

**Acton**  
**Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, May 21, 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: Larry Boisvert, Andy Gatesman, Josh Haines, Philip Keyes, Gary Kilpatrick, Nan Towle Millett, **Aaron Moore**, Jim Salem, **Sherman Smith**, **Jim Snyder-Grant**, Jason Temple, Todd Tsakiris

Others:

**Bettina Abe** (Acton Natural Resources Assistant), **Pete Church** (Littleton resident, member of Acton's Church of the Good Shepherd), **Brian Dranka** (Acton resident), **Susan Mitchell-Hardt** (Acton Conservation Trust (ACT) President),

**1. Opening**

Joe H opened the meeting at 7:02 p.m. with a quorum of 6 voting members present — Joe H, Joe W, Bob G, Bruce, Laurie, John.

**2. Regular Business**

Citizens' concerns

none

Review and approval of April minutes

Bob asked, "Who is Tom L?" referenced by Dale in his report on Nagog Hill Trail Improvements. Tom L was an Eagle Scout a long time ago. (Dale had not yet arrived at this meeting, so he was unable to respond, and "Tom L" will remain unchanged in the minutes.)

- Bob also asked that the minutes include his important suggestion that the yellow cross-trail down by Nagog Pond be relocated to get it off Town of Concord property and onto Acton Conservation Land.
- Remove "draft" from title of the table listing parcel reports from stewards
- Fix spelling of "Terra Friedrichs" in list of attendees.
- Per Jim: Change "Jim S-G demonstrated that the Arboretum parking is latitude and longitude referenced" to "Jim S-G showed that the website page for the Arboretum has a link to the parking lot that uses latitude and longitude in the link. It's a prototype we can use elsewhere."

It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to accept the minutes with the bulleted corrections shown above.

Committee membership

Aaron was sworn in today as an Associate member. He will be steward of Wills Hole/Town Forest, replacing Joe W. Joe W will be steward of Morrison Farm. Larry Boisvert was approved as an Associate member by the Board of Selectmen and has to be sworn in. He will be steward of Guggins Brook, replacing Jim. There is a long list of members who must take care of their reappointments for next year (which starts July 1), including all the Associate members. Joe W will update the membership list for July 1.

### Parcel Issues: “Grassy Pond West”, or what?

Is the recently-acquired land abutting Grassy Pond, and sometimes referred to colloquially as “Grassy Pond West,” to be part of “Grassy Pond”? There is an official policy on how to name parcels and, as of now, no name for this parcel has been legally mandated. Its Conservation Restriction (CR) does not specify a name. The LSC can propose a name and forward it to the Conservation Commission for its approval. There is a precedent: The Gaebel land along Piper Road and adjoining the Great Hill CL was given the name “Great Hill.”

It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to recommend that this recently-acquired land be part of the Grassy Pond CL. Joe H will see that this gets on a Conservation Commission agenda.

Related discussion points:

- All parcels purchased with Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds have CRs. Each CL write up on the “Acton Trails” website should mention CPA involvement in the acquisition and any CR, should either apply, as would be the case now for this portion of Grassy Pond.
- The Grassy Pond description should also mention the native American stone piles on this new portion.
- If a CL description refers to a CR, then it should also tell what body is officially monitoring the CR. Also, it’s important for people to know what a CR is. Google maps frequently recognize CRs.
- Google maps is not interested in updating CL names. OpenStreetMap does such updating, as does GAIA on its maps

Cub Scouts role:

The LSC had previously agreed that the Cub Scout Pack that meets at the Church of the Good Shepherd across Newtown Road from the entrance to the newly-acquired parcel could help with its maintenance, particularly of the new trail that crosses it. The Pack and Church subsequently asked its member, Pete, to help the scouts with this, and Pete came to this meeting to find out about process. The scouts would mainly take responsibility for maintenance of the trail, keeping it open, reporting downed trees that may be blocking it, etc. There should be a sign at the trail entrance, and the scouts could be involved with installing it. (The Town should move a rock to make a 4-ft wide opening at the entrance.) So, Pete will be the scouts’ adult liaison with the LSC regarding this part of Grassy Pond. It would be nice to meet with Pete on the parcel and “go over things.”

