**Groton Stewardship Committee Minutes**

**Present:** Lisa Murray, Vice-Chair (Groton Garden Club); Bob Hanninen (Earth Removal Stormwater Advisory Committee, Conductorlab Oversight Committee); Anna Eliot (Community Preservation Committee, Park Commission); Olin Lathrop (Conservation Commission, Invasive Species Committee); Kim Kuliesis; Deb Collum; Lisa Theall (President, Groton Garden Club)

**Absent:** Eileen McHugh, Chair (Conservation Commission)

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

**Location:** Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

**When:** July 20, 2022

L. Murray called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

**Committee updates**

L. Murray reported that the Garden Club is on a summer hiatus but planning for the club’s 100th anniversary in 2023. A grant application was submitted to augment native plant inventory across municipal gardens. O. Lathrop reported that the Invasive Species Committee recently treated knotweed at the Campbell Well site and that the Conservation Commission has applied for a grant to acquire a large parcel on land. B. Hanninen announced that the Conductorlab Oversight Committee will be having a meeting soon and will review an Activity and Use Limitation document from Honeywell (as it relates to the hazardous waste cleanup effort). A. Eliot asked whether a certain related parcel currently owned by Honeywell will be included in the report, to which B. Hanninen stated he wasn’t sure. D. Collum shared that a meeting has been set with Paul Catanzaro (UMass) to discuss a forum to outreach local landowners on conservation strategies.

**Designate Chair and Vice-Chair for FY23**

O. Lathrop nominated Eileen McHugh as Chair of the Stewardship Committee for FY23. A. Eliot seconded the nomination. **A roll call vote was taken with all members voting for E. McHugh to serve as Chair (Aye: OL, BH, AE, DC, LT, KK, LM).**

O. Lathrop nominated Lisa Murray as Vice-Chair of the Stewardship Committee for FY23. A. Eliot seconded the nomination. ‘**A roll call vote was taken with a majority of members voting for L. Murray to serve as Chair (Aye: OL, BH, AE, DC, LT, KK; Abstain: LM)**

**Update on CR monitoring at West Throne property**

D. Collum shared her experience on a recent inspection of the Groton Conservation Trust owned property (“West Throne”), which the Commission holds a Conservation Restriction jointly with the New England Forestry Foundation. D. Collum described both the observed encroachment as well as the survey technology NEFF was utilizing.

A discussion ensued about the history of the conservation parcel as well as the requirements/previous actions taken to notify abutters that hey live adjacent to a conservation parcel, which has certain rules/regulations. The discussion concluded with N. Gualco stating that NEFF will produce a report for the inspection and he will share it with the Committee in the future.

**Discussion on planting requirements for new developments (housing, commercial**)

L. Murray inquired whether there were certain planting requirements at the local level that would discourage homeowners/developers from planting invasive vegetation and instead require or encourage them to plant native vegetation. O. Lathrop explained how the list of banned invasive vegetation functions to ban the sale and importation of invasive plants in Massachusetts. A discussion ensued about transplanting invasive vegetation as well as what role does the Conservation Commission play on this topic. N. Gualco explained the jurisdiction of the Commission and shared a list of native plants the Commission will utilize when dealing with plantings within their jurisdiction. Finally, the group discussed opportunities for outreach and education across Groton.

**Discuss turtle nesting area management**

N. Gualco gave an overview of past, current, and future turtle nesting management sites the Commission is responsible for maintaining. Gualco highlighted management needs at three sites and used aerial photography to demonstrate the need for active management of these sites. After a discussion ensued about the nesting sites and the Commission’s role in managing them, N. Gualco stated that he would like to have help from a few Committee members to further review these sites with the goal of delivering management recommendations to the Commission.

**Review of Special Projects (Priest Hill, etc.)**

N. Gualco shared a copy of the final report he submitted to MassWildlife for the Priest Hill habitat restoration project. A discussion ensued about the project as well as the Trail Committee’s recent request to mow a trail to the top of the hill. N. Gualco stated requirements to get approval from NHESP for any mowing as currently there is no use of heavy equipment until November.

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

VOTED to recommend to the Conservation Commission to allow for a single-mowed path up to the top of the hill to an open area with the path width not to exceed 4 feet and the open area width not to exceed 20 feet in diameter. All permissions required by NHESP would be pursued by the Trails Committee.

**The motion carried by a roll call voted (Aye: AE, OL, KK, LT, DC, BH, LM).**

**Outreach Update, Videos**

N/A

**Approve meeting minutes**

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

VOTED to approve the meeting minutes for June 29, 2022 as amended.

**The motion carried by a roll call voted (Aye: BH, KK, OL, LT, AE, LM; Abstain: DC)**

**Set next meeting date**

The Committee set the next meeting for August 24, 2022 at 6:30PM.

**Adjourn**

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

VOTED to adjourn the public meeting.

**The motion carried by a roll call voted (Aye: BH, KK, OL, LT, DC, LM)**

**Minutes Approved: August 24, 2022**