



GROTON STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

November 19, 2025 – 6:30 PM

The meeting was opened at 6:30 PM.

1. INTRODUCTIONS:

- **Present at the meeting:**
 - Olin Lathrop – Chair of the Stewardship Committee/Conservation Commission/Invasive Species Committee/Stewardship Committee
 - Anna Eliot – Parks Commission/Stewardship Committee
 - Kim Kuliesis – Conservation Commission/Stewardship Committee
 - Adam Burnett – Stewardship Committee/Invasive Species Committee
 - Charlotte Steeves – Conservation Administrator
 - Benjamin Wolfe – Invasive Species Committee/Conservation Commission
 - Alex Lewis – observing the meeting
 - Paul Funch
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2. COMMITTEE UPDATES:

Review of Action Items

- Olin reported that he reviewed extensive background materials for the Eliades Conservation Area and confirmed that a management plan is already in place, including mowing guidance and restrictions related to vesper sparrow habitat. It was also noted that portions of the property have historically been leased for haying and that the status of this arrangement should be reviewed to ensure compliance with procurement requirements. Olin recommended a site walk to evaluate current conditions and determine next steps.
- Ben reported that he has not yet completed the project description write-ups for student volunteers. This item will remain on the action list.
- Anna reported that Hazel Grove is doing well.

- Anna raised concerns about downed trees and woody growth entering the mowed field at Priest Hill. After further discussion, the committee clarified the location of concern and agreed that the area may not be consistently mowed. Olin stated he would revisit the site to assess conditions on the ground.
 - The committee discussed the possibility of shifting from site walks only to occasional hands-on stewardship or maintenance days. Members supported exploring this idea, including using the committee email list to recruit volunteers.
 - Kim agreed to explore volunteer coordination, including outreach to the high school and other community groups.
 - Adam reported that he has identified nineteen fixed-radius sampling plots and created maps for field data collection. The next step will be locating the plots in the field and beginning data collection. The committee acknowledged this as progress.
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3. ON-GOING PROJECTS

Site Walk Debrief – Carrol Wheeler Park

- The committee reviewed observations from the recent site walk at Carrol Wheeler Park. Issues discussed included unclear property boundaries, knotweed infestation on adjacent MBTA property, and invasive species within the park itself. It was noted that the MBTA has previously required a significant fee to even discuss invasive management on their land.
- The committee agreed that invasive management within Carrol Wheeler Park is feasible and that a grant should focus on removal and restoration planting, rather than addressing adjacent MBTA land directly. The presence of a dead ash tree was noted as a potential hazard requiring professional removal.
- After discussion, the committee voted to proceed with developing a list of invasive removal and restoration actions for Carrol Wheeler Park and to use that list to prepare an application.
- Members made a motion to create a list of actions that they would like to have done at Carol Wheeler Park and to then prepare and submit an application for a grant.
- The vote passed unanimously.

Site Walk Debrief – Hayes Conservation Area

- The committee discussed observations from the Hayes Conservation Area site walk, including the turtle nesting area, which was found to be largely intact and functioning as

intended. Minor erosion was observed but did not appear to impact wetlands. Native vegetation was noted to be establishing well, with minimal invasive species observed.

- Adam raised concerns about debris from a recent house fire on adjacent development land, including charred material scattered across conservation land. Members discussed potential health and environmental risks and spoke about cleanup.
 - After discussion, the committee agreed that additional information was needed before determining next steps.
 - Action Item: Administrator Steeves will contact Takashi Tada (Land Use Director) and DEP to seek guidance on protocols for fire debris on conservation land and if assessment or remediation is warranted.
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4. GENERAL DISCUSSIONS

Membership Updates

- The committee voted to recommend Alex Lewis for membership on the Stewardship Committee, pending Conservation Commission approval. The vote passed unanimously.
- Kim was nominated and unanimously elected as Vice Chair.

Next Site Walk

- The committee agreed to hold the next site walk at Eliades Conservation Area on Saturday, December 13 at 10:00 a.m., meeting near Pacer Way.

Scheduling Next Meeting

- The next Stewardship Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 17.

Action Items Review

- The Chair will continue reviewing the Eliades property and revisit the fallen trees at Priest Hill.
- Ben will complete project description write-ups for potential student volunteers.
- Anna will continue reviewing Priest Hill, Ames Meadow, and Hazel Grove.
- Adam will proceed with work at Farmers and Mechanics Conservation Area.
- Kim will explore volunteer coordination and draft Carrol Wheeler Park recommendations.

- Administrator Steeves will contact Takashi and DEP regarding fire debris as well as assist with grant coordination.
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5. ADJOURN

- The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Andrea Rollo, Per Diem Minute Taker

Approved: March 18th, 2026