******Groton Stewardship Committee Minutes**

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

**Absent:** Deb Collum

**Others Present:** Rick Salon (Groton Lakes Association); Nik Gualco (Conservation Administrator).

**Location:** Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

**When:** January 4, 2023

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

**Committee updates**

BH - MassDEP is reviewing the language of the Activity and Use Limitation Determination.  It is anticipated that HoneyWell will put the land up for sale.  A. Eliot commented that in the past there had been discussions regarding the potential donation of a small triangular parcel of land (Parcel 110-7) to the Town to serve as a trail link between the Mill Street area and the Nashua Rail Trail.  AE inquired whether this would be a good time to revisit this topic. The Committee discussed this for several minutes.

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

VOTED to draft a memo to the Conservation Commission and Select Board to recommend that they follow-up on any prior discussions on the possibility of participating in the disposition of any Honewell properties connected with Conductor Lab.

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

LM updated the Committee on recent decoration work at open spaces across the Town.

LT provided an update on upcoming events of the Garden Club.

AE updated the Committee on Park work at Carol Wheeler Park.  She continued by stating that the Park Commission is in the process of Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) review for a proposed connector road between Hoyts Wharf and Cow Pond Brook Road.

**Stewardship Committee - recommend to appoint Ron Hersch (GLA) to GSC**

EM recapped that the Stewardship Committee had sought representation from the lakes area to join the Committee.

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

VOTED to recommend to the Conservation Commission to appoint a representative from the Groton Lakes Association to the Stewardship Committee.

A discussion ensued about whether to recommend Ron Hersch or Rick Salon join the Committee with E. McHugh stating she prefers Rick as he will be available to make the next several meetings while Ron is traveling. The group agreed that Rick should be appointed for now and that topic can be re-visited in June when the position expires.

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

**Reports from the field/updates on-going projects**

**QR Code Project**

L. Theall recapped the project to install 3” stickers with a QR code to be installed on trail head signs that would communicate the rules and regulations.  The discussion centered around the overall design, the number of scan patterns, and where the QR code would direct users.  The Committee also discussed where the signs would be installed on the trail head post and whether a medallion style sign marked on trees would be useful for where trails enter Town-owned properties from other open space areas.  Finally, the Committee discussed an on-going effort by the Trails Committee to utilize QR codes in providing trail map info.  E. McHugh offered to reach out to Paul Funch of the Trails Committee to inquire about their on-going efforts as well as to secure an inventory list of the trail heads on Town land.

**Tire cleanup at Wrangling Brook update**

K. Kuliesis announced that in addition to securing a Determination of Applicability from the Conservation Commission she has also now received a MESA Determination from NHESP for the tire cleanup project.  The Committee reviewed the NHESP letter.

**Stewardship and Agriculture - research on NOFA**

K. Kuliesis provided an update on her research into NOFA, including an upcoming conference.

**MA Water Management Act research**

L. Murray provided an update on her research of the MA Water Management Act, which regulates water withdrawals in excess of 100,000 gallons/day.  The Committee also discussed whether the Commission could require an RDA for withdrawals below the 100,000 gallons/day limit.

**Short Videos**

Tabled until February meeting.

**Turtle nesting area**

N. Gualco stated that he has asked Conservation Commissioner Alison Hamilton to serve as the “Turtle Czar” and conduct annual inspections of the turtle nesting area the Commission is responsible for monitoring.  The Committee discussed this and it was agreed that Alison should coordinate with the Committee to allow volunteers interested in monitoring to assist and participate.

**Signage on conservation properties**

O. Lathrop reported that he met with the Town Planner on the permitting requirements for installing new conservation area signs.

**Neighbor outreach/land management/succession planning**

Tabled until February meeting.

**Discussion on joint solar-agriculture development**

Tabled until February meeting.

**Approve meeting minutes and set next meeting date**

N/A

**Adjourn**

Upon a motion by B. Hanninen, seconded by K. Kuliesis, it was

VOTED to adjourn the public meeting.

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

**Minutes Approved: February 1, 2023**