**Groton Stewardship Committee Minutes**

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

**Absent:** Lisa Theall (President, Groton Garden Club); Olin Lathrop (Conservation Commission, Invasive Species Committee)

**Others Present:** Paul Funch (Trails Committee); Diane Carson (Nashoba Paddler); Nikolis Gualco (Conservation Administrator).

**Location:** Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

**When:** April 5, 2023

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

**Committee updates**

Municipal Boards & Committees

R. Salon reported that boards for the Lost Lake dam have been installed so water will be rising.  He continued and stated that the Groton Lakes Association is still working on their efforts to partner with the Mountain Lakes Association.

K. Kuliesis is targeting a tire cleanup date on May 27 and is coordinating with the sustainability committee/DPW on this.

L. Murray announced that the Girl Scouts are interested in working on pollinator gardens and that she has been in touch with the Sustainability Committee and the Grange on this topic.  The Garden Club’s 100-year celebration wrapped up its Groton Reads participation and L. Murray reported that it was very successful.

B. Hanninen reported that the Conductorlab Committee is checking over the final statement that’s gone to DEP and will make recommendations.  He continued and stated that the Town will hire a consultant to peer review.

A. Eliot reported that the Park Commission is exploring trying to work with the Heritage Landing 40B Developer on the need to locate and provide a 15 acre off-set for nitrogen loading and is exploring Town assistance to facilitate the development of affordable housing at this location.

Casella LAND Grant Update

N. Gualco provided an update on relevant permitting for the Casella land parking area as well as the status of the Purchase and Sales Agreement and Spring Town Meeting Warrant Articles.

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

Tire cleanup at Wrangling Brook

This item was discussed during the Committee updates (see above).

Vernal Pool Certification – Throne Hill

N. Gualco provided an update that the first part of the two-part workshop was a success with the second part to be scheduled for April 8.  D. Collum shared that the training was excellent and A. Eliot commented that any Stewardship/Conservation Commission certification of vernal pools needs to occur on public property.

Short Videos

This agenda item was skipped.

Signage on conservation properties

This agenda item was skipped.

QR Code Project

E. McHugh reported that the latest draft of the QR code was presented to the Conservation Commission at their last meeting.  The Commission voted to allow for the project to proceed.

Turtle Nesting Area

N. Gualco updated the Committee on a recent site walk at Hayes where members of the Conservation Commission observed the newly created nesting area. A discussion ensued on the topics of management needs, creation of habitat/clearing of forest, how to engage volunteers to help.  D. Collum offered to review the escrow agreement.

Prescribed Fire of Town Land

This agenda item was skipped

**Discussion: Interpretive Sign at Petapawag Boat Launch**

Diane Carson (Nashoba Paddler/Wild and Scenic Council) presented a proposal to install an interpretive (educational) sign at the Petapawag Boat Launch and showed examples of what it could look like.  The Committee discussed the content of the sign (history [e.g., Harvey Sargisson] and ecological values).  P. Funch stated that the Trails Committee is working with the Nashua River Watershed Association/Wild & Scenic Council on installing similar signs at J. Harry Rich State Forest and plans to use the same vendor for continuity.

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

VOTED to recommend to the Conservation Commission that they support the proposed installation of an interpretive sign under the condition that the sign mention Harvey Sargisson.

The Committee discussed the motion and E. McHugh stated that she was not generally supportive of telling the proponent what specifically to put on their sign but did want to be notified of the sign content.

**The motion carried by a roll call voted: (Yes: KK, LM, DC, BH, AE, EM).**

**Discussion: 2023 Conservation Monitoring Schedule**

N. Gualco gave a brief update on his plan to monitor four CR properties this spring.  He presented a draft of a report for one of the properties he has already completed (as part of his test run).  A discussion ensued and members of the Committee volunteered to participate in the upcoming inspections.

**Discussion: Nashua Road Housing Authority land**

A. Eliot continued her update from earlier on potential 40B development off Cow Pond Road.  She highlighted a few Housing Authority controlled properties and reported that she is exploring their potential feasibility to serve as the required nitrogen-loading off-set acreage.  The Committee discussed this!

**Adjourn**

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

VOTED to adjourn the public meeting.

**The motion carried by a roll call vote (YES KK, LM, DC, AE, EM).**

**Minutes Approved: May 3, 2023**