



Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition (Massland)
Steering Committee Minutes
December 13, 2019 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM
Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge Conference Room,
73 Weir Hill Rd, Sudbury MA

Attendance: On record at office

Hand-outs:

- Minutes of September 27th SC Meeting (Member login at <http://massland.org/steering-committee>)
- Agenda for December 13th meeting
- Public Policy Update / December 2019 / Emily Myron, TNC
- MDAR / APR program review public listening sessions
- Memo on Tax Credits from Mark Robinson (check title and scan as attachment)

Call to Order:

- a. Kathy Orlando, Steering Committee Chair called the meeting to order at 10:10AM, welcomed everyone and attendees introduced themselves.
- b. Lisa Vernegaard gave a warm tribute to Marylynn Gentry who passed away last week. Marylynn was the past executive director of Massland and Rich Hubbard acknowledged her work. She worked tirelessly for conservation in Wayland leading the effort to get CPA passed. She served for twenty years on the Sudbury Valley Trustees board. On January 18th there will be a celebration of her life and Lisa will get the information to everyone.

Minutes of the September 27th meeting: William (Buzz) Constable moved and Mark Robinson seconded to accept the Minutes of the SC meeting on September 27th. Hearing no further discussion, Kathy Orlando called the vote. **VOTE:** Unanimous.

Proposed SC meeting dates for 2020: Proposed dates of March 6, June 12, Sept 25, and Dec 11 (all Fridays) were discussed and June 12th was changed to June 19th. [Note: Subsequent to this meeting, the September date was changed to Wednesday September 23].

Staff Report: Robb Johnson thanked Barbara Chrenko and the Massland board for all they did to keep the organization going until his appointment.

- a. *Staffing.* Massland is stable and working well.
- b. *State Agency Retreat.* Robb thanked everyone who served on the 2019 Land Trust/State Agency Retreat Committee noting Bob O'Connor and Bob Wilber for leading the planning Committee and David Foster and other staff from Harvard Forest for leading a tour of Harvard Forest property including ascent of the monitoring tower. Robb further explained the typical

Retreat schedule and options for those who cannot attend both days. Kathy Orlando also recognized the unique nature of this retreat.

- c. *Massachusetts Land Conservation Conference (MLCC)*. Saturday, March 28th and is running slightly behind schedule for confirming presenters. Robb made a plea for more sponsors.
- d. *MassLand Census Survey*. Robb thanked board member Paul Catanzaro at UMass Extension for his coordination of this effort. Buzz asked everyone to respond to the survey which is currently at a 50% response rate. He also thanked Barbara Chrenko and Kathy McGrath for helping with design of the survey. The goal is to get an updated census of land trusts in the state and a sense of their current needs and priorities. Kathy Orlando said there will be a concerted effort to get a 100% response rate and assure that any land trusts that are no longer operating are identified. Questions concern land trust goals, needs, and assets. Information will provide leverage for policy and advocacy work, and will be presented at future meetings, including the MLCC in March. A plea was made to use information from past and existing surveys from other organizations. An issue was brought up by two executive directors of larger land trust organizations about the time sink required in doing this and other surveys.
- e. *LTA Rally*. Kathy Orlando thanked Colin Novick for his work organizing the Massachusetts dinner in Raleigh this past October, which was well attended.

Young Land Professionals (YLP) update. Nick Rossi summarized:

- a. *Membership*. The YLP is seeing increasing numbers and diversity for organizational demographics and size.
- b. *Needs Assessment*. Doing a survey of the YLP to help plan future event activities and identify ongoing educational needs.
- c. *Next event*. Late January or February at Jack's Abbey in Framingham in conjunction with the YLP group of the MACC (Mass Association of Conservation Commissions).
- d. *Mentorship program*. Being organized for the MLCC and led by the YLP. Currently determining interest and doing a need's assessment for the program. Suggestions from discussion included having options for mentors/mentee changes if needed. Pennsylvania Land Trust Alliance should be referenced for their model. Ray Lyons noted the great need for committed, specialized conservation attorneys and how this need could be incorporated into this mentorship initiative. MEDS was also mentioned as a source for consult on initiative design.

