecki nominated Member Janine Pitocco for Chairman after no one expressed interest in taking on the position. Member Pitocco said if nobody else was going to do it, then she would take it on for now. Member Roy Najecki made a motion to appoint Janine Pitocco as the new GLT Chairman; it was seconded by Member Gene Cavaliere and passed unanimously. VOTE: Ayes – 6 (Najecki, Boudreau, Cavaliere, Justham, Morin, Pitocco)

Again, no one expressed interest in filling the position of Vice Chairman, but after some discussion Member Wil Morin offered to give it a try. Chairman Janine Pitocco made a motion to appoint new Member Wil Morin as the Vice Chairman; it was seconded by Member Roy Najecki and passed unanimously. VOTE: Ayes – 6 (Najecki, Boudreau, Cavaliere, Justham, Morin, Pitocco) Chairman Pitocco took over the running of the meeting from this point on.

- b. Purchase a Polaris side-by-side ATV for Sprague Farm: 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. Chairman Janine Pitocco asked what the Board would do with the gator if this was purchased. Member Roy Najecki said the gator could be used for mowing fields. There are

two versions of the Polaris, a base model, and a premium model; the premium model has an underbody guard and power steering and costs approximately \$15,000.00. Member Scott Boudreau stated he would rather spend less money on a different version. Member Boudreau asked if anyone on the Board was working with, or had given permission to, volunteers Bruce Payton and Bob Lyons to do work because he saw them out there without a GLT Member. Member Roy Najecki indicated he had given them permission to do some exploratory work to try and locate the boundaries from Quadrans to the West Gloucester School; no one else on the Board was aware of this.

Member Wil Morin stated that he is trying to get an understanding of the scope of the work being done by the Board, which makes it difficult to vote on something like this. He also wants to keep in mind that there needs to be funds to repair the dam as well. Member Najecki stated that costs to repair the dam are still unknown and may not be known for another year. Member Kimberly Justham asked how much mowing is done by volunteers. Member Najecki said an estimate of 60-80 hours for Steere Hill, and Sprague Farm are usually needed, but volunteers do not always have the time to dedicate to that; the Board ends up hiring outside vendors to mow. The board will not save significant money on mowing with this purchase. No one felt prepared to decide on this purchase at this meeting. Member Roy Najecki made a motion to table this item until the April 26th meeting; it was seconded by Member Gene Cavaliere. The Board then realized they may not have a meeting on the 26th, so Member Najecki made a motion to amend his motion to table this item until the May 10th meeting; the amended motion was seconded by Member Gene Cavaliere and passed unanimously. VOTE: Ayes – 6 (Najecki, Boudreau, Cavaliere, Justham, Morin, Pitocco)

- c. Wetland Biologist support for Haystack Hill and Col. Anthony trail repair permits: This item was tabled from the last meeting. Member 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. Equestrians, ATV's, and dirt bikes are the only things that can traverse the area as it is. The Colonel Anthony trail had a stone bridge on it that washed out and people are walking on submerged rocks right now; 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.

Member Kimberly Justham suggested putting some gravel down to temporarily stabilize the area, but it would still be an issue if vehicles are continuing to drive out there. Member Gene Cavaliere asked if it would be better to only put down a small path of gravel for hikers. Member Justham indicated that if any gravel was added to the site, an application to alter would need to be submitted and an engineer would need to get involved; she also recommended a pre-application meeting with DEM before the Board committed to spending too much money. Former Vice Chairman James Giarrusso handled the permitting requirements for the bridges put in place at Steere Hill. Chairman Janine Pitocco asked if the Board Members felt it was worth a site visit for everyone to see the areas being discussed. Site visits are for information gathering; the Board cannot make decisions at the visit, and it needs to be posted just like a regular meeting so anyone from the public can attend. The Board Members decided a site visit would be helpful and selected Saturday, May 7th at 4pm as the when they would meet in the main parking area of Sprague.

- d. Gift for departing GLT Chair & Vice Chair: Member Scott Boudreau heard that both people would rather not receive a gift. Chairman Janine Pitocco also heard from the departing Chair that he did not

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want a gift; she would still like to publicly thank them for their service to the Board. She feels that in general people do not get thanked enough for their time they devote to things.

