

**Acton**  
**Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, July 16, 2019, Town Hall, Room 9, 7 P.M.**

Attendees (in bold)

Regular (voting) members: **Dale Chayes, Bob Farra, Zanna Gruber** (Vice-Chair-Elect), **Bob Guba, Joe Holmes** (Chair), **Bruce Rachman** (Vice Chair, Chair-Elect), 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, Jason Temple, Todd Tsakiris

Others:

**Dean Charter** (Acton Board of Selectmen), **Susan Mitchell-Hardt** (Acton Conservation Trust (ACT) President)

Joe H called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. with a quorum of 7 voting members present — Bob F, Zanna, Bob G, Joe H, Bruce, John, Joe W. Bob F was appointed timekeeper.

Citizens' concerns: None

Review and approval of June minutes

Bob G noted the reference to a new 2-gallon fuel tank to use for fueling the mower and pointed out that we have a good 5-gallon tank that could be used.

Per Joe H, the reference to the trailer's presence at the shed should read:

The trailer has been parked to a side of the shed. The town seems to be mowing around the shed. Each time you use the mower, be sure to mow where the trailer is, so it does not get stuck in tall grass.

Per Joe H, have the "Online maps new features" section read:

Jim described a new feature where one can add place-marks, such as "tree down" w/arrows, to a map, then mail the url to anyone. This will be demonstrated at the next meeting.

Approval of the minutes with changes noted above was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously.

LSC Officers for 2019-2020

Bruce for Chair, Zanna for Vice-Chair, and Joe W for Clerk were moved, seconded, and voted unanimously.

Parcel Issues

• Nagog Hill: Orienteering/map and compass training site

Dale showed a slide of what an orienteering marker could look like: a pressure-treated 4-by-4 post permanently in the ground and rising 4 ft above the ground w/pin patterns on it to be used for punching participants' cards. Another type of marker for an open-field course would be set at ground level. For an open-field course, Dale can identify two possible meadow sites at Nagog Hill. Both would be at least 100' by 100' and he would mow them.

Dale's second slide showed a map of the orienteering course set up in Westminster, MA, that is used for hunter education for which he is evolving to be its instructor. Dale would like a course further east in

Massachusetts, possibly at Great Hill, that could be used for hunter education. Other uses for such a course could include competitive orienteering, search-and-rescue training, and qualifying for the Boy Scout orienteering merit badge.

What Dale is asking of the LSC: To set up an orienteering course in Acton. Nagog Hill would be plenty big enough. Questions/observations:

- How many people would take, say, a hunters' ed course using such an orienteering course? 15 to 20 people.
- If there would be such an instructional course here, it would have to use some meeting room in Town first.
- There is clear precedent for such an orienteering course. Natural Resources has approved the one at Great Hill.

Action item: Dale will come to the LSC with a more detailed formal proposition that the LSC can vote on, most likely at the August meeting. It would include a map showing a Nagog Hill layout for such a course; also, information on who would pay for its installation.

Dale has not yet had a chance to follow up on the Discovery Museum's orienteering project at Great Hill.

- Nashoba Brook bridges

On the installation over the sluiceway at Wheeler Lane, Joe H e-mailed Tom Tidman once. No response. Bruce talked with Shawn O'Malley about it. There are several ideas working for its installation.

A discussion ensued on the bridge, its footings, its installation, and the repairs needed for the sluiceway.

- You can put the bridge across, then sit back and wait. One of the footings may seem insecure (a tilted block that has been that way for years), but it is down from where the bridge will be.
- Bettina did get someone to quote on the sluiceway work, but the person would like to do the work with the bridge not there, and with knowledge on what would happen to the dam.
- Is there CPA \$ to repair the sluiceway? Linda McElroy may have some yet.
- Why not install the bridge by sliding it out? The bridge is not a "slide-able" thing.
- At the last meeting, it was decided that the Town would do it, or we would do it ourselves.
- Bob and company have done their job. Now it's up to others to get the bridge in place.

Bruce: Putting the bridge into place is in the Town's hands. Bruce is sure it will get done. Bruce will talk with Tom. Bruce also has delivered the Chinese bridge to the Arboretum where it is waiting for Shawn to put down the granite for that bridge's footings.

At the pencil factory:

Bob G reviewed the problems with a bridge at this site; there needing to be a lot of prep work before a bridge could be installed. If there would be \$ available because of the historical nature of the project, that would be great, but there would be the added obligation to do the project so that it would be historically correct.

This project has been of great interest to Laurie Ullman (absent), the parcel's steward, so the LSC will table it until Laurie can participate.

Also noted: A tree has fallen at the pencil factory and one can walk across the brook on it.

- Nashoba Brook pest house work

John: Cleaning trees out of the pest house foundation (see LSC 06/18/19 minutes) is a bad idea because of what would grow there. What's there would become less visible than it is now. You don't want to make a clearing in the woods.

