



TOWN OF ACTON AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION

Minutes of Morrison Farm Visit

Jan 30, 2021

10:00 AM

Attendance:

Acton Ag Comm Members: Patrick Hearn, Joe Hebert, Peggy Hebert. Heidi Porten, Paul Simeone,

Natural Resources Assistant, Bettina Abe as Tour Guide

Acton Interested Citizen, Anne Forbes

Acton Conservation Trust President, Susan Mitchell-Hardt

Acton Select Board Liaison, Dean Charter

Morrison Farm Land Steward and Cemetery Commissioner, Joe Will

The tour and discussion follow:

1. The tour began at 10 AM at the Morrison Farm House at the South end of the property. The entire group remained outdoors, at least 6 feet apart and with masks.
2. Dean Charter provided information on the house interior. It is believed to be in poor shape after many years without heat.
3. The Barn is approximately 50'x30', two story and apparently in much worse shape than the house.
4. Buildings on site:
 - An open sided equipment shed that is in use near the barn
 - A newer closed equipment shed storing tools and mower for the Acton Land Stewards.
 - A small garage with attached chicken coop (See Fig. 1 for pictures of the buildings.)
5. The group began walking East adjacent to the community garden plots and past the small Pam Resor Orchard containing Apple, Pear, Peach and Cherry trees. See Fig-2 map of trails. After the orchard we walked north with the community gardens now on left and a wet meadow on right. There are 50 plots in the community gardens and there is a waiting list. After passing the Community Gardens, the land on the left is 5+ acres of open pasture land with a central crown and good drainage. On the right is a second wet meadow. There are tree and shrub windbreaks between the higher garden and pasture land and the wet meadow. Bettina commented there are many raptors patrolling the meadow food sources as well as a wide variety of other birds. At the end of the open pasture and meadow is a stone wall marking the entrance to the wooded white pine forest northern half of the Morrison property. There were several points where the trail was close to Ice House Pond/Nashoba Brook. The tour then turned South to return to the Farm buildings.
6. After the walk there was considerable discussion regarding what could be done with the house and barn and the history of prior proposals. Anne Forbes commented that the house is the only surviving Acton farmhouse from the depression era and is eligible for entry in the National

Historic Register. Bettina commented that the people who walk the trails and use the community gardens like the ambience and privacy provided by the house and barn and that the subtlety of the driveway access is found pleasing to all. There was discussion of what sort of proposal could be made in the future to preserve the farmhouse and barn at reduced cost to the taxpayers.

7. The general consensus was that the walk was well worth taking and that there are courses of action that can be further researched and discussed.
8. The group expressed appreciation to Bettina for her excellent tour and information.
9. The visit adjourned at approximately 11:40 AM.

Attached:

Subsequent input from Anne Forbes

"Here's the summarized recommendation from the MHC NR-eligibility opinion. (Criterion C is the design/architectural category):

"It is recommended for National Register consideration at the local level under Criteria A for its association with the early history of Acton and Concord, and Criteria C for its historic agricultural landscape, intact since the 17th century, and the well-preserved Depression-period farmstead of house, barn and out buildings."

