

Groton Stewardship Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: October 14, 2020, 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM

Present: Eileen McHugh (Conservation Commission, Earth Removal Stormwater Advisory Committee); Laura Moore (Lawrence Academy, Historic District Commission); Olin Lathrop (Conservation Commission, Invasive Species Committee, Trails Committee); Alex Woodle (Great Pond Advisory Committee); Rick Muehlke (New England Forestry Foundation, Groton Conservation Trust); Lisa Murray (Groton Garden Club); Bob Hannian (Earth Removal Stormwater Advisory Committee); Nik Gualco (Conservation Administrator)

Eileen McHugh called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Member Introductions and Purpose of Committee

The Committee took time introducing themselves.

Review of Seven Goals from Open Space and Recreation Plan and Establishment of Initial Priorities:

The Committee reviewed sections 8 (Goals & Objectives) and 9 (Seven Year Action Plan) of the 2019 Open Space and Recreation Plan. A discussion ensued about how the goals and objectives were created and what steps the Committee could take to help the organizations implement the various objectives they were identified as the responsible party for.

A few highlights, include:

Lisa opened the discussion and updated the group of a proposed Composting Facility (yard wastes) at the Transfer Station. A separate area will be available for yard waste containing invasive material. The Garden Club is including more native plants in the gardens they install and maintain and there is a special focus on pollinator plants.

Alex's primary interest is lake health and specifically reducing phosphorous load and controlling invasives pond weeds. He mentioned a recent study, funded by the GPAC, which showed excessive phosphorous in Lost Lake is coming from Martins Pond Brook and he wants to reduce this source of phosphorous. He loves the lake and noted how much use it gets including more kayaks this year than he's seen before. The downside of this use can be seen on two of the islands in the lake that are overused and mistreated and he like to find ways to protect the islands.

Nik talked about the Town's obligation to monitor their land and sees this an opportunity to reach out to a new generation (also older) of stewards. The Conservation Commission has a

stewardship program and he'd like to revitalize and reinvent it. One prototype he suggested is the Ranger position at Sargisson Beach. Nik is also interested in developing Management Plans for Conservation Commission managed lands. He sees an opportunity to lead field trips of the Conservation managed lands and recently conducted a field trip with the Groton Garden Club.

Olin built on the conversation about education and suggested a Lecture Series (or Poster Series) at the Library, tentatively called: "Your Conservation Lands". In a setting like this he could share his knowledge on the Natural Control of Invasive Species.

Bob is concerned about access to the Squannacook River due to limited access at the West Groton Water District. He has seen many more people parking on the side of the road and bushwhacking into the river. Bob started a discussion with Alex about monitoring boats as they enter the ponds for Invasive weeds. Alex responded that it takes a lot of volunteers to monitor the boat ramps and the monitoring areas lack restrooms and hoses for washing off boats.

Laura suggested that we pool our resources with other groups and form Land Conservation Groups for targeted key properties. These properties require funding, information, data and education and volunteers. She supports increased opportunities for adult education to raise awareness and to develop a new group of volunteers. She agreed that new (and young) people are needed to carry on the stewardship work. The overall goal is for our group should be intentional and sustainable efforts. Laura mentioned Indian Hill Music Center still under construction and encouraged us to consider the effect this will have on Groton.

Rick talked about a funding opportunity, the Forest Legacy Fund (US Forest Service). Piecing smaller properties into a larger project is being coordinated by the Nashua River Watershed Association. Rick is interested in increasing the number of Land Stewards in town.

Eileen talked about her interest in mapping to record our conditions for better understanding and for use by the future. She is also interested in developing projects from Planning through Construction.

Conclusion and Set Next Meeting Date.

For the next meeting, each member was asked to review the Seven Year Action Plan and take a deeper look into the Goals, Objectives and Proposed Actions.

The Committee agreed they would try and meet monthly on the third Wednesday. The next meeting date was scheduled for November 18, 2020.

Minutes Approved: January 20, 2021