

Acton
Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 19, 2019, Town Hall, Room 9, 7 P.M.

Attendees (in bold)

Regular (voting) members: **Dale Chayes, Bob Farra, Zanna Gruber**, Bob Guba, **Joe Holmes** (Chair), Bruce Rachman (Vice Chair), **Laurie Ullmann, John Watlington, Joe Will** (Minutes)

Associate (nonvoting) members: Andy Gatesman, Josh Haines, Philip Keyes, Gary Kilpatrick, Nan Towle Millett, Jim Salem, Sherman Smith, **Jim Snyder-Grant**, Jason Temple, Todd Tsakiris

Others:

Bettina Abe (Acton Natural Resources Assistant), **Larry Boisvert** (Acton Resident), **Susan Mitchell-Hardt** (Acton Conservation Trust (ACT) President), **Julia Xie** (Acton Resident)

1. Opening

Joe H opened the meeting at 7:04 p.m. with a quorum of 6 voting members present — Dale, Bob F, Zanna, Joe H, John, Joe W. Attendees introduced themselves, including Larry, who is interested in possibly becoming the Guggins Brook steward. (Later in the meeting, Julia introduced herself as someone who is exploring Town committee activities.)

2. Regular Business

Citizens' concerns

Susan informed the committee of the “American Woodcock Walk at Stoneymeade Conservation Land” on Wednesday, April 3, 2019, 6:30-7:30 p.m., rain or shine.

Review and approval of January and February minutes

It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to accept the January minutes.

Re the February minutes, Joe H mentioned some minor corrections that are unrelated to the body of the minutes. It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to accept the February minutes with Joe's corrections.

3. New/Special Business (or other applicable agenda items)

The NE Aquarium volunteer program

Joe H attended the New England Aquarium *live blue* meeting, along with 33 others, on 02/27 at the Aquarium. The *live blue* Ambassadors are looking for volunteer jobs, and want to know what type of help is needed. Joe was the only representative of a suburban group. Others represented were groups from Boston, ocean/river groups, and state-wide groups. One reason the Ambassadors come to Acton is because of two Aquarium employees from Acton. Half of the meeting time was spent networking — trying to figure out how the groups could help one another. There was no other group close enough to Acton for this to be helpful. Joe suggests that Acton need not attend the next *live blue* meeting.

Parcel Business — The public-access easement to Great Hill through the Discovery Museum

Joe H got the public-access easement document from Kristen Guichard. It says:

- The public can pass over all driveways, sidewalks, and paths;
- By foot and non-motorized vehicles;

- Only when the museum is open (regular hours, 9 am – 4:30 pm, Tuesday through Sunday).
- Parking should be for Museum users only.

Discovery Woods is the outdoors part of the Museum that is open to museum patrons. There are signs at Discovery Woods that say, “You must get a sticker to enter”. Joe checked this with the Museum office and was told that one does not need a sticker to pass through to the Great Hill Conservation Land abutting the Museum, but without a sticker one should not play in the Discovery Woods.

Joe proposed that the LSC update its website for Great Hill to say that users of Great Hill can access the Great Hill trailhead at the Discovery Museum only when the Museum is open; that they cannot park at the Museum, but can walk through Museum grounds to the trailhead without needing a museum sticker.

Parcel Business — Are all trails properly blazed?

Joe H asked for reports on trails that need reblazing, prompted by reports from trail users about lack of blazes. Trails that need blazing or reblazing:

- * Upper Robbins Mill (abutting Carlisle Road) red trail: Bob F has agreed to mark proposed blazes with ribbons to correct the temporary blazes made around the tree fall a few years back. Joe H plans to do the blazing.
- * Great Hill: John’s replacement blue trail up the southern side of the Great Hill.
- * Wills Hole: Blue trail from its west junction with the pedestrian walkway, east along the pedestrian walkway, then north along the cart path to its intersection with the yellow trail. Missing blazes were reported by a trail user.

Parcel Business — Service project for BSA Troop 1

Guggins Brook: Wood chipping at entrance to Guggins Brook. This would require supervision, something that Jim S-G, or perhaps Larry (possible new Guggins Brook steward), could provide. This would be more appropriate for Cub Scouts.

Wills Hole: Wood chipping or bog bridges at the lower end of the red trail from the Capt. Handley Road entrance.

Heath Hen Meadow (HHM) North: Wood chipping or bog bridges at a couple places along the red trail from the Central Street entrance.

Could Boy Scouts build bog bridges? (No answer.)

Parcel Business — Other

Nagog Hill: At next meeting, Dale will propose some gravel use here.

Robbins Mill: Per Bob F, the Tennessee Gas pipeline company will be mowing its right-of-way. Bob will inquire as to when, and will remove bog bridges in the right-of-way at the appropriate time. This has happened before and is “no big deal.”

Great Hill: Per John, at the northern Piper Road entrance, there is a “leaner” over an entire boardwalk. John will move the boardwalk about 20 ft for the rest of the Spring until he can take down the tree. John is keeping a list of Great Hill trees needing sawyering.

