

Town Lands Minutes July 13, 2020 DRAFT

Town Lands Members Present : Ken Oehmig, Hope Hilton , Co-Chairs; David Morton, Sec; Priscilla Seimer; Jane Smith; Ned Perry. **Absent:** David Hackett, Frank Holgate (Note: Frank Holgate has resigned from the Town Lands Committee)

Town staff: Paul Plummer, Harbormaster

- **MINUTES:** Approval of minutes from 6/8/2020: Minutes accepted, to be forwarded to Town for archiving
- **UPDATES:**

Tide Mill – Proposed funding for improvements on the Town ballot for July 14.

Climate Resiliency Task Force – no current update, awaiting future meeting

Portable Toilets – David reported that the abutter to Bethel Point has declined to provide space for the toilet.

Site visits by Hope, David and Ken yielded an alternative site on the east side of the road at the very southern end of the Permitted Parking area. The site is in close proximity to the boat ramp and mostly hidden from adjacent private property by foliage. Code Enforcement will be consulted regarding any required setbacks, variances, etc.

Ned suggested a letter to abutters, to inform them of the plan, once the necessary Town approvals are obtained.

Paul noted that funding for the Mitchel Field and Cliff Trail toilets is available, though funding for toilets at Bethel Point and other sites is pending the results of the ballot July 14. Hope suggested modifying the next annual Town Lands budget to assure funding for at least on additional toilet on Town Lands.

Canine Task Force – Hope will replace Frank as the Town Lands Committee rep to the Task Force and will report back after their next meeting. Suggested topics of discussion included 1) specifying individual Town Land sites as Dogs Disallowed, Dogs On Leash Only, Dogs Off Leash Allowed, and 2) review and assessment of “Voice Control” as an adequate means of controlling dogs by owners.

Road Issues – Paul noted that there has been some light cleanup at Merritt House Road, though more road repair is required due to erosion. Further consultation with the Road Commissioner was suggested. Ken also noted road, cleanup and invasive plant issues at Tide Mill parking lot. It was noted that additional improvements are pending the ballot that would include a general cleanup of the site.

- **OLD BUSINESS**

Signage at Giant’s Stairs – Priscilla mentioned that HHLT is reviewing signage at MacIntosh Lot and will coordinate with Town Lands to create joint signage with Giant’s Stairs. Ken suggested including space for ad hoc notices, such as relevant Covid-19 info, along with permanent signage for the sites. Ken volunteered to complete the painting of the back of the sign at the south end of the trail by the abutter’s property.

Poison Ivy at Giant’s Stairs – The Committee recognized and appreciated the volunteer work done at the site to control the ivy. It was also noted that the contracted mowing is helping, as well. Both Ken and Priscilla observed the suspected use of an herbicide on the poison ivy, applied by person/persons unknown, though other foliage does not seem to be damaged.

Bethel Point Toilet and Parking – Toilets discussed as above. David noted that there are very few permitted parked cars and that most of the permitted spaces are occupied by non-permit cars or left unoccupied. Hope mentioned that only 1 permit had been issued by the Town prior to the May 30 application deadline. After some discussion, it was suggested that all parking be non-permit with the exception of the number of spaces reserved for that number of issued permits prior to the May 30 deadline. A separate sign stating, “Space Reserved for Permit Only” be placed at each permitted space. It was also noted that boat trailers continue to park in controlled spaces against current signage. David mentioned a single car that has not appeared to move from its parking space for 2 months. Paul noted that there may not be a consistent town policy regarding overnight parking and there is no specific signage denying overnight parking at Bethel Point. Hope and Ken agreed to discuss these points with the Town Administrator.

- **NEW BUSINESS**

Parking and Property at Graveyard Landing – Ken suggested that the timber delineating the property line be more effectively secured to the ground. Embedding the timber in the lawn as has been done along the boundary line on the other side of the road would work well and allow vehicles to pass over it as needed. It was suggested that the abutter should be contacted to find a mutually agreeable permanent placement for parking and signage that will minimally interfere with the abutter’s access to his property. Ned inquired about the possibility of adding a picnic table at the site.

Mackerel Cove – Paul reported there are only two boats left at the site, one on the beach and another on the grass that is supposed to be removed tomorrow (July 14). There is a third boat on the beach, said by its owner to be on private property with the permission of the landowner.

Ken commented that a Cleanup Day would help get the rest of the site in shape.

Paul advised instituting a Fall registration process to identify boats stored on Town Land over the winter. It was also suggested moving the removal of property deadline to May 15 in the hope that stored boats would be off the site by Memorial Day. The plan should be presented to the Board of Selectmen. Paul noted that Selectman Kevin Johnson was aware and supportive of such a plan.

Ken discussed the placement of the proposed toilet at Mackerel Cove, suggesting an area between the Fishermen’s Parking and an existing telephone pole. It was agreed to proceed in procuring funds to complete the project.

Steward List – Clarification of Steward assignments was discussed to assure each Town Land was adequately served by a steward monitor. Ken will send out an updated list to committee members to confirm assignments. An effort will be made to draft other members of the community who may be interested in stewarding Town Lands. Perhaps HHLT members who inspect their sites might be interested in sites that abut Town properties. The Giant Stairs would be an example.

David distributed HIPP Invasive Plant booklets to the stewards present, at the request of Ellen Shillinglaw, HIPP.

Garrison Cove – Paul reported that the Town Attorney has reviewed the deed ownership of the strip of beach north of the road and adjacent to the boat ramp and concluded that the Town gained ownership in 1936 as a consequence of property tax delinquency.

Paul also noted that he will be assuming some of the duties relating to Town Lands previously exercised by Terri now that she has taken on additional duties as Town Treasurer. Congratulations to Terri, condolences to Paul.

Meeting adjourned

NEXT TOWN LANDS MEETING – August 10, 2020