

FOSTER LAND TRUST
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 3, 2012
Ben Eddy Building 7:00 p.m.

Call to Order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

Roll Call: Present (5): Linda Los Tibbetts, Chair; Myra Mercier, Vice Chair; Walter May, Treasurer; Bill Fortier; Sisan Smallman (new member).

Excused (1): Kristen Cole, Secretary.

Absent (1): Chris Iozzi, Conservation Commission Representative.

New Member: The Chair welcomed new member Sisan Smallman, who has been selected by the Planning Board as their representative. An information packet will be provided, including contact information, recent minutes, the quarterly report, RI Land Trust Standards and Practices, and similar documents.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes from the last meeting were not available for review. This matter was continued to the next meeting. In the absence of the Secretary, Sisan offered to take minutes for this meeting.

Financial Reports:

Walter reported that he has submitted to the Treasurer a requisition for \$300 for Morneau and Murphy for the registration of the Delvecchio deed. Two lots on either side of Tom Woods Road total just under 99 acres.

Walter has submitted a voucher for himself for \$7.63 for 3 bags of cement used in building the handicapped accessible bench on the Spencer property.

Walter reported that a voucher has been submitted for \$4800 for Scituate Surveys for the survey of the Spencer property. A balance of \$3435 will be due upon completion of the survey.

Walter noted that the surveyor wants to walk the property at 8:30 a.m. next Wednesday, April 11 with any Land Trust members who are able to participate.

Discrepancies with abutting property owners have been resolved.

The Treasurer's report is expected on April 19.

Walter reported that harvesting of witch hazel on the Newsome property has been completed. A tally of the final tonnage is not yet available. Payment is to be \$50/ton.

Last fall, the Board authorized Walter to purchase a bond with Board funds, but no action has been taken yet because bonds that meet the Board's standards (AAA rating and around 5% return) have not been available, even with a premium fee. He can either purchase bonds in the 3%+ range, or continue to wait. The capital account currently has \$13,000, and the stewardship account (after deducting for the ongoing survey) has almost \$29,000.

MOTION: Sisan Smallman made a motion to authorize Walter May to purchase a \$5000 AAA rated bond with funds from the stewardship account at a currently available rate, anticipated to be 3-3.75%; motion seconded by Bill Fortier.

Vote taken. Motion passed unanimously.

F. Other Activities

Linda reported that the DEM Trails Grant requires that signed affidavits be submitted attesting to hours of volunteer labor put in on the project. Walter indicated that he put in 3 days on the bench and 99 hours on brush cutting, among other hours.

Lime application is to be completed on the Hayfield property at the rate of 2.1 tons/acre, based on the soil testing. The cost will be borne by the authorized harvester.

Linda asked about participating in improvements to the North-South Trail project. Walter suggested staying to the north of Tom Woods Road. Linda wondered if a side loop to the pond on the Delvecchio property might be feasible.

Linda reported that a USDA Community Forestry Grant might be available to purchase land for the protection of forests. DEM has some money to be used in Foster, but not enough to enable property purchase, and that money cannot be used as a match for other grant funds. A Community Forestry Grant might be considered for the Sainio property.

The Trust for Public Land (which is located in Massachusetts, but can involve RI and Connecticut locations) is interested in a joint approach to protection of adjoining properties on the CT/ RI line. Ann-Marie Ignasher has been in touch with the Killingly Planner, and partnership with the Wyndham Land Trust and 1772 Foundation is possible. There is also interest in support for property abutting the Grass property, but a 50% match would be required. Board members discussed the existence of several apparently orphan lots (not registered, taxed or owned) around the Grass property and elsewhere.

The RI Land Trust Alliance and Land Trust Council has made a first-time offer of assistance to local Land Trusts. The full Board must be committed to the project, though no financial contribution is required. They are a bit vague about the kind of assistance that might be available, but Linda has advised them (and all members strongly agreed)

that we would not be interested in having a consultant simply tell us what needs to be done; rather, we would need "boots-on-the-ground" forms of assistance. Linda proposed that we consider a full forest management plan for the entire greenway, up through the Schneider property, consistent with the Standards and Practices promulgated by the Alliance. Walter noted that he can probably complete a forest management plan – identifying trees for harvest and for preservation, habitat conservation, etc. -- but also indicated that would be a long-term, time-consuming project. He would like to see a copy of standards and an actual forestry management plan to see the approach and format (Linda indicated the Borders Farm plan may be available for review). Walter's suggestion for a project is practical assistance with verification of property boundaries. Linda will discuss with the Alliance. She noted that Gloucester indicated a similar need for practical assistance, not consultancy, and the Alliance might be willing to consider alternatives.

Upcoming Activities

Trail Hiking Event May 5. A walking tour of the Spencer property is scheduled as the first stop on a Blackstone Valley bus tour. The bus will probably arrive shortly after 9:00 a.m. Land Trust members who are able to attend should meet at the site between 8:30 and 8:45 to ensure the trail is in good condition, and to prepare to point out the tamarack groves and other features along the hike to the pond.

Land Trust Days, organized by the RI Land Trust Council, will take place in July. The plan is to show the Hopkins property. Events can be submitted for PR during April and May. Kristen has been identified as the primary contact at our end.

Next Meeting: The next scheduled meeting on May 1 is believed to conflict with the Town Financial Meeting; therefore, the Land Trust meeting on May 1 is CANCELLED. Another meeting will be scheduled if needed.

Adjournment

MOTION: Myra Mercier made a motion to adjourn the meeting; motion seconded by Bill.

Vote called. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sisan Smallman