**Groton Stewardship Committee Minutes**

**Present:** Eileen McHugh, Chair (Conservation Commission); Bob Hanninen (Earth Removal Stormwater Advisory Committee, Conductor Lab Oversight Committee); Lisa Murray, Vice-Chair (Groton Garden Club); Lisa Theall (President, Groton Garden Club); Anna Eliot (Community Preservation Committee, Park Commission); Kim Kuliesis; Rick Salon (Groton Lakes Association).

**Absent:** Olin Lathrop (Conservation Commission, Invasive Species Committee); Deb Collum

**Others Present:** Paul Funch (Groton Trails Committee); Judy Anderson (general public); Nikolis Gualco (Conservation Administrator).

**Location:** Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

**When:** February 1, 2023

**6:32 PM E. McHugh called to order**

**Committee updates**

Casella LAND Grant Update

N. Gualco provided an update of the Casella LAND Grant, including the progress made on the development of a parking area and connection trail off Nashua Road. He stated that he will be filing with NHESP a MESA checklist for their approval. Paul Funch asked if MEPA would be triggered as the site is within the ACEC, to which N. Gualco commented that he would investigate this.

Municipal Boards & Committees

L. Theall highlighted upcoming Garden Club events at the library.

R. Salon stated that the Groton Lake Association will be meeting soon and that the Great Pond Advisory Committee will be meeting with the Board of Health about augmenting their water quality protocols to increase testing at the lakes.

B. Hanninen reported that the Earth Removal Stormwater Advisory Committee has an upcoming hearing on the elementary school project. He also stated that the Conductor Lab Oversight Committee has not received any update yet on the Activity and Use Limitation for the Conductor Lab site.

A. Eliot reported that the Park Commission is still working on exploring the possibility of developing a connector road between Hoyts Wharf Road and Cow Pond Brook Road.

L. Murray reported that it is officially Girl Scout cookie season! She continued that the non-profit council had a recent meeting with Destination Groton.

E. McHugh commented that the Conservation Commission recently had a hearing on the creation of a new turtle nesting area within the Rocky Hill Wildlife Sanctuary. She continued by stating that so far, the Commission was not happy with the proposed location, although they acknowledge that the development of this nesting area is a requirement of the Conservation Management Permit for Rocky Hill subdevelopment.

P. Funch made an announcement for the upcoming Conservation Forum, which will take place on February 16, 2023 at the Groton Center.

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

Tire cleanup at Wrangling Brook update

K. Kuliesis reported that the tire cleanup is going well and that the approvals required have been secured. She continued and stated that she will be organizing for recruiting volunteers with a target date of late-March.

Research on NOFA update

K. Kuliesis reported that the Northeast Organic Farming Association’s winter conference will be held in March and that there appear to be a lot of relevant workshops to the work the Stewardship Committee undertakes on the agenda.

Short Videos update

B. Hanninen reported that the Flat Pond video just needs final polishing and that he is working with Groton Cable to finish.

L. Murray reported that the Garden Club has been in contact with Groton Channel about their short video. They are planning on adding wide footage of various garden sites in spring and will help with voice over. Finally, the Groton Channel will record the March 5 Garden Club annual lecture.

Signage on conservation properties update

N. Gualco shared an update he received from O. Lathrop who stated that he has filed sign permit applications for Hallet, Priest, Fitch-Best, and Martins Pond properties. He continued and said the Conservation Commission has approved the installation of a metal sign with duck logo for Martins Pond as a test site.

Stewardship and Agriculture

A. Eliot suggested that a member of the Agriculture Commission should be represented on the Committee. N. Gualco commented that this representation is important especially when the update of the OSRP comes back up in 18 months.

QR Code Project update

E. McHugh provided updates to the QR code project and shared feedback from Paul Funch of the Trails Committee on the design of the sticker as well as the locations for where the trailheads and trails are located. P. Funch recommended the QR codes be installed at the entrances to conservation areas on the 5x5 trailhead posts. L. Theall questioned whether adding another QR code would be too confusing and inquired if we could just add a link to the website. The Committee discussed this further.

Turtle nesting area

N. Gualco reported that there is no update on this item.

Neighbor outreach/land management/succession planning

A. Eliot reported that there is no update on this item.

**Trails Committee – discuss naming the trail along the abandoned B&M rail line**

P. Funch gave an overview of the recommendation to name the Pepperell + Brookline rail line the “Ice Line Trail”. The naming would be reflected on the Trail Committee website and would cover the length of the trail. The Committee discussed the name and their thoughts on it.

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

VOTED to recommend to the Conservation Commission to name the trail connecting Fitch’s Bridge to Town Forest the “Ice Line Trail.”

**The motion passed by a roll call vote (YES – KK, RS, BH, AE, LM, LT, EM)**

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

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

VOTED to accept and release the meeting minutes for December 7, 2022 as amended.

**The motion carried by a roll call vote: (YES: RS, BH, AE, LM, LT, KK, EM).**

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

VOTED to accept and release the meeting minutes for January 4, 2023 as amended.

**The motion carried by a roll call vote: (YES: RS, BH, AE, LM, LT, KK, EM).**

The Committee agreed that the next regular meeting date would be March 1, 2023 @ 6:30PM. N. Gualco stated he will post a meeting for the upcoming Conservation Forum in case a quorum attends said meeting.

**Adjourn**

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

VOTED to adjourn the public meeting.

**The motion carried by a roll call vote (YES: BH, AE, LM, LT, KK, RS, EM).**

**Minutes Approved: March 1, 2023**