

GROTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Location: Town Hall, 2nd Floor

Members Present: John Smigelski (Chair), Peter Morrison (Vice Chair), Olin Lathrop (Clerk), Susan Black (absent), Bruce Easom, Eileen McHugh, Marshall Giguere

Others Present: Takashi Tada (Conservation Administrator)

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Chairman Smigelski.

General Business:

B-39 Winding Way: Atty. Collins requested (for R. Lacombe) an extension for a technically expired Order of Conditions. P. Morrison made a motion to approve a one year extension for B-39 Winding Way MassDEP#169-749. E. McHugh seconded and the motion passed unanimously (6-0).

110 Boston Road (Groton Community School): Atty. Collins said that if there were any questions, he would request a continuation. P. Morrison made a motion to issue an Order of Conditions under the Wetlands Protection Act to 110 Boston Road, MassDEP #179-1154. The motion was seconded by E. McHugh and passed by a vote of 4-2 (M. Giguere and B. Easom voting against). P. Morrison made a motion to issue an Order of Conditions to 110 Boston Road, MassDEP#179-1054 under the Groton Zoning Bylaw, striking conditions #5 and 10. The motion was seconded by E. McHugh and passed by a vote of 4-2 (M. Giguere and B. Easom voting against).

7:15 p.m. – Public Hearing: RDA , Herbicide Treatment of Invasive Plants, Eliades Conservation Area, Pacer Way

Owner/Applicant: Town of Groton

Invasive Species Committee Rep: O. Lathrop

Phragmites are in the drainage ditch, which will be bundled and cut and the stems, etc. will be painted in the fall, which works according to Tim Simmons of MassWildlife.

E. McHugh requested a baseline map to use for future reference. O. Lathrop said one will be available, as well as photographs of the site.

M. Giguere asked what the timetable is. O. Lathrop said there would be outreach this summer and the treatment would begin in late summer/fall, noting that this herbicide requires abutter notification.

P. Morrison asked about outreach funding. T. Tada said they could use the Land Management Account or the Conservation Commission operating budget.

B. Easom asked what would be done with the cut material. O. Lathrop said it would be left in place or burned next spring. P. Morrison suggested getting an out-of-season burn permit for invasives.

J. Smigelski said that he felt that controlling the Autumn Olive does not require an RDA.

B. Easom said he is worried about spreading the seeds. O. Lathrop said the cuttings will be stockpiled in the upland area and hopefully will be burned right away.

T. Tada asked if the drainage ditch is jurisdictional. Commission members said it is part of the subdivision's stormwater management system (i.e., not jurisdictional).

Upon a motion by M. Giguere, seconded by P. Morrison, it was

VOTED: to issue a Negative Determination of Applicability (#1) for the proposed herbicide treatment of invasive plants on the Eliades Conservation Area, Pacer Way

The vote was unanimous (6-0).

Return to General Business:

A Groton Herald invoice was signed.

Upon a motion by E. McHugh and seconded by P. Morrison, it was

Voted to: approve Conservation Commission minutes from 12/6/16.

The vote was unanimous (6-0).

Committee Updates:

M. Giguere said the GPAC discussed Baddacook Pond weeds at its last meeting. There had been \$125,000 budgeted and a quote came in at \$145,000. Jim L. is working with Solitude and the prevailing wage needs to be paid for work on the land. A private hauler will be used and not DPW.

7:30 p.m. – Public Meeting: RDA, Eagle Scout Project – Bog Bridges, Throne Conservation Area

Applicant: Will Hughson

W. Hughson did a PowerPoint presentation, noting that the bog bridges (similar to those at the Williams Barn/Sorhaug Woods) will be over wet areas in the Groton Conservation Trust's Throne Hill conservation area.

E. McHugh said it is a nice project and a great presentation. She asked how he planned to get the sections to the site. W. Hughson said he would wheel them there in a makeshift cart.

E. McHugh asked whether there would be any tree cutting. W. Hughson said there would not.

M. Giguere noted that it is a nice project in a boggy area. He asked whether there would be any excavating to match the steep slopes.

W. Hughson said it would be unnecessary because it will bypass any slopes.

B. Easom asked about the jurisdiction/bylaw of filling in wetlands with the pipe supports because it is not under the WPA.

M. Giguere said the roadway is not really jurisdictional, and only the flowing stream is.

P. Morrison said the pipes would not impede the flow.

B. Easom said he would prefer to see the wetlands spanned or a NOI filed for consistency.

O. Lathrop said he is less concerned about the wetlands and more concerned about trail maintainability. He suggested shifting the trail. W. Hughson said the Groton Conservation Trust did not want the trail shifted.

Holly Estes, Groton Conservation Trust trustee said that going off trail is not an option, noting that the trail is an existing cart path.

O. Lathrop asked whether he has checked with the fire department and he said no.

Paul Funch, Trails Committee Chairman, said a fire truck is narrow enough to pass by and noted that the road could be improved.