Subcommittee and Working Group Updates.

- a. *Agricultural Subcommittee*. Kathy Orlando noted that the MDAR APR Working Group will be doing public listening sessions throughout state in January (See Handout for dates or E-News). Guidelines and regulations on growing hemp on APR and Chapter 61 land in development.
- b. *Conservation Restriction Working Group*. Rob Warren outlined the work being done to identify all stakeholders in the CR process, and, creating a structure for reviewing and revising the CR model. This work output will be available imminently. John Gioia said he has developed a tool to get input. Implementation is pending.

- c. *Valuing Nature's Services Working Group.* Bob Wilber summarized the focus on developing a library of ecosystem services literature available for LTs, being organized by Paige Dolce for the next issue of Loring Ground. Paul Catanzaro's group at UMass Extension is developing a Cost of Community Services assessment tool. The working group is exploring the possibility of putting out an RFP for someone to develop a customizable tool for use to value open space. Loring also noted that the tool should include local values for conservation and carbon storage. Also suggested consulting the Trust for Public Land based on their Return on Investment work done for state and large regions. Suggestions identified other resource including Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program. Lisa Vernegaard made a plea for a consistent language and narrative that can be deployed by all. Reggie Hall noted the Conservation Fund would be sponsoring a related conference and he will forward information to Robb for E-News.
- d. *Amicus Committee.* Buzz Constable summarized work to date with this new committee including the Wellesley Conservation Commission case (Rob Warren will be the point of contact) and the Wildlands Trust Case (Bob Wilber will be the point of contact). Please get input on these cases to either points of contact.
 - a. *Nominating Committee.* Kathy Orlando summarized to the process for bringing board nominations to Massland's Annual Meeting for vote. She asked the current committee to continue. If you are interested in serving please contact Kathy Orlando. Kristin Sykes noted how she was nominated and spoke positively of the process. Robb noted that a board candidate need not be on a land trust board member or employee. The number of board positions being sought will be known after the board meeting today. The goal for demographic diversity was noted and ideas or suggestions should be forwarded to Robb.

Land Trust Alliance Report. Kevin Case was not able to attend today.

- a. Robb updated that LTA has restructured and Kevin Case is now responsible for the Eastern US (East of the Mississippi River).
- b. The MA Record Keeping Initiative is continuing with goal to complete for seven land trusts using a professional consultant to review the land trust land holding records. It is anticipated that funding will enable a second year of the project – watch eNews for information. There will be a workshop on this initiative at the MLCC.

Advocacy / Policy Updates. Emily Myron (See Public Policy Update Attachment)

- a. Green Budget Coalition has identified four line items for increased funding including: DCR state parks and recreation and DEP administration. If you are doing outreach, please contact Emily Myron or Robb for more information on the operating budget action items.
- b. Working on Capital Budget. Massland is a member of the Commonwealth Conservation Council and planning to advocate on increased funding for land conservation, water quality protection, climate change and municipal assistance programs in the State's FY21 Capital Plan. Updates will be forthcoming.

