

Acton
Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, August 21, 2018, Town Hall, Room 9, 7 P.M.

Attendance

Regular (voting) members present: Bob Farra, Bob Guba, Joe Holmes (Chair), Laurie Ullmann, Joe Will (Minutes)

Associate (nonvoting) members present: Dale Chayes, Zanna Gruber, Josh Haines

Others:

Janet Adachi (Acton Board of Selectmen LSC liaison),

Joe H called the meeting to order at 7:07 P.M.

Review and approval of July minutes

Re the blazed trails at Morrison Farm: The next step would be to take the blazing plan to the Cemetery Commission and Municipal Properties, not the Conservation Commission (as stated in the Minutes draft), as Morrison Farm is Municipal Land, not Conservation Land (CL). Andrea Ristine, Town Superintendent of Municipal Properties, requested that Joe H bring the proposal to her when it's available. Approval of the minutes with this revision was moved and voted unanimously.

Grassy Pond West, Anderson parcels

Josh is Steward of the Jenks CL and is active in Cub Scouts with Pack 1 that is chartered by the Church of the Good Shepherd at the corner of Arlington Street and Newtown Road. Josh proposes that Pack 1 be the "steward" of the recently-acquired parcel at 161 Newtown Road that will become CL, and could possibly merge with the Grassy Pond parcel. Pack leadership and the Church have both approved of the Pack adopting this parcel. The Church will provide a Board-of-Selectmen-approved Steward (a Church member) who would be an Associate member of the LSC, and the Church will work with the pack on caring for the parcel. Discussion points:

- Is the Church willing to allow the public to use its parking lot? Josh: That's a great question.
- An issue with scouts is turnover, but the Church will have the continuing role.
- Within the pack, CL duties would become a committee responsibility.
- What would happen in the summer? The Pack does have an event or two during the summer.

A CL project could be such an event.

- Is there a legal problem with this? The scouts would be just like current volunteer helpers.
- The Steward from the Church would be taking the formal role of Steward. S/he would have to go through the volunteer process to be an Associate member of the LSC. Josh would be shepherding the whole process.
- The new parcel could merge with Grassy Pond CL (which has a steward), but it could have two stewards, one for the land on each side of the long boardwalk. Perhaps the Pack could steward the whole of the merged parcels!
- When should the trail on the new parcel be constructed? Bob G and Tom Tidman have located what Bob calls "the best route" for the trail from Newtown Road to the Grassy Pond access trail near the boardwalk. It's particularly well defined by four cement survey markers where the 10-ft wide trail easement crosses a 20-ft wide section of private land.
- The LSC should ask Tom about the state of the Conservation Restriction on the property and when

the LSC should put in the new trail.

It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously that the Cub Scout Pack at the Church of the Good Shepherd adopt the CL access trail from Newtown Road to the Grassy Pond boardwalk and that the Pack maintain the surrounding parcel under the guidance of the to-be-appointed Steward from the Church.

Heath Hen Meadow/Mt. Hope unauthorized cutoff trail

The Committee reviewed the situation, noting that there are now two bypass trails instead of one. What should the Committee do — give up, try a web camera, try trail blockages, form a work party and fill in the bypass trails? The latter won't work. The Committee can "do a camera thing". It should contact Bruce Rachman for a camera, or buy one. Dale has a camera to loan.

Nashoba Brook: Wheeler Lane Bridge Construction schedule

This can begin after Labor Day, after other stuff is first moved off Bob G's property where initial assembly will take place. Bob G will work with Bettina Abe to obtain materials. He has sent her plans and a cost estimate. After Labor Day, she can order the parts. Bob outlined construction steps, initially needing only two people: First, Bruce Rachman would come to Bob's house and they would put together four 18-ft pieces. Then they would do the special cutting of vertical members and diagonal members. Third would be careful drilling of all the holes. Only after the pieces are assembled, would a gang be needed — to lift up each truss and haul all of them over to Wheeler Lane. Then, to get each truss across the sluice, people would be needed to hold it up vertically while others attach cross members. That would be one work day, and it can't be scheduled at this time.

Nashoba Brook: Native American kiosk height

There is general, but not unanimous, agreement that the kiosk is too tall. Joe H could try shortening the kiosk this Saturday if he has volunteers to help, as the job is too difficult for just one person.

Other parcel information

– Wills Hole/Town Forest

Bob G reviewed his concern about the Acton Trails map showing a dashed line paralleling the sculptor's private driveway from the yellow trail to Quarry Road. Why the concern? Because crossing Quarry Road into NARA encourages a trail in NARA that would have a significant drop that would be susceptible to erosion.

– Nagog Hill

Bob G used a map to review the access trail, with bridge, to Nagog Hill from Breezy Point. Concord will cut the trail (approved by Concord Water) and build the bridge. The LSC has to show Concord where to put the bridge. Re Nagog Hill itself, Dale needs help with some CL boundaries as the map does not show them. Knowing boundaries would help in determining whether certain downed trees are on CL.

