**Groton Stewardship Committee Minutes**

**Present:** Eileen McHugh, Chair (Conservation Commission); Lisa Murray, Vice-Chair (Groton Garden Club); Lisa Theall (President, Groton Garden Club); Anna Eliot (Community Preservation Committee, Park Commission); Rick Salon (Groton Lakes Association); Olin Lathrop (Conservation Commission, Invasive Species Committee); Deb Collum

**Absent:** Kim Kuliesis; Bob Hanninen (Earth Removal Stormwater Advisory Committee, Conductorlab Oversight Committee).

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

**Location:** Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

**When:** March 1, 2023

**6:30 PM E. McHugh called to order**

**Committee updates**

Conflict of interest training

E. McHugh mentioned the recent announcement by the Town Clerk, which requires board members to complete a conflict-of-interest training.

Casella LAND Grant Update

N. Gualco gave an update on the parking area, which was flagged by a Commissioner L. Hurley, and showed a sketch of the proposed work, including the trees that would need to be removed.  L. Theall asked about PFAS contamination at the High School and whether this would affect the Casella property.  N. Gualco commented that the area of contamination was very far from the Casella property and that he was not concerned.

Municipal Boards & Committees

R. Salon reported that the Great Pond Advisory Committee is hoping to get in front of the Board of Health in March to discuss augmenting the water quality testing of the lakes.

L. Murray discussed her time attending the Conservation Forum and the Groton non-profit council meeting.

L. Theall announced that Garden Club’s free annual public lecture, which will have a focus on engaging youth, will take place at the Groton Center on Sunday, March 5.  She shared a flyer and announced the Groton Channel will livestream the event.

O. Lathrop reported that the Invasive Species Committee has submitted an RDA to the Conservation Commission for the treatment of invasive vegetation at Town Forest.  He then announced a lecture on the Spotted lantern fly at the Groton Center on Thursday, March 16.

E. McHugh announced that March 31 is the deadline for Zoom meetings to end and the next Stewardship meeting will be in-person.

N. Gualco reported that the Commission’s final application was submitted to the CPC.

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

Tire cleanup at Wrangling Brook update

No update provided.

Short Videos update

No update provided.

Signage on conservation properties update

O. Lathrop reported that he has received a high resolution file of the GCC “duck” logo.

QR Code Project update

L. Theall showed a revised sign that displays the QR with two additional signs (no motorized vehicles AND dogs on leash).  The Committee discussed the image.  N. Gualco stated he will discuss with the Town Manager whether we can remove the temporary red leash law signs as well as whether a sign permit is required for the extended QR code signs at trail heads.

Other reports

E. McHugh showed some photos of Conservation Commission properties in West Groton. The Committee discussed the need to capture more photographs for updating the website as well as documenting the type and locations of property signs.

D. Collum shared that nothing has been done regarding the neighborhood project.; Committee discussed turtle nesting area at Rocky Hill and recent GCC meeting.

**Discussion: Vernal Pool Certification – Throne Hill**

N. Gualco stated that he was notified of a potential vernal pool in the Throne Hill area.  He explained that if the Committee was interested, they could explore the process of certifying the pool.   E. McHugh mentioned former Commission member Kris Corwin was very active in certifying the vernal pools at the High School and suggested we reach out to her for training.  O. Lathrop mentioned he is still in touch with her and will reach out to see if she would help lead us through the process.

**Discussion: MassDCR CR boundary signs**

N. Gualco explained that he was asked by MassDCR if they could install CR boundary signs along the properties they hold a CR on.  The Committee discussed this.

Upon a motion by O. Lathrop, seconded by R. Salon, it was:

VOTED to recommend the Conservation Commission that DCR install CR boundary signs.

**The motion passed by a roll call vote (Yes: OL, RS, LT, DC, LM, EM).**

N. Gualco will prepare a map for the Commission showing all properties that DCR holds a CR on.

E. McHugh continued to **Reports from the field/updates on-going projects:** Other reports and lead a brief discussion on the list of outstanding discussion items.  The Committee discussed in some detail the topic of solar development on agricultural sites.

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

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

VOTED to accept and release the meeting minutes for February 1, 2023 as amended.

**The motion passed by a roll call vote (Yes: RS, LM, LT, EM; Abstain: DC, OL).**

The next meeting will be April 5 and it will be in-person at Town Hall.  N. Gualco will investigate whether it is feasible to have the meeting as a hybrid for members of the public who want to participate remotely.

**Adjourn**

Upon a motion by R. Salon, seconded by L. Theall, it was:

VOTED to adjourn the public meeting.

**The motion passed by a roll call vote (YES: OL, RS, LT, DC, LM, EM).**

**Minutes Approved: May 3, 2023**