



TOWN OF GROTON
Conservation Commission
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Groton Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 28, 2020 @ 6:30 p.m.
Virtual Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/95002961275>

Broadcast on Zoom and The Groton Channel
Pursuant to Governor's Executive Order
Concerning the Open Meeting Law and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Present: Laurence J. Hurley, Vice-Chair; Eileen McHugh, Clerk; Peter Morrison, Marshall Giguere, Olin Lathrop, Bruce Easom

Members absent: John Smigelski, Chair

Others present: Nikolis Gualco, Conservation Administrator

6:40 PM Vice-Chairman Hurley called the meeting to order.

APPOINTMENTS AND HEARINGS*

6:30 PM – RDA (cont.), 20 Highland Road, for repairs of an existing retaining wall (Woodle).

Applicant Alex Woodle presented the Commission with a sketch that showed distances between the three sections of retaining wall and a corner of the house foundation.

Upon a motion by M. Giguere, seconded by E. McHugh, it was:

VOTED to issue a Negative 2 Determination subject to the condition that all work be done after lake draw-down.

The motion passed by a roll call vote (yes: E. McHugh, B. Easom, O. Lathrop, M. Giguere, P. Morrison, L. Hurley)

6:35 PM -NOI (cont.), 50 & 52 Island Road, for the replacement of two failing sewage disposal systems, MassDEP#(not yet assigned).

Upon a motion by O. Lathrop, seconded by B. Easom, it was:

VOTED to continue the public hearing to May 12 to allow time for MassDEP to issue a case number and the Board of Health to approve the plan.

The motion passed by a roll call vote (yes: E. McHugh, B. Easom, O. Lathrop, M. Giguere, P. Morrison, L. Hurley)

6:40 PM – RDA (cont.), 210 Indian Hill Road, restoration plan/establishment of lawn area (S. Boucher)

The Commission was introduced to Attorney William “Buzz” Constable who represents the Groton Conservation Trust in their dealing with enforcing the Conservation Restriction on this property. Constable indicated that he had sent a letter to the Commission, but N. Gualco stated that he had not yet received it. Gualco then read an emailed request from the applicant, S. Boucher, to continue the public meeting to May 12 to allow time for the attorneys to finalize their discussions.

Upon a motion by E. McHugh, seconded by M. Giguere, it was:
VOTED to continue the public meeting to May 12.

The motion passed by a roll call vote (yes: E. McHugh, B. Easom, O. Lathrop, M. Giguere, P. Morrison, L. Hurley)

The Commission then moved to **GENERAL BUSINESS** and began to Interview new members for the Conservation Commission.

Adam Burnette and Alison Hamilton were interviewed by the Commission. Each candidate brought an impressive amount of expertise to their bid to join the board with A. Burnette’s expertise in hydrology, forestry, and natural ecosystem management and A. Hamilton’s expertise in organismal biology with a specialization in herpetology. There were numerous questions for both candidates with a theme around each’s ability to commit to the time constraints of the Commission. It was also discussed that there would be requirements to attend educational trainings as well as to sit on other boards as the Select Board has designated numerous other town boards be comprised with a member of the Commission sitting on them.

After interviewing both candidates, the Commission had a lengthy discussion on which to recommend to the Select Board. Ultimately, it was Ms. Hamilton’s expertise in biology that tipped the scale in her favor. However, the Commission expressed their wish for Mr. Burnett to remain interested in joining the board as his skills and experience would be a vital asset to the Commission in the future.

Upon a motion by E. McHugh, seconded by P. Morrison, it was:
VOTED to recommend to the Groton Select Board the appointment of Alison Hamilton to the Commission.

The motion passed by a roll call vote (yes: E. McHugh, B. Easom, P. Morrison, L. Hurley; abstain: O. Lathrop, M. Giguere).

Land Management: Shattuck Homestead

N. Gualco gave an update on a discussion he had with Town Forester, Mike Barry regarding the idea of switching the order of herbicide application and mowing at Shattuck Homestead. This was suggested so that the Town may have a better time addressing the black swallow wort growth. Last year, the Commission opted to mow the first weekend of July, but there was an interest in mowing earlier in late-June. This idea was not feasible as June corresponds with the peak nesting season of turtles. The Commission discussed this and decided it would be best to speak with M. Barry at the next meeting before any decision was made.

Committee Updates/Announcements

O. Lathrop shared that the Boy Scout working on the Priest Family Conservation Area trail is finalizing his Scout Master approval and should be ready to submit the RDA very soon.

B. Easom shared that the Commission's FY21 CPA application (a non-essential warrant article according to the Town Manager/ Select Board) has been pushed off until the Fall Town Meeting as part of the COVID-19 response.

M. Giguere announced that GPAC is considering changing out the bubbler heads at Duck Pond to a microbubble system, which should be more effective in oxygenating the pond.

P. Morrison commented that he is prepared to conduct the annual servicing on the Brush Hog for the Trails Committee. A discussion ensued about the Town's current spending freeze and Gualco commented that to his knowledge this would be reimbursed at this time.

Approve Meeting Minutes: March 10, 2020

Upon a motion by E. McHugh, seconded by O. Lathrop, it was:
VOTED to accept the minutes for March 10, 2020 as revised.

The motion passed by a roll call vote (yes: E. McHugh, B. Easom, O. Lathrop, M. Giguere, L. Hurley; abstain: P. Morrison)

Invoices

Upon a motion by O. Lathrop, seconded by B. Easom, it was:
VOTED to authorize Eileen McHugh, and if she is unavailable or unable, Peter Morrison, be designated to sign all invoices previously approved in a public meeting by a majority of the board.

The motion passed by a roll call vote (Yes: E. McHugh, O. Lathrop, M. Giguere, B. Easom, P. Morrison, L. Hurley).

8:12 PM – Adjournment

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by B. Easom, it was:
VOTED to adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to MGL Ch. 30A, Sec. 21(6) not to return to open session

The motion passed by a roll call vote (yes: E. McHugh, B. Easom, P. Morrison, L. Hurley; abstain: O. Lathrop M. Giguere).

Minutes Approved: May 12, 2020