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2015 Annual Steering Committee Meeting

Draft MINUTES

Friday, May 15, 2015

Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center / 680 Hudson Road, Sudbury, MA 01776

12:43 PM Kathy Orlando, MLTC Steering Committee Chair called the meeting to order.

1. Ed Becker moved, Lisa Vernegaard seconded to approve the MLTC Steering Committee Minutes of Feb. 27, 2015 as submitted. Vote unanimous. (www.massland.org/files/MLTC_SC_Minutes_Feb272015.pdf)
2. Kathy welcomed Bernie McHugh, introductions around the table.

MLTC Election and updates – Kathy Orlando, MLTC Steering Committee Chair

1. Kathy O. presented the slate of board members and indicated that the open board position will be left open until the Strategic Plan is done to identify the most appropriate candidate as a major focus will be to find individuals who bring fundraising and development expertise to MLTC. Cynthia moved and Ed seconded to elect the slate as presented each with three year term: Whit Beals; Rich Hubbard; Kathleen O'Donnell and Henry Woolsey. Vote unanimous.
2. Rich and Kathy emphasized that increasing revenues for MLTC in the current fiscal year will be important to continue and expand our mission of advocacy for land protection and capacity building for Massachusetts land trusts.
3. Discussion on increasing SC meetings participation; Rich suggested that staffed LTs bring staff, particularly the younger staff; Steve J. suggested moving the SC meetings to other areas of the state; Bernie asked if we've considered separating the board and SC meeting days; Lisa suggested building on regional initiatives, e.g. the West Suburban Conservation Council (WSCC) as an example; Rita noted that this time of year is in high demand noting that the annual meeting is usually earlier in the year. Leigh and Kathy suggested that the regionals reach out to the locals.
4. As part of her goal to meet all the members, Mary Griffin would be happy to attend local and regional meetings.

Land Conservation Advocacy Day – Kathy Orlando, MLTC Steering Committee Chair, Mary Griffin, MLTC Executive Director

1. MLTC: Kathy O. and Mary G. joined others on Capitol Hill for LTA sponsored advocacy day meeting with members of the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation and their staff. Value and effectiveness of the tax credit and farm bill were discussed. Mary/Kathy would like real stories from MA that demonstrate the value of these programs.
2. Met with other attendees to learn how they've managed pipeline issues, etc.

Report from State Agency & Land Trust Retreat - Bob Wilber, MLTC Trustee and Bob O'Connor, EEA Land and Forest Policy Director

1. Retreat was very successful; workshops well received; valued net-working time. Bob W. mentioned that Mason Phelps attended and was recognized for his contributions to conservation. Best practices, stewardship were topics.
2. Bob O'C noted that the April meeting time may be better than February as winter was not an issue, more daylight. Colin asked to invite federal staff; Rich mentioned that Conservation Districts be included; all retreat presentations are on the MLTC web site. Discussion about timing, full day, half day.

EOEEA Update – Bob O'Connor, EEA Land and Forest Policy Director

1. Bob gave an update on the Environthon: although fewer teams, almost all of the participants are going on to major in environmental science
2. Celia Rechel has moved to VT for a new position, and her contribution to EOEEA was acknowledged. Her job has been posted and will be in the E-news

Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition

3. Landscape Partnership Grant should be posted on the website as of next week. Grant amounts uncertain; currently \$4.8M in grant applications; need to increase the cap. At this past week's ILC meeting it was suggested than an app be developed for the state that gets all of conservation land on one map; Fish and Wildlife has a map, but, would need a single repository for all parcels and back story on each, accessibility and parking; would probably need a grant. Bernie said that some of the national parks have these apps.
4. Melissa and Bob have proposed that monies be set aside for small playground projects (\$50K) for small towns.
5. Partnership and LAND application workshops well attended.

Legislative Update – Steve Long, Director of Government Relations, The Nature Conservancy (H.O. distributed):

1. Budget process moving slowly; land conservation tax credit increased from 2mil to \$5mil; amendment number 3: Steve is suggested a MLTC press release with quotes on the success of public/private partnerships, especially publically visible projects, and credit/thank legislators for their action. Steve will trigger the timeline. Highlight quality of land, family aspect and that the land is permanently protected, and, efficiently through the tax credit program, and, advantage to lower income families.
2. Supplemental funding for CPA; \$25mil proposed.
3. DCR revenues that used to go into the general fund now remain with DCR and incentivies collections; noted that fees have been increased. Anticipates a surplus due to appropriated projects that tank (slippage).
4. EEA in final stages of putting environmental bond/capital plan package together.
5. Executive Order (EO) 562 has prompted a review of state regs; there are reasonable changes needed; however, principal phrase of concern is that the State regs cannot exceed the Federal regs; George B. (ELM) gathered many precedent examples of State exceeding Federal regs; need to follow. Mary G. noted that MLTC has signed a letter with many organizations about their concerns, and, many stakeholders are weighing in on the extreme language in EO 562.
6. EO 554 on community compacts; Steve has been working on this to demonstrate how non-profits have added values to communities they serve. Bernie suggested putting \$ value on volunteer labor and NGOs; goal of EO is to identify best management practices and innovation.
7. Early retirement will impact Mass DEP and DCR.
8. The Adaptation Coalition's four-part Adaptation Strategy for the Commonwealth for climate resiliency was summarized. Public hearing of the Environment Committee on the Comp. Adaptation Management Plan bill requiring an action plan for the Commonwealth upcoming.
9. State legislative committee work on land protection and forests; and for climate change/energy summarized; and noted that Mass continues to rank highly for quality of life and noted how bond investments support cultural/recreation, land for forestry, clean air, water and wildlife; tourism; green infrastructure and wildlife recreation (hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing such as bird watching)
10. Email Steve Long for more information.

