



Land Stewardship Committee

Meeting Minutes

January 15, 2019

7 p.m.

Room 9, Acton Town Hall, 472 Main Street

Present:

Full members: Bob Farra, Dale Chayes, Laurie Ullmann, John Watlington, Bruce Rachman, Joe Holmes, Bob Guba

Associate members: Jim Snyder-Grant, Sherman Smith

Selectmen liaison: Janet Adachi

Voting members absent: Joe Will, Jezanna Gruber

1. Opening

Chair Joe Holmes opened the meeting at 7:04 p.m.

In the absence of the clerk, chair Joe Holmes appointed Jim Snyder-Grant to take minutes.

2. Regular Business

A. Citizen Comments [none]

B. Approval of Meeting Minutes – The meeting minutes from the December 18, 2019 meeting were reviewed and approved by a unanimous vote, with amendments:

- Change “Informal subcommittee” to “informal group” in the December draft minutes.

C. Meeting procedures from last month were reviewed and approved:

- Be on time, be ready to start the meeting at 7.
- Be prepared for the meeting.
- No interruptions.
- One person at a time.
- Time the agenda items — if facilitator wants.
- Take responsibility for staying on topic.
- Speak when it’s your turn.
- Speak loudly enough when it is your turn to be heard.
- If you can’t hear, it’s always good to say so.
- Facilitator can decide that folks need to raise hands.
- Facilitator can use rounds (where everyone in turn gets a chance to speak on a topic)
- Facilitator gets to set format.



- Facilitator can get a time-keeper volunteer.
- Give facilitator respect and support.

D. Citizens' Concerns handling:

We'll have a slot early in the meeting for citizens to raise concerns. If it's not a simple matter, chair will decide if we have time for it at this meeting, or if it needs to be scheduled elsewhere. If citizens are here for a particular agenda item, chair will decide if it is reasonable to take care of those items early on in the agenda.

E. Docushare system or similar:

Where to keep monthly parcel reports so that they are available to the public? Since they are referenced in the meeting, they need to be available. One legally defensible solution is to list them in the minutes and note that they are available at Town Hall. Town Hall's IT system has available backup of every email sent through the lsc@acton-ma.gov email shell. It would be nice, but not mandatory, to have the documents used in a meeting more easily publicly accessible through a system such as Docushare. Bettina has access to Docushare and is able & willing to put documents there. Another option, easier to implement, is to put the monthly reports referenced in the meeting directly in the minutes. That's what we'll try first.

It was noted that there was a problem with finding the link from actontrails.org to minutes and agendas on Town website.

The need for a future agenda item noted: how to remind individual stewards to send in monthly reports.

F: Recruitment efforts:

Mapping volunteer email has gone out and has good responses.

Blazing email has gone out and has had many responses

Guggins steward still being recruited.

G: Website review:

briefly reviewed changes added to website.

Note to Webmaster: please check new feature implementation on mobile phone.

H: Maps review:

The new extension of Grassy Pond Conservation land to Newtown Road is now on the map (the bounds, not the new trail).

There is a new feature under development that was shown that will allow people to mark up maps with arrows and text for pointing at various places in the woods (example: "tree down here"). System will be implemented to allow people to save and send links to marked-up maps. Just points for now. Lines might be very useful in the future (to show proposed trails, for example).

I: Parcel business:

burn piles: it's really hard to burn piles in conservation land meadows these days. Nagog Hill example: They are very large, and it's hard to get water to the piles. Dale will pick them up with



equipment and make smaller piles in the woods. He's started this and it seems to work well. Maybe we can do the same as Wright hill, especially after the invasives in those piles have dried up. Grassy Pond piles in woods: after 4-5 years, they shrink down.

Some **Nagog** trails have erosion/water issues. More details in report (see copy of report at end)

Reviewed how to get certified as a chain sawyer.

Also talked about chainsaw boots: Kevlar layer like chaps do. Dale recommended them.

New Grassy Pond trail: has been cut with chainsaw, and cleared, and flagged. Cub Scout troop is owning the care. All done but the blazing. It was noted as a fine example of good cooperation. There's one crossing over private land where the old trail meets the new trail. Tom Tidman has agreed to discuss this with the homeowner.