Additional discussion points:

- The LSC should use what it has said regarding help from the scouts as policy, or as a stock response, for it to give to anyone who wants to help.
- What is view of the Church on the use of its parking lot by Grassy Pond users? The Church is open to it.
- What about blazing (in general)?

Per Jim: Peggy Liversidge is still doing blazing but would like people to work with her to learn so they can take over. Jim is looking for a new person. He is thinking about asking for volunteers from the volunteer list. Bettina trained Peggy and described the blazing process, noting that, while the trail on the new parcel needs blazing yet, blazing would not a good activity for young folks like the scouts. Are there any stewards who would want to blaze their own trails, particularly short segments? If yes, contact Bettina. She has all the equipment, the know-how, and the specifications. How does the Committee feel about this? To some it makes sense that stewards can do it if they want to, but they don’t have to. To others, there is need for a skilled blazer. Wait time on a blazing request has seemed to be about a year. Stewards can, of course, report blazing problems to the committee.

### Parcel Issues: Nashoba Brook: Wheeler Mill sluice restoration

The bridge is on site. Bob explained how the bridge would be installed with the existing abutments. He also described problems with the walls of the sluice. Bob has talked with Tom Tidman on site. Both agreed that the best way to install it would be to lift it and drop it in place. There would be some clearance issues with overhanging tree branches. Tom talked with his crew chief, Shawn O'Malley, who thought his crew could lift the bridge and slide it across. Shawn is presently planning how to do this. Tom has assured Bob that the Town will install the bridge, and Bob said that Tom is to contact him (Bob) when it will happen because once the bridge is in place, its planks have to be put down immediately. The LSC will hold Tom accountable if nothing happens in a month.

Tom does not want to hire stonemasons to fix the walls of the sluice. But, could he request a quote from a stonemason to find out cost so that next fall the LSC can apply for CPA funds to fix the walls? In order for the Town to get a quote, Bettina would have to meet Bob on site to help her learn specifics of the necessary work.

### Parcel Issues: Brainstorm summer projects

Per Joe H: We have lots of volunteers. We will try to brainstorm what we want to do this summer so that we can put out requests for their help. We need to advertise a few weeks in advance of a project. Joe has already gotten one volunteer for a project. Also, he's contacted the New England Aquarium for its volunteers to do Japanese knotweed removal at the Canoe Launch this summer.

Bruce: At the Camp Acton handicapped accessible campsite, the scouts are doing lots, but around the site there will be a lot of ground that will need to be "naturalized" instead of showing dirt. Leveling will be done this week. Bruce could monitor such a volunteer project.

Bob, reinforced by Bettina: That's key. Volunteers need someone on site supervising them.

Laurie: The AMC (Appalachian Mountain Club) has work projects. They are always available, but couldn't help with this Camp Acton project.

John: Dealing with invasives is a Spring activity. It gets harder later in the year. Also, wood chipping could be done by volunteers.

Jim: Guggins Brook could use wood chipping at the Mass Ave entrance; also, help with digging post holes for moving the Central Street sign.

Joe: At the Arboretum, there could be a late Fall removal of the remains of the old bog boardwalk. Although virtually out of sight, the remains are still exuding creosote.

Zanna: At Heath Hen Meadow (HHM), the Prescott Road red trail entrance is a lake. Also, it's a bittersweet nightmare — totally overgrown. The bittersweet needs pulling. Bettina will meet with Zanna to see if she can give Zanna any suggestions. Joe H: We could use a bridge there. Bruce: At the beaver dam bridge, a section of boardwalk on the cemetery end could be replaced. A discussion of the HHM beaver problem ensued. Joe H and Bettina still have to meet with Tom Tidman on the HHM beavers.

