

**Acton**  
**Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, February 18, 2020, Town Hall, Room 9, 7 P.M.**

Attendees (in bold)

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

Others:

**Bettina Abe** (Acton Natural Resources Assistant), **Susan Mitchell-Hardt** (Acton Conservation Trust (ACT) President)

**1. Opening**

Bruce opened the meeting at 7:01 p.m. with a quorum of 5 voting members present — Dale, Joe H, Bruce, Laurie, Joe W.

**2. Regular Business**

Review and approval of January minutes

Approval was moved and voted unanimously.

Citizens' concerns

Susan announced that Laurie will receive the 2020 Carol Holley Conservation Volunteer Award at the March 15 Annual Meeting of the ACT.

There was continuing discussion on how to recognize Bob Guba, recently retired from the LSC.

Parcel Issues

• Nashoba Brook

Joe W inquired of Bill Dickinson, Chair of the Acton Historical Commission (AHC) as to any developments at the AHC on placing a bridge at the pencil factory. Bill e-responded, "I . . . have not advanced the bridge project much lately. Still working on a few conceptual designs and getting estimates. My plan is to run by some proposed designs in the AHC meeting and then bring them in front of your committee in the next few months."

• Nagog Hill

Hybid Farm put in new fencing and left debris on Conservation Land (CL). Dale and Bettina have been talking with the Property Manager about this. It's Hybid's responsibility to clean up the debris. Bettina will send Dale a copy of Hybid's agreement with the Town on Hybid's use of the CL.

Bettina has reminded Tom Tidman that the large meadow behind the farm needs mowing, and it could be done when it's frozen and there's no snow. If the Town mows the meadow, Dale will tend to some details, such as mowing the meadow's edges.

• Camp Acton

Bruce would like to see if the Town could at least fill with gravel the ruts in the driveway.

- Great Hill

The Main Street parking lot needs some gravel treatment. Joe H would like the Town Engineer to approve what Joe would like to have done and offer Joe suggestions on how to do it, but the Town Engineer position currently is vacant. Joe will try to go through Tom Tidman on this. It would be even better if such repair requests would come from Bruce as Chair of the LSC.

At the parking lot behind the South Acton Fire Station, the blue sign for handicapped parking was knocked down by a snow plow a year ago. The LSC could contact the Acton Commission on Disabilities to help in getting this fixed.

- Robbins Mill

Bob Farra had mentioned the need for bog bridges, particularly at a spot in the middle of the main trail where there is a springtime flow of water that can be over a foot deep. Bruce could supervise their construction by scouts. If this could somehow be related to the Bay Circuit Trail, Appalachian Mountain Club volunteers could possibly do it. The AMC did put in a couple bog bridges on the yellow trail at Spring Hill. Bruce will be in touch with Bob on this, and will have to let Bettina know of scouts and supplies needed.

#### Online maps new features

Joe H has blazed (6 new blazes, 7 in all) the Wills Hole short red trail from Harris Street, as it is a designated red trail on the map. Joe also confirmed that the map is accurate where it shows a portion of the yellow trail crossing private property. It was noted that a small portion of the red trail from Captain Handley Road also crosses private property.

### **3. New/Special Business**

#### New steward needed

A new steward is needed for Stoneymeade CL. Bettina says that this has been posted on the LSC website. Bettina will put a sign on the Stoneymeade kiosk as well.

#### Meeting Thursday with Carlisle Conservation

There is a meeting with Sylvia Willard, Administrator for the Carlisle Conservation Commission (CCC), tomorrow at 10 am at Town Hall. She wants to discuss connections of Carlisle and Acton trails. The LSC is willing to work with the CCC if the CCC has ideas to offer beyond the connections that currently exist.

#### ABRHS Senior Community Service Day project ideas

Project proposals are due 02/28.

#### Other

Bettina listed Eagle Scout candidates and their possible Eagle projects:

Tom Vaille: A 50-foot boardwalk at Guggins Brook

Sam Cluett: A ramp at each end of the south bridge at Nashoba Brook

Nathan Wolf: 60 feet of bog bridges at Nashoba Brook

Aiden Watson: Add footage to Tom Vaille's boardwalk (see above), or at the Massachusetts Avenue entrance to Guggins Brook

Ensuring discussion points related to these projects:

- Tom’s project is “set” at Guggins. Bettina sketched where the boardwalk will be. She noted that once the outer blue trail is boardwalked all the way, it could become the yellow trail, which would better encircle the parcel.
- Bettina showed what Sam would do at each end of the bridge: For the west end, two simple steps, no need for a ramp. For the east end, a ramp with 2-by-4 cross pieces for traction. Bruce strongly urged that before allowing such a project, the structural integrity of the bridge be investigated. Bruce and Laurie will do so. Bettina will accompany, if possible. In the meantime, Bettina will tell Sam, “Maybe.”
- Nathan’s project has been confirmed. Its location is the wet area near the pest house where a stream flows through intermittently.
- Aiden would like to add more footage at Guggins, but Guggins’ steward might feel that the Mass Avenue entrance may have a greater need. Bettina will ask the steward and let him decide on Aiden’s project. (Clerk’s note: The Mass Avenue steward resigned from the LSC a couple days following this meeting.)

Related discussion: Why talk about new boardwalks? Building more boardwalks just makes more work for us. We need a (bog) boardwalk fix at the Arboretum. What wasn’t replaced previously needs replacement now.

Unrelated discussions: The LSC had voted to include the Assabet River Blue and Green Trail parcel with the parcels it stewards. The name originated with OARS (Organization for the Assabet River), with “blue” suggesting water and green suggesting land. Bettina will provide a write-up of the “Assabet River BGT” for the LSC website.

- Will the parcel known as the Caouette-Simeone Farm retain that name? There is a procedure for naming parcels — to be reviewed at a later meeting.

Per Bettina: There will be two-day chainsaw training in March. John advises that any sawyers should have the third day of training — hands-on training in “bucking” (cutting a felled tree and its branches up into shorter lengths) and cleanup.

Bruce mentioned that there is interest in Acton in establishing a “pump track” for mountain biking enthusiasts. Points made in the ensuring discussion:

- Per Bettina: At the Assabet River BGT, a second parking lot on Adams Street was not done. Tom Tidman has said that this area would be perfect for a pump track. Perhaps the LSC could have a chainsaw party to help build this lot. Its absence might interfere with requests for future grants.
- The Town will not allow a pump track on Department of Public Works land (north of NARA).
- What about WR Grace land?
- Can there be a pump track on CL? The Town Forest would be an excellent site for one.
- Land Steward Phil Keyes is Executive Director of the New England Mountain Bike Association.
- Bruce will forward an email to Bettina related to the Acton folks who are working on establishing a pump track.

#### **4. Additional Regular Business**

##### Next month’s (March 17, 2020) agenda

- Inspections and repairs: Structural integrity of the south bridge at Nashoba Brook, Great Hill’s Main Street parking lot, the Camp Acton driveway; communication with Tom Tidman and Town Engineer
- Pump track

- More bog bridges
- Parcel names

Evaluate meeting

“It was wicked fun.”

**5. Adjournment**

At 8:13 p.m., it was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, March 17, at 7 p.m., in Room 9.

**Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting**

- Draft Meeting Minutes of January 21, 2020