Discussion: John suggests that the LSC leave the trees untouched. Joe H pointed out that the LSC has given Linda McElroy permission to do the clearing of the foundation. John pointed out that the foundation has been cleared and five big trees, "yea big around" and 60-70 ft tall, are growing in the middle of the basement. An e-mail has gone out to sawyers asking them to do the removal, but to remove them might require professional tree removers, including a climber and special equipment (and \$). Right now, there is a healthy canopy. When a tree falls, it will do damage to the foundation. Cut the tree high enough and it won't hit the foundation. To cut it right is not in line with sawyer training. Maintaining the site (long-term) is another story. Leaving trees there will wreck the site. Cutting them will wreck the site if there is not a plan. Standard tree-cutting procedures will damage the structure. We should kick this back to Linda and suggest that she get a professional cutter and also consider long-term maintenance.

Bruce, as a sawyer, will pen the e-mail to Linda.

- "Special Town Forest Committee"

The Acton Water District is considering running a water line between Quarry Road and Nagog Park along the fire road, or pedestrian pathway, that runs through the Town Forest joining the Quarry Road and Nagog Park entrances. Question: Who approves this?

Dean provided background information. Historically, there was a three-person Town Forest Committee to oversee the two town forests — now the Town Forest portions of the Wills Hole/Town Forest parcel, and the Bulette parcel. In the early '80s, Town Forest Committee responsibilities were turned over to the Conservation Commission. Now the Town, which thinks it would be beneficial to have this water line, needs a Town Forest Committee to approve or disapprove such a water line. It was voted by the Board of Selectmen to appoint the Conservation Commission as the Town Forest Committee for the purpose of acting on the water line proposal. Purportedly, the new Town Forest Committee will ask the LSC for its advice on the water line.

Are there engineering plans for this water line? Not that is known at present.

The LSC should see what is being proposed. There should be a conceptual design before engineering plans. The sooner the LSC can look at these, the better. The LSC could reach out to the Town and the Water District to find out what the plans are.

There will have to be a wetlands filing.

There are Town Forest regulations. Susan looked up the state's "level of protection" for Town Forests (Article 97) and pointed out that this may have to go to Town Meeting and the State Legislature if it is a "change of use" (as legally defined).

It was pointed out that the suggested water line could also provide a conduit for electrical services that would make nighttime illumination of the pedestrian pathway (such as for the July 4 NARA celebration) easier than it currently is.

Action item: The LSC should get plans for this project and learn whether this would be a “change of use.”

- Heath Hen Meadow Dam/Beavers

Joe H and Bettina met with Mike Callahan of “Beaver Solutions” on a pipe system to help control the water flow of Heath Hen Meadow Brook through the dam below the bridge. There is no cost quote yet, but Mike will provide one. Mike is doing something similar for the same stream in Stow. The two existing pipes (in Acton) are floating, except where they are wedged in under the bridge. Mike suggests that Acton should eliminate the float. Joe H thinks that this could be done with the current pipes; a volunteer could do the necessary cutting. The pipes would have to be recovered anyway. There is also a need for a bigger cage around the upstream end of the current pipes.

The LSC will wait for Mike’s proposal, and a possible vote.

- Camp Acton

Bruce is happy to announce that the accessible campsite has an accessible boardwalk. In the next few weeks it will have an accessible kiosk. Bruce has requested help from Tom Tidman to fix the Camp Acton gate.

- Other Issues

The mower — It looks like the mower got dropped on its left front wheel. Although the mower is usable as is, that wheel needs attention. The wheel needs to be replaced or the mower should be taken to a professional for fixing. John will take the lead on this. First, he will get a price on replacing the wheel. A field-mower discussion ensued.

### Website Issues

The site had been down. It is running again.

It’s still on Bruce’s server. The Town has the information it needs but has not yet transferred the url to point to the Town server. It is definite that the Town will take it on, and at some point in time it will be on the Town server.

We need someone in town (Bettina?) to take over management of the sawyers (e-mail) list that Jim Snyder-Grant had started as a Google group.

### Online maps new features, place-marks demo

One new-feature demo: Joe H showed how, if one locates a tree down for instance, one can mark its location on the Acton Trails map for a that parcel, annotate if necessary, and e-mail the marked map w/annotation.

Bruce: There may be a way to highlight new map features. This would include providing stewards with a write-up on each feature.

John Campbell is a new volunteer on the mapping committee, joining Joe H and Jim Snyder-Grant.

Bruce is wondering whether the Acton Trails maps should use LIDAR (Light Detection And Ranging) technology.

### August agenda

If Dale is in town, he may come with a proposal. (See earlier item on “Orienteering/map and compass

training site.”)

Evaluate meeting

It was lovely. There needs to be a Snack Subcommittee.

The meeting adjourned at 8:33 P.M.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, August 20, at 7 P.M., in Room 9.

**Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting**

- Draft Meeting Minutes of July 16, 2019