- e. Pavilions for Hawkins Pond and Steere Hill – project and DEM grant update: The Board received updated quotes for the pavilions from Kloter Farms and they would cost approximately \$30,000 each. The grant paperwork is still not completed. Member Roy Najecki didn't believe he had the authority to complete it; the grant will cover 80% of the projects up to \$48,000. Both locations still need the concrete work done at them before anything can be built there and DEM approvals will also be needed before things can continue to move forward. At the December 28, 2021 GLT meeting, the Board voted to award the bid to Baccala Concrete Corporation per their quote of \$6,154.50 for 50 yards of concrete to rehabilitate the slab at the top of Steere Hill. The Board just needs to reach out to them to schedule that work. Member Roy Najecki made a motion to give himself authorization to complete and submit the required DEM grant paperwork on behalf of the Gloucester Land Trust; it was seconded by Member Kimberly Justham and passed unanimously. VOTE: Ayes – 6 (Najecki, Boudreau, Cavaliere, Justham, Morin, Pitocco)
- f. Workshop meeting to discuss Hawkins Pond dam repair: The Board will set a date in the future to have a workshop meeting to discuss where the project stands as of now; the Board will invite Engineer Bob Fairbanks to attend the meeting and make a presentation. New Member David DeCost has some dam experience, so that should be helpful.
- g. Sprague Farm, spring wild turkey hunting permission – Light Foundation: Member Roy Najecki asked for this to be placed on the agenda to be proactive. Last year the Board allowed the Light Foundation to use Sprague Farm for their one-day event and Member Najecki anticipates they will be reaching out again to ask for permission to have the same event this year. He has not heard from anyone from the Foundation yet, doesn't want to not be able to accommodate their request if the date is before another GLT meeting is held. Member Gene Cavaliere made a motion to allow the Light Foundation to hold their one-day event at Sprague Farm again this year on any date requested by the Foundation; it was seconded by Member Roy Najecki and passed unanimously. VOTE: Ayes – 6 (Najecki, Boudreau, Cavaliere, Justham, Morin, Pitocco)

Correspondence:

- a. Hawkins Pond Dam: The GLT received an email from Thomas Fitzpatrick of the RI DEM regarding setting up a time to do an inspection at the Hawkins Dam, but there was some confusion over if anyone was available to meet him during the time he requested. When Mr. Fitzpatrick was finally reached, he stated that the dam will be put on a regular inspection schedule, and he will be reaching out again to schedule a visit. One wall of the spillway has fallen over and about an inch of water is flowing over the spillway; the Board's engineer will need to work with the DEM to resolve any issues. For now, Chairman Janine Pitocco will be the Board's point of contact person for the dam.

Member Roy Najecki would like to know more about how to work the valves at the dam and suggested opening them up a little more to lower the water level. Chairman Pitocco would like to get back to having 1-2 people who monitor the dam and are points of contact in an event of an issue. Legal counsel David Ursillo asked if the section of the spillway that is broken should be cordoned off to keep people away from it. He suggested maybe a small fence, stakes with caution tape, basically anything that would keep people off the broken concrete area. The Board should make an effort to identify the issue and take preventative steps so that nobody gets hurt.

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Open Forum: Chairman Janine Pitocco asked when the port-a-johns were going to be in place at the properties. Member Roy Najecki stated they were being delivered next week; the one at Steere Hill was left up there all winter and will be switched out with a new one. Member Morin thought that she had experience as a wetlands biologist and possibly worked for VHB as an ecologist.

Chairman Pitocco asked Member Wil Morin and new Member Kimberly Justham to introduce themselves to the Board and disclose a little bit about themselves. Member Morin did it at the last meeting, but not everyone was present at that meeting. He grew up in Gloucester, lives on Tourtellot Hill Road with his family and owns a small vegetable farm; he loves to hike the trails with his kids. Member Justham is a graduate of URI, has worked for several companies relating to land conservation and environmental regulation, including working in compliance for the RI DEM. Her interests lie in conservation, and she is looking forward to serving on the Board. Everyone else present then shared a bit about themselves as well to help the new members get to know more about the people they will be working with.

There being no further business before the Land Trust, Member Gene Cavaliere made a motion to adjourn at 9:39pm.; it was seconded by Member Kimberly Justham and passed unanimously. VOTE: Ayes – 6 (Najecki, Boudreau, Cavaliere, Justham, Morin, Pitocco)

Minutes Approved: May 10, 2022 meeting.