**Groton Stewardship Committee Minutes**

**Present:** Eileen McHugh, Chair (Conservation Commission); 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:** Bob Hanninen (Earth Removal Stormwater Advisory Committee, Conductorlab Oversight Committee); Lisa Murray, Vice-Chair (Groton Garden Club).

**Others Present:** Steele McCurdy (Fire Chief); Nik Gualco (Conservation Administrator).

**Location:** Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

**When:** September 21, 2022

E. McHugh called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. (no quorum).

**Special Topic: discuss the use of prescribed fire on conservation lands**

N. Gualco and O. Lathrop introduced the Commission’s recent use of prescribed at the Shattuck Homestead conservation property (off Martins Pond Road). Chief McCurdy (CM) stated that projects like this are great training opportunities. He continued to state the he is concerned about fuel loading around the region and sees these training opportunities as critical. He concluded his introduction by stating that he would like to also know what [properties the Commission would like to let burn if a wildfire were to ignite. CM stated that he has an MOU with Mass Audubon for fire response at Rocky Hill.

The Committee has a lengthy discussion with topics ranging from site selection and site impact to questions about recent fires of conservation land and suggestions for future prescribed fire treatment.

**Committee updates/a refresher on the Stewardship Committee’s goals and objectives**

L. Theall shared that the Garden Club will have a booth at Groton Fest to include a seed give-away. O. Lathrop reported the following: 1) the Invasive Species Committee’s recent treatment of the Campbell Well Site; 2) Phragmites treatments at Carmichael Swamp, Priest Family Conservation Area; Eliades Conservation Area. A. Eliot reported that the Park Commission is working with the direct abutter of Carol Wheeler Park who is looking to remove trees and re-landscape the area around.

E. McHugh provided an overview of the Committee’s charge for the newer members. A. Eliot commented that she hoped the structure of the Committee would remain diverse in the future.

# Update of the revision to the regulations for use of conservation land

L. Theall shared a draft of a 3” X 3” sticker, which included a QR code. The Committee discussed where the code would direct to as well as some of the benefits and challenges of such a system.

**Update on Neighbor Outreach/Land Management/Succession Planning**

D. Collum shared notes from a recent zoom meeting she had with UMass Extension Professor Paul Catanzaro, Anna Eliot, and Nik Gualco. The discussion centered on three main points, which included: 1) Observation Regarding Private Landowners; 2) Reaching Landowners and the power of a Social Network; 3) Hosting Gatherings. Next steps included: 1) reaching out to potential collaborators; 2) creating a working group; 3) tracking the eventual release of the Neighborhood Outreach grant application.

The Committee had a lively discussion on this topic.

**Review of Special Projects (Priest Hill, Shattuck Homestead, other Conservation Areas)**

N/A

# Short Videos - update

N/A

# Approve meeting minutes

N/A

# Set next meeting date

The Committee choose the next meeting date of October 12, 2022 at 6:30 PM

# Adjourn

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

VOTED to adjourn the public meeting.

**The motion carried by a roll call vote (Yes – KK, DC, LT, OL, AE, EM).**

**Minutes Approved: December 7, 2022**