**Groton Stewardship Committee Minutes**

**Present:** Eileen McHugh (Conservation Commission, Earth Removal Stormwater Advisory Committee); Bob Hanninen (Earth Removal Stormwater Advisory Committee); Anna Eliot (Community Preservation Committee, Park Commission); Lisa Murray (Groton Garden Club); Olin Lathrop (Conservation Commission, Invasive Species Committee); Alex Woodle (Great Pond Advisory Committee)

**Others Present:** Nik Gualco (Conservation Administrator)

**Location:** Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

**When:** Wednesday, November 17, 2021

E. McHugh called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

**Committee updates**

Garden Club - update

L. Murray - introduced Garden Club's exploration in how to bring more awareness of use of pesticides on Town-land (how it is being used, whether alternatives).

Linda Loren (Garden Club member) emphasized teaching homeowners, businesses, and the Town on how to reduce use of pesticides, which would benefit pollinators. Loren inquired about what the recreation fields were treated with and suggested that the Town could benefit from enacting rules/regulations to restrict the use of pesticides.

Lathrop explained state licensing requirements for application of pesticide.

The use of fertilizer on recreation fields was further discussed including the need for keeping the fields in good condition for safety. The contractor used to maintain the fields may have an applicator's license to apply herbicide.

A. Woodle provided context on use of herbicides on lake management at Lost Lake. The Committee discussed the use of integrated pest management (bio controls) and the management of the school grounds.

It was recommended that if the Garden Club wants to learn more about the fields that they approach the Park Commission at a meeting.

Invasive Species Committee - update

The Committee reviewed the latest draft of the MOU that the ISC had recently unanimously voted to approve.

 Upon a motion by A. Eliot, seconded by O. Lathrop, it was

 VOTED to recommend the GCC-ISC MOU to the GCC for approval.

 The motion passed by a roll call vote (Yes: OL, AW, BH, EM, AE, LM).

Stewardship Committee – update

N. Gualco explained he is waiting to hear back from the State on receiving the notice to proceed for the Priest Hill Habitat Restoration grant. Pending business includes signing contracts, financial paper work, etc. The Committee discussed whether treating bittersweet will be feasible in December, which Gualco reported that Mike Barry thinks it will be ok to treat thru December. The Committee discussed whether or not to treat the bittersweet if we miss the window in December.

**Update on GIS/monitoring equipment budget request**

Gualco reported adding the ESRI annual license to the budget. IT has purchased the GPS for the Town and it has been delivered to the CC office. The Committee discussed this more.

A. Eliot shared on a recent discussion Gualco, Eliot, and Anna Wilkins (North County Land Trust). The Committee discussed the possibility of partnering with NCLT including the lending/borrowing of certain equipment.

**Update on monitoring of town-owned/CR properties**

Gualco reported on a recent monitoring of the Baddacook Woods Conservation Area, which is owned by the GCT. Woodle, Eliot, and Gualco walked the land on Monday, Nov. 15. Gualco is in the process of drafting the report. Eliot shared the need to report the Phragmites that was observed in the large wetland complex – the stand was rather small and could be treated before it spreads.

**Update of the short video projects**

Flat Pond Video

B. Hanninen shared drone photography he received from A. Woodle of fly over of Flat Pond. The Committee also reviewed similar photography of Priest Hill.

Lost Lake Video

A. Woodle reported on his continued efforts on his video project.

**Approve Meeting Minutes**

 Upon a motion by A. Eliot, seconded by A. Woodle, it was:

 VOTED to approve and release the meeting minutes for Oct. 20, 2021 as revised.

 **The motion passed by a roll call vote: (Yes: AW, AE, BH, EM; Abstain: OL).**

**Set next meeting date**

The Committee selected December 15, 2021 as the next meeting date.

O. Lathrop reported on an opportunity to participate in the Wild and Scenic grant, which he believes is due in early February. Gualco will add this to the December agenda for discussion.

**Adjourn**

 Upon a motion by A. Woodle, seconded by A. Eliot, it was:

 VOTED to adjourn the public meeting.

 The motion passed by a roll call vote: (Yes: OL, AW, BH, EM, AE, LM).

**Minutes Approved: December 15, 2021**