– Nashoba Brook/Spring Hill

Laurie and Phil Keyes are rethinking the Bay Circuit Trail (BCT) route. Heading north from the Davis Road parking, perhaps the BCT should not cross over to Spring Hill on the first red crossover trail, but stay on the Nashoba Brook yellow trail and its Trail Through Time, finally crossing over to Spring Hill on the second red crossover trail. The Appalachian Mountain Club will be looking for another project for this fall. Per Laurie, The BCT is flexible. Small changes like this are nothing.

LSC members/roster

The LSC should have 9 voting members, but currently has just 7 (with a quorum being 5). Associate members Zanna and Dale are willing to become voting members. Dale, however, will be out of the country for 6 weeks. Janet needs a request to the BoS from the LSC to make Zanna and Dale voting members. The next BoS meeting is 09/17. Joe W will send a request to Janet.

Acton Trails website: Maps

Prior to the meeting, Jim Snyder-Grant sent an email with three suggestions for a map symbol that terminates a dashed trail and suggests that the hiker using the map not proceed further on that trail.

1. an international “do not enter” icon. See Acton Trails’ Arboretum map:
<https://www.actontrails.org/map/?zoom=17.93&lng=-71.433994&lat=42.482564>
2. a red X icon. See Acton Trails’ Robbins Mill map:
<https://www.actontrails.org/map/?zoom=17.09&lng=-71.395281&lat=42.508914>
3. a “Stop” sign. See Acton Trails Great Hill map:
<https://www.actontrails.org/map/?zoom=17.93&lng=-71.433994&lat=42.482564>

There was brief discussion:

- X on a map is where you go to (didn’t like).
- Sudbury Valley Trustees, Carlisle Conservation use X (liked).
- Xs mark where people died (didn’t like).
- 2 like red X. 2 like “do not enter”. Others no opinion.
- Would everyone understand the international symbol?
- Jim’s idea is good on the interactive map, but can’t do this on a phone.
- There are organizations with standards for map symbols (e.g., DCR, AMC). Could look at these.

Acton Trails website info: officers, roster, invasives, text updates, broken links

Rambling discussion:

- Who’s running the LSC Website? Who is Webmaster? Some think it’s Bruce Rachman or Jim Snyder-Grant or a combination of the two.
- Should Acton Trails link to other people’s CLs? Keeping it to Acton would keep it simple.
- Webmaster needs to know how to navigate WordPress.
- Acton Trails should have a pulldown w/Committee roster. This would require an active Webmaster. Come each June, s/he would have to update the roster.
- The LSC roster could be shown on the Town website, as done with other committees.
- The Town site could have blend of information and would include a link to Acton Trails.
- How would Town IT feel about it?
- A steward’s name could be on his/her parcel.

The Committee should pass this on to Bruce and Jim. It can have them do a proposal to address website issues, including where/how to post the Directors’ roster; who the stewards are for various parcels.

Morrison Farm blazing and the Cemetery Commission

Joe W reported that the Cemetery Commission had no issues with the blazing proposal. It has to go yet to Municipal Properties.

String trimmer

Jim Snyder-Grant had asked about this in an email. A discussion ensued on string trimmers. Non-technical points:

- if the Committee is going to have one, there has to be study of what kind of vegetation to take down with it.
- String trimmers cut grass and weeds.
- If the Committee buys one, it should buy the best.
- Jim’s concern is about the Guggins Brook access trail from Central Street. Jim wants a battery-operated device, no more gasoline.
- It should be a powerful one.
- Jim should be encouraged to try out the ones that can be loaned to him.

Acton Dog Park Committee (ADPC) request, invite

The ADPC invites LSC members to its 08/28 meeting, or an ADPC member can come to an LSC meeting. The LSC will invite the ADPC to the next LSC meeting. Joe W shared the four sites (Municipal Land) that the ADPC is considering, and there was discussion on land eligibility for some of the sites, as the Town is not necessarily clear as to what is Municipal Land and what is CL. For example, a swap for the Town to obtain the Miracle Field land resulted in some of ADPC-considered land along Quarry Road to change from Municipal Land to CL, and the change has not yet been updated on certain Town records.

Scoutland update

Laurie has talked with Bill Klauer. The Acton Boy Scout Trust Fund owns the property. There likely is a document on the status of the trust and what kind of succession plan there would be. Still in discussion are the two routes: The one suggested by the LSC and one closer to the brook that Bill believes is more historically-appropriate. Tom Tidman is the one who should pursue this with Bill and possibly find a compromise.

New Business

- There should be a purchase order for a new field mower in a week, and a new mower should be here in a month or so.
- The trees that needed to be taken down at Camp Acton may be down.
- Josh will bring back the brush cutter so that Joe H can have it.

September agenda

Bridge building

Evaluate meeting

Not discussed.

The meeting adjourned at 9:06 P.M.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, September 18, at 7 P.M., in Room 9.