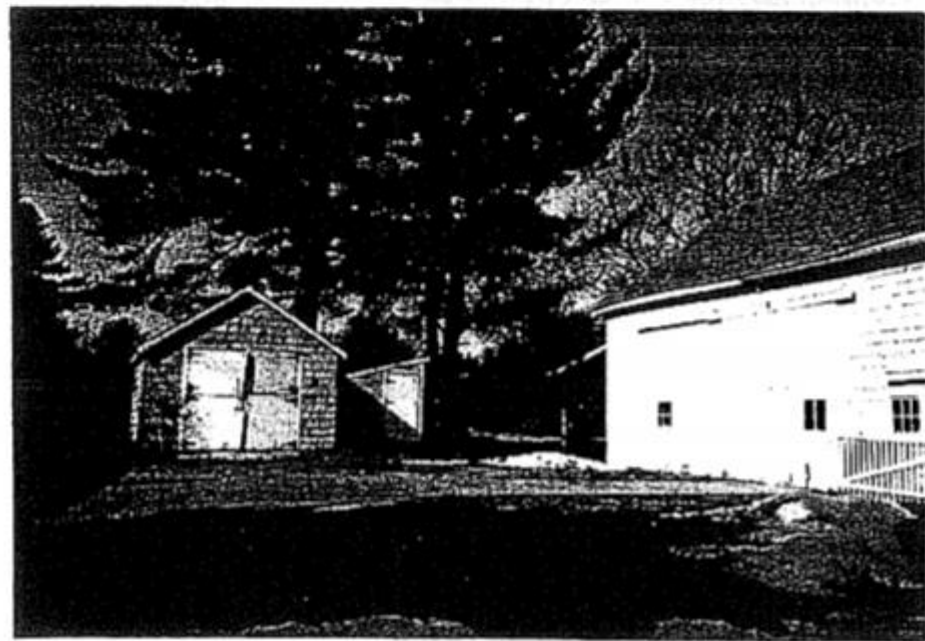


Fig 1 – Top- Morrison Farm House, Center-Barn, Bottom – Small Garage

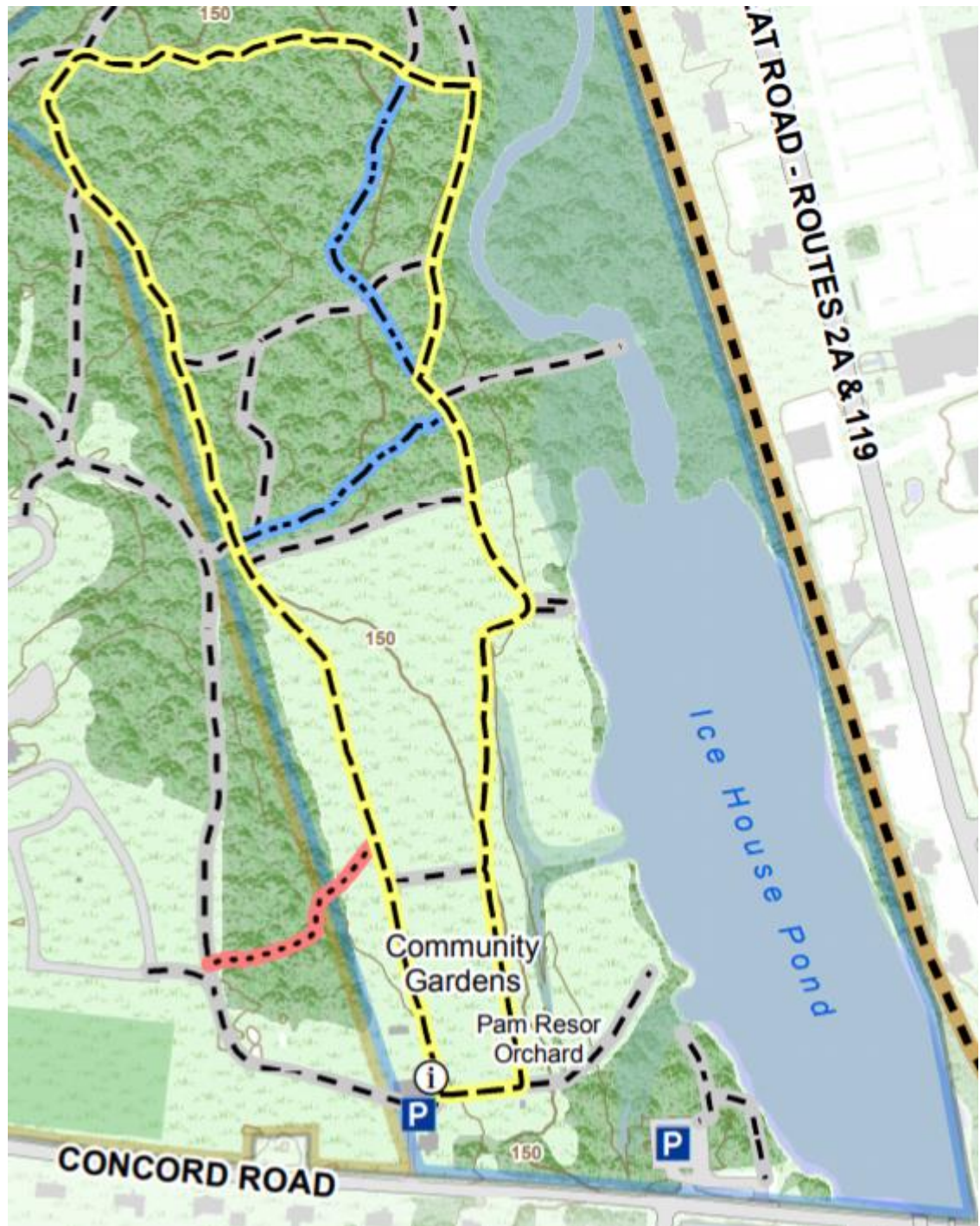


Fig 2: Morrison Farm Walking Trails