Also, there was discussion on the LSC volunteer list. One should talk to Bettina or Joe H on how to use the list. To clean up the list, Joe will send a note to the volunteers asking if they want to continue on the list. Other users of the list could help clean it up.

### Parcel Issues: Other

– Nashoba Brook, Great Hill, and elsewhere:

There are certain parking lots that need attention, e.g., At the end of Wheeler Lane and in the Great Hill parking across from Ace Hardware — potholes! The Town worked on some parking lots last year, but not this year. John nearly lost a muffler on the Camp Acton access road. Bruce has asked the Town many times to address this, but with no result. There are certain parking lots that should be paved because of damage that they otherwise receive in the Spring. The aforementioned Great Hill lot needs some drainage because there is a spring up the hill from the lot. Certain parking lots should be on next month's agenda.

– Morrison Farm:

At a previous meeting, work needed on the shed was discussed. Bob agrees with the exterior work that was proposed. As for the interior, he points out that no one has inventoried all the equipment that he has at his home, including “boxes and boxes” of hardware. Before fixing up the interior, the LSC should have an idea of what is to go into the shed. There should be a subcommittee that meets offline, inventories LSC equipment, and draws up a plan for the inside of the shed. Bob and Joe H and whoever will be on the subcommittee need to get together and plan. Bettina pointed out that with the new fiscal year, she will have a budget. That could help with the planning. Per Bob's experience: You need a strong person to head any project to make sure it gets done.

Joe H has moved the trailer from the shed. It will not go into the shed again because of fit. The field mower can be moved now on the trailer. Mower instructions are with the mower.

– On native-people sites:

Per Bettina: There are lots of Native American landscape stone ritual sites all over the world, including in the Acton-Littleton area, and particularly on Acton CLs. The Discovery Museum recently hosted a talk on advances made in protecting Native American artifacts. Bettina will be leading a walk on the Trail Through Time (TTT) in October, explaining what the TTT stone piles mean. She is coordinating the walk with Linda McElroy, and as she learns more, she will share with the LSC.

– Camp Acton:

Bruce: There's a roof on a Camp Acton kiosk that could be used in another parcel. Suggestion: The Grassy Pond Newtown Road kiosk roof is rotted. This would be perfect for it. Also, there is a rotted sign at the Camp Acton entrance. Bruce will take it down and Bettina will put up a parking information sign.

– Nashoba Brook:

Laurie shared a sign for a dog-walking business that had been posted on the Davis Road kiosk. Laurie will call the apparent owner of the business.

– Grassy Pond:

Joe H e-mailed Tom Tidman today inquiring about any Town plans for the Newtown Road parking lot.

– Morrison Farm:

It's time to blaze the Morrison Farm trails.

### Acton Trails website issues: Progress with moving website to new server

Peg Sestrich will see that it is moved by the middle of June, before she leaves on vacation.

### Acton Trails website issues: Progress with finding new website guru

It's Peg Sestrich. Peg, Bettina, and Town IT Director Mark Hall will be meeting next Thursday

### Acton Trails website issues: Other

Peg Sestrich, working closely with Bettina and Linda McElroy, will make the TTT website part of the LSC website.

### Online maps new features

None

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

### Invasives work

Jim wants to continue working on removing invasives after he is no longer a steward. To that end, he would like a letter from Tom Tidman for permission to remove invasive species. In working with stewards, if a proposed removal is of stuff “bigger than” non-woody vegetation (like garlic mustard), then Jim would like to first review the intended work with the steward. Another arrangement that might be good would be to have someone on the LSC (John?) who would be interested in coordinating the LSC website with Jim. Jim would continue to work with volunteers, so he would like occasional permission to use the volunteer list.

Bruce: There is a lot of buckthorn at Camp Acton. There is also a lot at Great Hill and the Canoe Launch. A discussion ensued on removing buckthorn.

