

**Acton**  
**Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, December 20, 2016, Town Hall, Room 9, 7 P.M.**

Attendance

Regular (voting) members present: Bob Farra (Vice Chair), Paula Goodwin, Bob Guba, Joe Holmes, Bruce Rachman (Chair), Jim Snyder-Grant, Laurie Ullmann, Joe Will (Minutes)

Associate (nonvoting) members present: none

Nonmembers: Bettina Abe (Acton Natural Resources Assistant), Janet Adachi (LSC's Board of Selectmen liaison), Carolyn Kiely (Quail Ridge resident)

Bruce called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M.

Review and approval of November minutes

Corrections:

List of meeting attendees is to show Jezanna Gruber as a "176 Central Street observer" rather than a "176 Central Street abutter."

– Joe H submitted this paragraph to replace the one on garlic mustard:

After the leaves drop in the fall is a great time to remove garlic mustard. This is because garlic mustard is a biannual plant, which stays green all winter, so it really stands out. Also in the spring when it is flowering you have to bag it and haul it out because the flowers will turn to seed even if pulled out. In the fall, as long as the ground is not frozen, you can just pull out the plants below the root balls and put them on top of a rock, and they will die on their own. Jim keeps a map of all the garlic mustard infestations in town Conservation Land (CL), so ask him where to find some, and report to him any new infestations you find.

– Paula submitted this content to enhance the description of a workday:

Paula had a workday on 11/12 to move piles of accumulated sticks and branches into the woods away from the bridge. One volunteer helped out, having seen the announcement on the WildAware Facebook page. The work was completed within 2 h. Paula will postpone workdate planning until early spring.

– Also changed "Americorps" to "AmeriCorps."

Approval with above corrections was moved and voted unanimously.

Maps, including an overlay showing the Bay Circuit Trail — Jim, Joe H (projector by Bettina)

Jim showed his work to date (see <http://snyder-grant.org/jim/mapping/lsc.html>), pointed out some of the changes he's made, and took LSC feedback suggesting additional changes. The displayed map and discussion focused on the North Acton parcels.

Need a Trail Through Time (TTT) steward? Or, should current stewards be responsible for TTT trails on their parcels?

Linda McElroy has managed the TTT from its beginning but now is pulling back. Laurie is the current steward of Nashoba Brook where most of the TTT is located. Points made during the discussion (some several times): There are two different general tasks, trail stewarding and something else for historic

reasons. The LSC steward could handle the trail stewarding. Other responsibilities that would be quite different from conservation, e.g., signage, would be too much for one person. The motivating force for such other responsibilities would revolve around volunteer interest. It would be good to have someone particularly interested in history. (The Acton Historical Society does not get involved with pre-colonial stuff.) Also, an important duty would be to get the TTT website functional. If someone is identified, s/he could be part of the LSC, and the TTT website could have a home on the LSC webpage. Linda has been trying to find someone to take over her role. We can work with Linda to put out a “Help Wanted” notice. The LSC should ask Linda to describe that person’s responsibilities and then the LSC should put out the “advertisement.”

Parcel naming issues; possible changes to bring to the Conservation Commission — Joe H, Jim Jim, Joe H, Janet, Bettina, Tom Tidman, and Matthew Selby met on this. The usual procedure with likely name changes would be the LSC recommends and the Conservation Commission (Cons Com) approves. Initially Joe is proposing name changes involving six parcels, detailed in a handout he provided to the LSC. It was noted that sometimes a deed, a Conservation Restriction (CR), or a lease will specify a name.

1) Changing “46-54 Martin Street” (so listed in Acton’s Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP)) to “46 Martin St” drew little Committee interest.

2) Merging the Anderson parcel with Bulette CL and using the name “Bulette Conservation Land – Town Forest.” A sense from the meeting with Tom is that Acton would like to preserve the fact that there are specific parcels that are town forest — land that historically provides forest products for the townsfolk. For a combination of land, using Bulette CL – Town Forest as an example, include “Town Forest” as part of the name of the whole parcel if a trail goes into the town forest part. Otherwise, omit “Town Forest” from the name. Examples: An Arlington Street entrance into Bulette CL – Town Forest would show a sign that says simply “Bulette Conservation Land.” The Capt. Handley Road entrance into Wills Hole CL – Town Forest could show a sign that says simply “Wills Hole Conservation Land.”