Heath Hen Meadow: (actually, Mt Hope cemetery woods). Trails were recently "unclogged" by an unauthorized user, and another trail was cut by (possibly the same) unauthorized user. We've put up signs at both ends: signs were torn down. Those signs had natural resources contact info and the persons responsible didn't contact NR. This is all on Mt. Hope lands. Reminder: we voted to put up the webcam. (but no-one has done it yet). If we could find the person we could talk to them about why we don't want them do it. Affirmed that the committee cares about it, even though it is on cemetery land.

Bettina will contact Joe Will as cemetery commissioner about how to proceed, perhaps by putting up a sign to ask the person to contact us.

Jenks: Drainage ditch is needed at Jenks, or else stuff will just keep washing away. Bettina will ask Tom if Town can do it. A new idea about a viewing area was raised in Jenks. Bettina may talk to Josh and Tom about this viewing area (boardwalk + bench). She has an accessible design in mind.

Morrison Farm trail blazing: Andrea Ristine gave OK to blaze trails. That was the last OK needed. Blazing can commence when weather is warmer. Bettina has the supplies, as does Peggy L.

Camp Acton: the future accessible camp site needs gravel to be brought in. Bettina reports highway is being asked to bring in gravel. They didn't want to do it because of various problems and issues. Bettina will continue to pursue getting this done somehow.



Bulette: Glow in the dark markers recently found are probably markers for illegal hunting at Bulette That's an area that has attracted illegal hunting in the past. We might be able to find the tree stand & report it to the environmental police. Best is if we can find a license number. Cars typically pull off of Route 2 and access this area at night.

J: Tool shed at Morrison Farm: Log books available for power equipment. Please keep recording use in the log book. We need to make sure we have a system for logging for the rest of the equipment. Bettina asked Joe, Bruce, etc., to propose a design for the insides, so Bettina can order supplies.

K: Annual Report: Bettina will draft a committee report for Joe to review.

L: For next month's agenda: proscribed burn plan.

M: The new mower: Maybe it has been run dry. Joe will double check. Gas has been taken away to ensure that next year's supply is fresh. Trailer is in the shed for this winter. Eventually we can't do that, once there's more stuff in the shed. A corner needs to be shored up in the Spring. Can Shawn sharpen a blade in the mower? There have been nicks. Advice from Bob G: don't sharpen it yet.

N: Bay Circuit Trail: This Thursday is a Bay Circuit trail alliance meeting. Still couldn't find the paperwork for easement near Sportsman's club & Robbins Brook development that will be needed for proposed reroute of the BCT to help close the gap between Carlisle section and the rest of Acton. Rock wall on that easement needs to be breached. Maybe we use that route option for 5 years while the Valentine easement and trails are developed. More at February meeting on the BCT after Joe H. and Laurie Ullmann talk it over with the BCT trail maintainers on Thursday.

O: March agenda topic: Six strong people needed for installation of the bridge at the end of Wheeler Lane. Each of those big pieces is 500 pounds. Let's attach the strapping properly & plan it out. Bob F will think plan through with Bob G.

P: Meeting Evaluation Time keeper worked well – Bruce had a phone with gentle but persistent melody. We got a little better about adhering to guidelines, and it allowed us to get through a pretty hefty agenda before 9 PM.

3. Adjournment

At 8:40 p.m., it was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting.



The motion was approved unanimously.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

- Draft Meeting minutes of December 18, 2018
- **Acton Trails website:** <http://actontrails.org>
- **Acton Trails website map:** <http://actontrails.org/map>
- “Help with maps?” email of January 15 2019 from Jim Snyder-Grant
- “blazing the trails” email of January 15 2019 from Jim Snyder-Grant
- “changes to website since last review” email of January 15 2019 from Jim Snyder-Grant

- **LSC presence on Town website:** <http://www.acton-ma.gov/633/Land-Stewardship-Committee>
- Parcel reports from Stewards:
 - Acton Arboretum** (no report from Steward)
 - Acton Canoe Launch**
 - Bulette - Town Forest**
 - Camp Acton** (no report from Steward)
 - Grassy Pond** (no report from Steward)
 - Great Hill**
 - Guggins Brook**
 - Heath Hen Meadow**
 - Jenks** (no report from Steward)
 - Nagog Hill**
 - Nashoba Brook** (no report from Steward)
 - Pacy**
 - Pratts Brook**
 - Robbins Mill** (no report from Steward)
 - Spring Hill** (no report from Steward)
 - Stoneymeade**
(no report from Steward)
 - Wetherbee**
 - Wills Hole - Town Forest**
 - Wright Hill** (no report from Steward)