- c. Status of state legislation and policy. Emily summarized as noted on the handout (SEE Appendix A) that the final supplemental budget did include CPA and hopefully \$20M *may* be available within the coming year. (SEE CPC's website for latest info).
- d. S.1767/H.2522 is still in Revenue Committee and being held up for logistical reasons unrelated to this bill, which should be resolved in early February. She also noted that the "plastic bag" bill is not "dead".
- e. H. 763 prohibiting use of neonicotinoids pesticides, except by licensed applicators, has been reported out of Committee. Otherwise no movement on other bills.
- f. A pending suite of other bills on pesticides. Perspective that city and town regulation based bills may not proceed as many do not have the infrastructure to monitor and enforce. The value of selective use of glyphosate has been noted by legislators. Discussed the balance needed for appropriate use in select circumstances by licensed applicators to control invasives. Lisa noted that SVT intends to do a literature review on this and may consult a communication's specialist to assist with public narrative. Concerns expressed on pervasive use of glyphosphates in agriculture to accelerate profitability associated with process and recent study has noted how prevalent it is in the food supply and how it is readily available for residential use. Buzz noted a new MassLand Policy Committee is expected to be formed next month and this topic should be among those considered. He also thought that Massland and perhaps MACC should be working on this, perhaps in coordination with SVT. Loring emphasized the need to communicate clearly on this issue as well as other issues such as climate change, forestry. Amy Janovsky volunteered to work on this and noted an upcoming workshop on this.
- g. The MVPP program is progressing and Melissa Cryan said the coordinator was hired on Monday.
- h. Federal Public Policy. Representative McGovern should be noted and thanked for his work on the Land and Water Conservation Fund.
- i. Formal comment period on Solar Bylaw over. Andy Finton noted 75% of the approved solar programs are on undeveloped land and efforts are going forward to change this. Dept. of Energy Resources (DOER) is moving to incentivize solar on developed land. DOER regulations pending. Kristin Sykes said 11,000 applications backlogged under the current Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART) Program and that the state did not reference siting guidelines in original SMART program. The state is mapping existing and proposed sites. Many rural communities being hard hit with projects. The KEY ISSUE is what can be done with current 11,000 applications for solar projects across the state with 75% proposed for green fields. Brendan Annett and Mark Robinson noted that solar occurring on the Cape is being promoted as "best use" and pleaded for Massland action. Mark also asked if Climate Action Committee Policy on solar could be shared. Solar is being incentivized by Federal and State policy and overall state goals and objectives for solar need to be defined relative to site. Maine is working on solar siting. Green Communities bylaws allowed broad siting. Whit Beals noted that National Grid had so many solar applications that they've put them on hold to study capacity. Cross agency communication and coordination needed at the state level in DOER. Please email Emily with questions.

Proposed MassLand Policy Committee. Buzz noted the board will be taking action on this proposed committee to determine Massland response to advocacy issues.

State Agency Grants and CR review status. Melissa Cryan announced that the Landscape Partnership and Drinking Water Grants have been announced and will be posted in E - News. Bob O'Connor noted that CRs are sometimes being held up waiting for Secretary signatures.

Featured Presentation. Bob O'Connor, EOEAA gave an informative presentation on the conservation successes in Massachusetts since 1929 and noted all the programs and highlights. (PDF attached)

- a. Since 2001, 350,000 acres protected. New tools developed since 2001 were summarized. Ideas developed as a result of the State Agency LT retreat, e.g. Conservation Partnership Grant were mentioned.
- b. Greening the Gateway cities and tree planting initiative. Almost 27,000 trees planted in 14 cities to date since 2014. Program employs local vendors for the planting. Owners of trees planted on private properties in urban areas "adopt" the trees and Bob spoke of the benefits to the community and families in the program. The Hero Program through Clark University noted 85% survival of those trees planted. Bob spoke of the health and environmental benefits and impact of tree planting and current measurement activities to determine impact of program. He advocated for the diversification of the conservation effort by engaging other groups in health care and in the community.
- c. In discussing the monthly Resilient Lands Initiative Steering Committee meetings, he also noted popular ideas emerging so far: a no net loss carbon tax on greenfield development and use to fund green space; developing a Chapter 61 urban version; use libraries as gateways to the outdoors and outdoor learning; Using DCR buses during vacation times to transport urban children to connect to DCR parks and properties. Other issues noted the challenges in rural communities who lose property tax income when land is conserved. His presentation was well received.

12:44 Rita Grossman moved to adjourn and Cynthia Henshaw seconded the motion. Hearing no further discussion, Kathy Orlando called the vote. **VOTE:** Unanimous.