HHM: Joe H, noting the presentation of the “Beaver Solutions guy”, Mike Callahan, at the ACT Annual Meeting: Do we want to try again to fix the HHM beaver dam by the bridge or should we have the beaver people come in? Our current beaver deceivers are home-made, and they need to be larger.

The system (by the pros) at Guggins Brook is working well. There the beavers have done what they are supposed to do and water is still flowing. The committee agreed that there should be another try. Joe will contact Bettina to find whether the town is willing to ask Beaver Solutions for another quote.

Acton Trails website — Progress with moving website to new server

Per Jim S-G, the Friends of the Acton Arboretum webmaster has asked the Friends to use its hosting space to host the LSC site. Jim will share with her the info she needs to move stuff over. To users, the result will look the same as at present, the code will be the same, but it will be “at a different place in the Cloud.” A layer of administrative “stuff” will be different. Jim has not tried to ask about any legal issues re this private group serving the LSC needs.

Acton Trails website — Progress with finding new website guru

Jim S-G appealed to the volunteer list. The first person to respond said that she could probably do it, so there is progress.

Acton Trails website — Showing street addresses on Conservation Land entrances (on paper maps too)

Should the website list addresses of parking lots? Should it show addresses on “Entrances” descriptions? As an example of what an address on a map could look like, Joe H pointed out that on the Arboretum “Entrances,” there is a link for the Taylor Road entrance that shows an address (viz., of the current Taylor Road exit). Problem: A parking lot for a conservation parcel does not necessarily have a street address, e.g., the Main Street parking lot for Great Hill, also the parking for Wills Hole/Town Forest at the end of Nagog Park Drive. Dale suggests that where a unique street address exists, show the address; where there is no address or a range of addresses, put in text (not a link). The Committee agreed on the following:

- Website: Show both the address text, and a link to the location on Google Maps. The Committee will ask the new web guru to try this.
- Online maps: Click on a parking “P” to show a link to location directions on Google Maps.
- Paper maps: No need to show address information.

Acton Trails website — Other

The appeal on the front page has been expanded to needing a new steward for Guggins Brook as well as Wills Hole.

Online maps — New features

Marys Brook now shows on the Arboretum map.

4. Additional Regular Business

April agenda

To include Dale’s plans for dealing with soggy parts of Nagog Hill. Before that meeting, Jim S-G would be happy to walk with Dale and share information about the parcel from the last 20 years. Bob G has already done this. Dale will give Jim a call.

Morrison Farm activity

On mouse proofing the shed, Joe H tried a mousetrap and caught no mice over an interval of time. There are holes in the shed. Joe will schedule a mouse proofing work party. Joe has also replaced a bluebird house pole at the farm. And, he may try to schedule a work party for improving the edge of the meadow. Dale would check to see if he could bring his tractor to the meadow. The farm’s muddy

parking area was also discussed.

Other

Bettina provided information on the “Amphibian Crossing Brigade” that would help with amphibians (frogs, salamanders, etc.) crossing For Pond Road at night sometime later in March. Right now, there is too much snow cover and ice. Amy Green on the Acton Conservation Commission can provide more information. Jim will send the title of a Crossing Brigade handbook that has lots of information of the activity.

Evaluate meeting

It went quick; was very good; people are getting better.

5. Adjournment

At 8:21 p.m., it was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, April 16, at 7 P.M., in Room 9.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

- Revised meeting minutes of January 15, 2019
- Draft meeting minutes of February 19, 2019
- ACT flyer on its American Woodcock Walk, April 3, 2019
- Acton Trails website: <http://actontrails.org>
- Acton Trails website map: <http://actontrails.org/map>
- Discovery Museum Public Access Easement April 25, 2016, MSRoD Book 67314, page 536

Parcel reports emailed from Stewards since the last meeting:

- Acton Arboretum: “Arboretum” sent 3/17/19
- Acton Canoe Launch: “Acton Canoe Launch Report, March 2019” sent 3/14/19
- Bulette - Town Forest: “Bulette March 2019 status” sent 3/19/19
- Camp Acton: No report from steward
- Grassy Pond: No report from steward
- Great Hill: “Great Hill Trail Update (March)” sent 3/18/19
- Guggins Brook: “Guggins report” sent 3/17/19
- Heath Hen Meadow: “Heath Hen Meadow report” sent 3/17/19
- Jenks: “Jenks Report” sent 3/17/19
- “Jenks Report – Update” sent 3/17/19
- Nagog Hill: “Nagog Hill” sent 3/14/19
- Nashoba Brook: Nashoba Brook parcel” sent 3/17/19
- Pacy: “Pacy Update” sent 3/19/19
- Pratts Brook: “Pratts Brook report” sent 3/19/19
- Robbins Mill: “RM March Report” sent 3/17/19
- Spring Hill: “Spring Hill Report” sent 3/19/19
- Stoneymeade: No report from steward
- Wetherbee: No report from steward by meeting time
- Wills Hole - Town Forest: No report from steward
- Wright Hill: “Wright Hill – March report” sent 3/19/19