MLTC Reports

1. Director's report – Mary Griffin, Executive Director: Mary summarized (see report): MLCC success: 522 attendees; 100% positive feedback on keynote and workshops; recognized and thanked staff; sponsors; exhibitors and 20 MassLift volunteers. Planning has started for next year's MLCC.
2. State agency retreat: 60 attendees; acknowledged and thanked "the Bobs" (Wilbur and O'Connor); very successful; valued for content and networking.
3. Amy J. has completed the service providers' list update project using UMass Extension resources.
4. Mary G. would like to meet membership and welcomes invitations to regional and local events to meet constituency.
5. MEDs group met: attorney advisory group meeting planned for the fall; working on tax credit;
6. Financial report - John Page, Treasurer not in attendance; Rich summarized that MLTC on budget, but, that we need to increase our revenues; asked for individual and membership increases. Membership drive in June; please renew.
7. Kathy McGrath noted changes and improvements in web site; request for photos of projects as current ones are winter photos; MLTC also has launched a Facebook page.

LTA Update – Rebecca (Becca) Washburn, LTA

1. Acknowledgments: Thanked those MLTC members who participated in ED training; thanked Mary Griffin. and Kathy Orlando for participating in LTA advocacy day;

Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition

2. Accreditation lottery has started; and, noted that changes have been made to LTA accreditation process.
3. Rally in Sacramento this year; scholarships available;
4. Terra Firma: has developed a calculator for determining stewardship funding needs for a LT; identifies balance given that Terra Firma provides coverage, but not all; helps to consider these variables; in pilot testing now and should be available by the end of this year. A question about whether Terra Firma dues should be operating or stewardship.
5. State Association LTA meeting will be attended by Mary G.; Bernie asked how many MA LTs are enrolled in Terra Firma: ~ 30; about 8 LTs accredited;
6. Rand Wentworth will be resigning in Jan 2016.

Matt Zieper / Trust for Public Land (TPL):

1. National project to create new public funding for parks; good track record with 81% measures passed
2. TPL has a grant to help LTs develop public policy framework in local community; e.g., education on values, e.g. for CPA adoption (cannot do lobbying, just education) for ballot or legislative measure. Grants can go directly to land trusts. KEY: must be in Terra Firma or have a CR defense fund; the donor who provided the funds was adamant that the grant recipients take easements seriously. Rich asked if grant can be used to defend a CPA repeal venture. (SEE TPLS CR program: National Conservation Easement Database.

Beyond Earth Day: keeping land conservation in the public eye – Group discussion

1. Economic Benefits Summary (memo) – Steve Long distributed a hand out on economic benefits and resilience service of land conservation. MA Audubon pulled together a list of economic benefits of conserved land. How to translate econ benefits: jobs created; revenue being pulled into state: nature's benefits; "this is a report of direct and indirect benefits of open land and conservation" Good tool to enhance message as talk to public; 2nd page based on bipartisan polling data on how to communicate effectively to build support for conservation.
2. 65% more extreme storms in MA now due to climate change; example of effective communication for DOT on crossings.
3. Thanks to the Superhero in Our Midst (Cape Cod Times) – Mark Robinson described process to successfully save Shellfish Hatchery and the barrier beach (land acquisition) Cape Cod Fisherman's Alliance; Used example of how the article relates the benefits of the land to the community in clear language. On massland.org.
4. Stephen Johnson looking for examples of Conservation Commission and LT cooperation on stewardship.
5. Bernie noted that in the West, there's a disconnect between conservationists and recreationalists; discussion ensued about balance between pristine protected land vs. engaged public in impactful recreation; or farmer and conservation; Stephen Johnson gave examples of both groups working together, e.g. mountain bikers engaged in trail stewardship. Leigh suggested that the Lincoln Institutes mediation class could be a good resource; usually information is the answer. Bernie spoke about keeping skiers on trail so as not to spook the sheep; idea of distinguishing between mainstream and rogues; Colin's model: playing in the same sandbox together...leave no trace; come up with a similar phrase/concept; Kathy O. gave an example from a workshop: stop using "us and them".

3:00 PM - Northeast Direct Pipeline Update – Rich Hubbard, MLTC Board President

1. NEES update: Vincent DeVito has been working with other groups and update given. Discussion of the legislative process concerning Article 97 land. NEES an intervener in Maine. Kinder Morgan reports being reviewed. Mass Dept of Public Utilities intervener in process. Article 97 work started.
2. It was noted that Mary G. can discuss and be engaged in land discussions with the exception of Fish and Game land/issues.
3. Judy E. gave an update on MASSPLAN and Pipeline Plan Awareness network for the NE. In that Fish and Wildlife to be discussed, Mary Griffin. Left until discussion over.
4. Jan M. and Leigh reiterated the importance of defending Article 97 land and related issues.
5. Loring asked for an update on NE Governors meeting from late month.
6. Loring noted need for pipeline not documented.

3:31 PM - Rita moved, David McGowan seconded to adjourn; vote unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Rita Gibes Grossman