If Bulette and Anderson should merge, the steward of Bulette would cover the Anderson portion as well.

Motion: Recommend to the Cons Comm that the combined Bulette and Anderson parcels be named “Bulette Conservation Land – Town Forest.” Passed unanimously.

Joe H will come up with specific suggestions for signage at the different Wills Hole entrances.

3) Use “North Acton Community Gardens” in place of various names for that parcel. This is not exactly in LSC’s bailiwick, but the LSC would support “North Acton Community Gardens” as its name with “Conservation Land” not be used in any signage.

4) Use “488 Mass Ave” for the “Flint Road and West Acton Conservation Land” (so listed in the OSRP). No discussion.

5) What to call the 176 Central Street parcel? One possibility would be “Mount Hope Conservation Land,” but there is no “Mt. Hope feature” to the land. There is a piece of general municipal land between 176 Central and Heath Hen Meadow (HHM) which would make using “Heath Hen Meadow” in its name problematical. How about “Muddy Brook Conservation Land”?

6) What to call the “Caouette Simeone Farm Land” (so listed in the OSRP). This is Acton’s first conservation parcel that’s a farm. It has become CL with Acton Conservation Trust and Sudbury Valley Trustees holding the CR. The LSC discussed keeping “Farm” as part of the name. It was pointed out

that there is a 10-year lease for farming to continue on the land during which time the public has limited access to the parcel. The LSC made no recommendation regarding the name.

Bob F pointed out that this is the closest the LSC has ever been to having naming convention guidelines. He believes that having some guidelines will be beneficial when someone donates land. Joe H is willing to draft some guidelines to discuss at future meetings.

#### Non-Parcel Updates:

##### a. 176 Central Street (signs on Cemetery land, blazing, poster shelters, map boxes, kiosks) — Jim w/map

Jim displayed a map showing a red entrance trail, two blue crossover trails and a yellow trail loop on the 176 Central/Mt. Hope Cemetery (MHC) land as suggested by Jezanna Gruber for consideration by the Cons Comm and then the Cemetery Commission (Cem Comm) per an agreement by the Cons Comm, the Cem Comm, and the LSC of a few years ago. This led to a discussion about different aspects of a trail system for HHM/MHC/176 Central. It was suggested that such a system of trails be a future agenda item. Jim has been working on this but he feels now that Paula and Jezanna should take it over.

##### b. Nagog Pond and Concord

The hearing has been extended to 01/18/17 to give Concord time to review new material (detailed bird report) submitted by a Quail Ridge resident. Janet reviewed the Nagog Pond/Concord issues for the LSC. Carolyn pointed out that Concord officials and Breezy Point residents have agreed on a new path over Concord land from Breezy Point to Nagog Hill CL. The new path could be an improved wildlife corridor, which would mean that Concord would have to take this again to the Acton Cons Comm. So, some changes are happening, but as yet Concord is not moving the fence that separates its property from Quail Ridge. Does the extension push out the decision date? Janet: Yes.

##### c. Dog Park info

Joe W told of the Board of Selectmen voting to form a Dog Park Committee. Janet mentioned that Franny Osman is preparing a charge for the committee and that that committee's first challenge will be to decide whether there should be a dog park.

#### Parcel(s) specific:

##### a. Heath Hen Meadow: Possible new blue trail (Bettina)

This was part of the discussion in the immediately-preceding part a.

##### b. Other parcel information

- Nashoba Brook (discussion during Jim's initial map presentation): The makeshift bridge on the sluice way is completely icy and two planks wide, so it is very dangerous. Laurie should remove the planks (instead of placing a warning sign) if the planks are not too iced in. There will be a fine bridge there in the future but an issue is the state of the sluice wall below the bridge. If the LSC puts in the bridge before the wall is fixed, there won't be room or space to repair the wall. Tom Tidman says to go ahead with the bridge; there is no need to fix the wall. Since it's important to get people to the Robbins Mill Pond and there will be no Town issues with building the bridge, the LSC should proceed to build the bridge when the weather gets warm.
- Camp Acton: Bruce has requested signs from Bettina to help with dog control, mainly in Camps Sites 1 and 2. Dogs should be on leash in campsites, or make campsites off limits for dogs that are off leash. Janet pointed out that the Spring Hill developer of land abutting Camp Acton has to go back to the Planning Board with a definitive plan for a composting toilet for Camp Acton. There will be another public hearing yet on the developer's proposals for Camp Acton. Bruce is wondering whether he should

bug Tom Tidman to have the Town not wait for the developer and do the driveway excavation needed to make Camp Acton handicapped accessible.