There are prison work details that can come out to do invasives (and other) work.

John: There’s an infinite amount of invasives work that can be done. Anyone interested could talk with Jim or John.

### Sawyers’ communication

Dale expressed concern that he would send emails to the LSC sawyers’ list, the sawyers would inevitably act on his issues, but he would never hear about it, i.e., no response to him from anyone, and he was even ready to offer his assistance. The ensuing discussion suggested that the problem was email that was bouncing, or being filtered as spam. In any case, the LSC can add Dale to its sawyers’ list. Jim will put him on it.

Joe H suggests this process: Send tree-down information to the sawyer’ list. A sawyer will give notice to the list and the informer that s/he is about to go out and tend to the tree. When done, the sawyer sends a note that the job is done.

### Orienteering/map and compass training site

Dale is a hunter ed instructor. He would like to have two local sets of permanent markers to support that work. One set would be alongside an open field (e.g., the field at Grassy Pond). Another would be in woods (e.g., Camp Acton, Spring Hill, Nashoba Brook). A student gets a worksheet that would involve the student with the markers. The other committee members were supportive of Dale’s intentions, so Dale will make a more detailed presentation next month and include a proposal for the Committee to vote on.

The orienteering markers placed by the Discovery Museum at Great Hill were mentioned to Dale, and he will check them out.

## **4. Additional Regular Business**

Next month's (June 18) agenda

- Parcel parking lots and parking-lot access.
- More on Dale's proposal for an orienteering/map and compass training site [Clerk's note: This will be delayed until the July meeting.]

Evaluate meeting

Like usual, we started pretty well. Around 8:30, we turned into a bunch of wild cats and randomly spoke of things that showed up in our heads. This really slows down the meeting. In general, though, the meeting was nice. We talked about lots of things.

**5. Adjournment**

At 8:48 p.m., it was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

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

**Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting**

- Draft Meeting Minutes of April 16, 2019
- **Acton Trails website:** <http://actontrails.org>
- **Acton Trails website map:** <http://actontrails.org/map>
- "Help wanted with LSC shed" email sent 5/16/2019
- "Open Meeting Law constrains how we use email" email sent 5/21/2019
- "Seth's Dog Walking" sign taken down from Nashoba Brook Davis Road kiosk

**Parcel reports emailed from stewards since the last meeting:**

Parcel Name	Email Title	Date Sent
Acton Arboretum	"Arboretum report"	5/19/2019
	"Re: Arboretum report"	5/20/2019
Acton Canoe Launch	"Acton Canoe Launch Report, May 2019"	5/19/2019
Bulette - Town Forest	"Bulette status - May 2019"	5/20/2019
Camp Acton	"Camp Acton Report May 2019"	5/21/2019
Grassy Pond	No report from steward	
Great Hill	"Great Hill Trail Update (May)"	5/20/2019
Guggins Brook	"Guggins report – May 2019"	5/17/2019
Heath Hen Meadow	"Heath Hen Meadow report"	5/21/2019
Jenks	"Jenks Report"	5/19/2019
Nagog Hill	"Nagog Hill report 2019-05-18"	5/18/2019
	"Updated - Nagog Hill report 2019-05-18"	5/20/2019
Nashoba Brook	"Nashoba Brook report"	5/20/2019
Pacy	"Pacy April Update"	4/21/2019
	"Pacy May Update"	5/21/2019

Pratts Brook	“Pratts Brook report”	5/21/2019
Robbins Mill	“Robbins Mill”	5/21/2019
Spring Hill	“Spring Hill Update”	4/22/2019
	No May report from steward by meeting time	
Stoneymeade	No report from steward	
Wetherbee	“Wetherbee Report”	5/18/2019
Wills Hole - Town Forest	No report from steward by meeting time	
Wright Hill	“Wright Hill May report: The war on invasives cont’d”	5/21/2019
	“Re: Wright Hill May report: The war on invasives cont’d”	5/21/2019