**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); Deb Collum; Kim Kuliesis

**Absent:** Lisa Theall

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

**Location:** Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

**When:** May 18, 2022

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

**Committee updates**

\*\*\* Prior to discussing Committee updates, O. Lathrop raised a point of order and stated that since new Committee members D. Collum, L. Theall, and K. Kuliesis had not yet been sworn in at the Town Clerk’s office, they would not be eligible to vote. The Committee discussed the logistics of this and then resumed the meeting \*\*\*

OL – Invasive Species Committee will be injecting ash trees at Petapawag and conducting stem counts of Phragmites (with the assistance of UML Professor Alison Hamilton’s class) at the Priest Family Conservation Area with the goal of seeing if treatment has been effective.

LM – Garden Club annual Plant Sale took place this year at Legion Common and everything went well.

NG – Sargisson Beach Ranger has been hired. Efforts have been focused on cleaning up the entryway, which could be a good location for a new perennial garden if the Garden Club is interested/agrees the location is suitable.

**Review Policy for use of Town Land and brainstorm ways to improve its communication to the public**

EM gave an overview of recent activities at the Flavell Crossing Conservation Area (CA) (blazing of trees without permission) on a trail that has been discontinued (due to trespassing on abutting private properties). Paul Funch of the Trails Committee was the one who brought this to the attention of the Commission and after a meeting with the Commission, P. Funch took the following actions: over-blazed the red blazes to “erase” the illegal markings; installed a trail closure sign; outreached the mountain bike community via the NDO Mountain Biking email group. OL and NG provided context on the “Special Opps” trail history. KK shared she was recently hiking on the property and stated she did not see any new activity.

At this time, the Committee evaluated the current regulations for land use on conservation land. A selection of notes from this discussion include:

Regulation #1 - change the permitted use time to “1/2 hour before sunrise until ½ hour after sunset” …

Regulation #2 – a discussion ensued regarding changing the language to “No motorized vehicles shall be allowed without permission by the Groton Conservation Commission.”

Regulation #3 – the Committee discussed hunting on town-owned land as well as the need to post NO HUNTING signs on the properties where hunting is prohibited.

Regulation #4 – the Committee discussed that the language is wordy and may not be getting through. The idea of creating a separate document (or sign) to communicate the important parts was explored.

The Committee also discussed the opening paragraph and the implications of mosquito spraying and chemical drift on conservation land. It was suggested that the Commission consider adding language to the boilerplate Order of Conditions Special Conditions to address this. KK weighed in on her experience with mosquito spraying and stated that even though some companies use organic chemicals they still have a negative impact on pollinators.

EM suggested creating a separate simplified list of rules with reference to a detail with more specifics

**Review Project Page for Priest Family Conservation area for posting on the Town’s website**

EM shared a draft for the PFCA as an example of creating stewardship cards for the various properties, which could be linked from the Town’s website. The Committee then discussed embedding links from the Trails website for each property.

**Outreach Update, Videos (discuss potential participation at Grotonfest)**

BH shared updates on the status of his presentation on Flat Pond.

**Approve meeting minutes**

Upon a motion by AE, seconded by LM, it was:

VOTED to accept the meeting minutes for April 20, 2022 amended.

**The motion carried by a roll call vote (Yes: LM, BH, EM, AE; Abstain: OL)**

Upon a motion by AE, seconded by LM, it was:

VOTED to accept the meeting minutes for March 23, 2022 amended.

**The motion carried by a roll call vote (Yes: LM, BH, EM, AE; Abstain: OL)**

**Set next meeting date and discuss in person or virtual meetings**

Set June 29 @ 6:30PM

**Adjourn**

Upon a motion by AE, seconded by BH, it was:

VOTED to adjourn the public meeting.

**The motion carried by a roll call vote (Yes: LM, OL, BH, EM, AE)**

**Minutes Approved: June 29, 2022**