H. Estes said the CR (co-held by DCR and GCC) permits improvements to the existing trail. She read the CR uses.

O. Lathrop said that sounds good.

P. Morrison said it is not a good idea to abandon an access road because emergencies happen.

J. Smigelski asked about the condition of the used lumber being proposed for use. O. Lathrop said it is Trex decking.

J. Smigelski recommended using support pipes that were sturdy enough to support the weight.

Upon a motion by M. Giguere, seconded by B. Easom, it was

VOTED: to issue a Negative Determination of Applicability (#3) to allow bog bridges to be constructed as part of an Eagle Scout project on the Throne Hill Conservation area and with the following conditions:

- 1) The first bridge shall span the main stream;
- 2) The bridge landing shall be on level ground.

The vote was unanimous (6-0).

8:00 PM Discussion: Request for Extension and Vegetation Management, the Groton Inn, 128 Main St., Mass DEP #169-1109

Applicant: John Amaral, Brian Butler

Per the request of the applicants, a motion was made by P. Morrison and seconded by E. McHugh it was

VOTED: to issue a three-year extension for vegetation management.

The vote was unanimous (6-0).

Discussion continued regarding invasive vegetation management.

There will be mechanical treatment and two debris piles.

Invasives (especially European Alder) will be cut and covered with rubber mats to reduce encroachment around the edge of the otherwise nice meadow/marsh habitat and provide a good viewscape for the hotel.

In the future, the Order of Conditions may need to be amended for herbicide use. Ongoing maintenance will be done, including multiplying the diversity of wildlife in the upland meadow habitat, which is currently in decline.

M. Giguere said it is a good, well thought out plan and the end result should be good.

B. Easom said he agreed that it benefited both ecology and people.

O. Lathrop said he likes the plan but would need to see specifics before he could agree to the use of herbicides, noting that he understands that full success would require the use of herbicides.

P. Morrison said he is a big fan of early successional/grassland habitat.

E. McHugh agreed that the plan was great.

J. Smigelski said it is hard to plan too far into the future, noting that he would prefer focused short-term activities.

J. Amaral thanked the commission for their support, noting that the MIGIS Group are good stewards and are thinking of promoting the eco-tourism aspect and are planning on having educational signs.

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by B. Easom, it was

VOTED: to accept as minor plan change for vegetation management at 128 Main St. (Groton Inn), MassDEP #169-1109. The vote was unanimous (6-0).

Return to General Business

788 Boston Road Order of Conditions, Bylaw #2017-2

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by E. McHugh, it was

VOTED: to accept Bylaw#2017-2.
To strike 36, 49, 51, 53, 54 and
Add no salt on property and replace 51 by adding with five year monitoring per the public hearing discussion.

The vote was unanimous (6-0).

Land Management Discussion:

Baddacook Field site walk: Overall the grasses look good. O. Lathrop will look into spot-treating the Black Swallow-wort. Some garlic mustard plants were observed in the field.

Sargisson Beach: All set to open this Friday.

Reorganization and Appointments:

Upon a motion made by O. Lathrop and seconded by P. Morrison a vote was taken to appoint the following committee representatives: E. McHugh to ERSWAC, M. Giguere to GPAC and B. Easom to Williams Barn.

The motion passed unanimously (6-0).

Upon a motion made by M. Giguere and seconded by B. Easom a vote was taken to appoint J. Smigelski as chairman. The vote was 5-0-1.

Upon a motion made by M. Giguere and seconded by B. Easom a vote was taken to appoint P. Morrison vice chair. The vote was unanimous (6-0).

Upon a motion made by M. Giguere and seconded by B. Easom a vote was taken to appoint O. Lathrop as clerk. The vote was 5-0-1.

M. Giguere will try to call in for the 6/13/17 meeting.

Baddacook Field: B. Easom asked about farming use and the cost of an irrigation well. He said he would contact the Ag. Commission to gauge interest. He said they could go to the annual town meeting with a warrant article.

Discussion ensued regarding whether this would be eligible for CPC funds, with the determination being it was not.

E. McHugh said she wants to see what the level of interest is and costs vs. revenue.

B. Easom volunteered to go to the Ag. Commission.

Upon a motion made by O. Lathrop and seconded by P. Morrison, a vote was taken to authorize B. Easom to go before the Agricultural Commission.

The motion passed unanimously.

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by E. McHugh, it was

VOTED: to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 PM. The vote was unanimous.

Notes taken by Takashi Tada, Conservation Administrator

Transcribed by Margot Hammer

Exhibits on file at Conservation Commission Office:

1. RDA, Herbicide Treatment, Pacer Way (Eliades Conservation Area)
2. RDA, Bog Bridges, Throne Hill Conservation Area (GCT)
3. Vegetation Management Plan, Groton Inn, 128 Main Street
4. OOC, Groton Inn, 128 Main Street, MassDEP #169-1109
5. OOC, Winding Way (Lot B-39), MassDEP #169-749
6. OOC, Groton Community School, 110 Boston Road, MassDEP #169-1154
7. OOC, 788 Boston Road, Bylaw #2017-2