- HHM: Bob G and others cleared the winter trail this afternoon through the swamp and around the whole island. Now the trails need cleaning of a lot of cut-up debris. Paula will do it.
- Great Hill: Bob G checked out the new boardwalk built as an Eagle Scout project near Piper Road and gave it his highest commendation, "It was done perfectly. I couldn't have built it any better."
- Grassy Pond: Erosion has caused problems with the new boardwalk. There's another Grassy Pond boardwalk that needs fixing as well. Also, Gary Kilpatrick, Grassy Pond steward, has been sworn in as an LSC associate.

### LSC Website

#### a. Brainstorming WildAware stories

- The challenge to wildlife of domestic pets.
- Fishing in Acton (from Joe H): stocking fish, catch and release, why mercury is still a problem, a list of all public accessible fishing spots (from Bettina).
- Conservation and Hunting: Bruce knows many who hunt in Acton and will share information with Paula.
- On the WildAware Facebook page, the Arboretum and HHM are heavily represented. Paula would like to show information about other parcels. She would like to hear from stewards on their parcels.
- First January article is about the barred owl.

#### b. Workdate calendar

- For his December 17 workday, Joe H did get 3 or 4 volunteers, but it snowed, so he canceled the workday.
- Bruce had a workday to replace a collapsed bridge at Grassy Pond with help from Bettina and Jim, among others.

### January 17 agenda

176 Central/MHC/HHM

### Evaluate meeting.

Many thanks to Janet for the Baci treats.

The meeting adjourned at 9:03 P.M.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, January 17, at 7 P.M., in Room 9.

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Subsequent to the distribution of a draft of these minutes, Linda McElroy sent an email commentary on the TTT notes above. At Bettina's request these notes are appended here:

From: Linda  
Sent: Dec 24, 2016 11:00 AM  
To: Joe  
Cc: LSC, "babe@acton-ma.gov", Doug Halley, Janet Adachi

Subject: Re: Wills Hole/TF, plus . . .

Hi All,

Realizing that minutes must reflect what was actually discussed at a meeting, I would, nevertheless, like to clarify, for a possible future discussion, what I would like in re a TTT steward.

I am not planning to retire, yet, from my direction of this long-term project. What I can no longer do is the fieldwork, that is, mostly maintenance. Nor, is it appropriate to expect Laurie to pick up that responsibility, although he has helped a great deal in recent years with the volunteer service groups that have done the brunt of that work. There are 3 volunteer groups that can be depended on to annually do this kind of work.

What is needed is someone who walks the Nashoba Brook parcel regularly to check the sites for vandalism, do maintenance of the kind that is regularly needed in a forest, and repair or replace infrastructure--much the same as any other steward. There will eventually be map boxes to be checked. I do not see the need for a person with historic specialties.

I am not retiring from continuing involvement with the project until at least a few more objectives are reached. And there are two initiatives pending from outside organizations for connection to the Trail. I will make appropriate efforts to keep LSC informed and seek permission where necessary.

My high priority, just now, is to review, rewrite and/or create new texts, graphics, updated map, and mill schematic for the website this winter. I need help with the structuring of such a website that will reference these materials, and I would [like] it to be accessible thru the LSC website. If there is no one who can assist me in this, I will try to do it myself with guidance from two family members.

I am currently working with Doug Halley to create a PP-like presentation and publication to be used for publicity purposes and to apply for placement of the Trail on a state list of historic places (I think that is what it is; this is Doug's project). I am also having CPC review the work I have done under my current grant and approve the additional work I wish to undertake within the bounds of that grant.

All of these matters I would be happy to present for further discussion at a future meeting of LSC, if the committee would like.

Sincerely,  
Linda

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