

Land Stewardship Committee Meeting Minutes
June 15, 2011, 4:00 PM
Acton Town Hall

Regular (voting) members present: Bettina Abe, Tom Arnold (temporary appointment as regular member), Joan Cirillo, Philip Keyes, Peggy Liversidge (minute-taker), Jim Snyder-Grant (chair)

Associate (nonvoting) members present: Bob Guba

Nonmembers present: Tom Tidman (Director of Natural Resources and LSCom's Town staff liaison)

Temporary appointment of regular member: When the meeting began only four regular members were present, so in order to have a quorum, associate member Tom A. was temporarily appointed a regular (voting) member for the duration of the meeting.

May meeting minutes: The May meeting minutes in the "blackline" form submitted by Joan were briefly discussed. It was verified that the wording was the same as in the last submitted minutes, with formatting added to show changes. Peggy suggested that in the Camp Acton item, the "lower gate" instead be referred to as "the gate closest to Pope Road." The minutes were then approved with this change.

Postponement of June 25 potluck: Tom A., who has offered to take a lead role in organizing this event, realized after last month's meeting that he had a prior out-of-town commitment for that date, so the event is being postponed. The new date tentatively agreed to was the Monday of Labor Day weekend, September 5; that will be finalized after Jim has a chance to check the availability of the New View Common House.

In order to try to get a larger turnout than we sometimes do, it was suggested that, in addition to the volunteer list, we invite Eagle Scouts who have done projects for us and their families, as well as anyone else who has helped out in some way on conservation lands.

Jenks bench: Tom A. will be attending tonight's ConsCom meeting and presenting the ideas for a bench at Jenks as in the May meeting minutes.

Robbins Mill Pond: Jim has created a map that combines the Spring Hill/Nashoba Brook/Camp Acton conservation lands, the Scout land, the Robbins Mill residential development, and the open space that the Town acquired from the developers. The Scout land, which is privately owned and administered by three trustees for use by local Scout troops, is in the middle of the open space acquired from the developers, and Jim has been trying to reach Bill Klauer, the most active of those trustees, to discuss a possible trail easement across their land. This would connect the larger portion of the new Town open space, which abuts Spring Hill and Nashoba Brook, with the portion of that space that borders on Robbins Mill Pond. The discussion with Bill Klauer is incomplete, so Jim will report on it later.

Concerning possible trails on the new land, Philip noted that Linda McElroy has determined that there is not a sufficient density of Native American artifacts (stone piles) in this area to warrant Trail Through Time (TTT) interest, so trails on the land can be laid out without that consideration. The only TTT-related site on that land that Linda currently recommends paying attention to in trail layout is the upthrust rock quarry near the pond that may have been the source for the stone chamber capstones.

Parts of the old turnpike to Concord have also been mentioned by Linda as a reasonable target for a trail or a trail crossing.

Tom A. raised the question of whether a CR is needed to keep the open space permanently protected. Jim said that he thinks it is currently designated as municipal land restricted for passive recreation and that it has state Article 97 protection, all of which offers some protection against its being put to some future use other than conservation land, but a CR might be a way to gain greater protection. Tom A. added that a clearer process and an agreed-upon form for writing CRs are needed, since there are currently many possible wordings.

The question was raised of a possible name for the new land (e.g., whether it might continue to be called the Robbins Mill or the Robbins Mill Pond land or be considered an extension of either Spring Hill or Nashoba Brook, both of which it abuts, or some other possibility). This will be an agenda item for a future meeting.

Committee reappointments: Jim stated that the three regular committee members whose three-year terms expire this year (Philip Keyes, Peggy Liversidge, and Nan Towle Millett) have indicated they will all continue for another term. He also noted that Dave Cochrane, a regular member who has not been able to attend most meetings this year because of his teaching schedule, has told Jim that his schedule next year will allow him to attend more regularly.

Garlic mustard: Jim stated that the garlic mustard picking season is over for this year. He and some helpers made good progress at Wheeler Lane this year and made some progress at the Arboretum, Guggins, and Jenks. Some work was also done at Nagog Hill until it became clear just how large an area that infestation covers. Nan Millett has agreed to work with Jim next winter to pre-plan and get the word out in the hope of recruiting more volunteers.

OSRP: Jim reported that he has been working with ConsCom member Fran Portante and with Tom Tidman on the inventory portion of the OSRP document. This will include shortened versions of our parcel descriptions.

Guidebook: Peggy stated that she has received responses about the guidebook parcel descriptions from all regular committee attenders except Heidi Sikina and Tom A. (for Nagog Hill) and Nan Millett (for Stoneymeade); the others she hasn't heard from are all associate members who do not attend meetings (for Bulette, Camp Acton, Jenks, Pratt's Brook, and Wills Hill/Town Forest). She will send out another email to request this input.

Joan noted that the current Nagog Hill description on the website represents a reworking of the guidebook description that she worked on a while ago with the website maintainers at the time, Bob Guba, Rich Rhode and Jim, though it (and the map) now needs to include the Groener land acreage. Tom A. said that he is satisfied to use this description for Nagog Hill. Joan also stated that she had turned over to Tom A. a packet of information that includes necessary map changes, so these (or a summary) should be passed along to Peggy.

At the Pacy land, there is now a map on the kiosk, created by Tom T. in the style of our other maps. It is almost complete but needs a few refinements, including computer-generated coloring. Bob said he plans to contact Rich Rhode to see if Rich can help him with this. Jim also reported that he and Tom T. had walked the Pacy land and written a draft of a parcel description.

Tom A, brought up again his idea of designing cards with information directing people interested in maps and parcel information to our website. These could be used on an interim basis as we revise our descriptions and maps, but they could also give us a chance to see whether this might serve as an alternative to doing a full new guidebook printing. Tom offered to find someone with graphics expertise to create a design. All of those present voted to move forward with this idea.

Quail Ridge update: Jim reported that a new developer, Pulte Homes, is planning to purchase the Quail Ridge property and has filed a request to amend the number, arrangement, and some architectural details of residential lots specified in an earlier special permit; the new layout still includes a 9-hole golf course. Our current concern is that the new plans appear to encroach on our existing trail easement and that the terms of the easement regarding cooperation with the LSCom have not been adhered to. Tom T. has invited Jim to speak with him and someone from Pulte about these issues and to make clear to Pulte that they can't disregard the earlier agreement about the easement, including their responsibility to construct a boardwalk within that easement.

MAPC online map: In response to an inquiry from MAPC (the Metropolitan Area Planning Council) about adding our trail maps to MAPC's online map of the region's trails and bike paths, Bob has sent material to allow them to integrate our maps with that system.

Request for money for supplies: Bob requested \$200 from the FY2012 budget to purchase deck planks to construct a 16-foot stretch of boardwalk at Guggins Brook (on the access trail near Rt. 111) and a 14-foot stretch at Grassy Pond (on the loop trail between the Willis Holden access trail and the blue trail leading to the pond). Those present approved this expenditure. Bob also said that he will use the remaining funds in an old purchase order to buy nails, brown paint, etc. before the end of the current fiscal year.

Great Hill blazing: Peggy reported that she has done some more reblazing on the loop trail; it is now about two-thirds reblazed. Also, Bettina has installed the notice board with a "You Are Here" map at one of the trail intersections on the hill, and she and Peggy are now reconsidering the idea of using different-shaped blue blazes on the hill trails; they are wondering about going back to standard blue blazes on all these trails plus "You Are Here" maps at each intersection on the hill. Jim requested that an email be sent out suggesting this idea and that this be a future agenda item.

Parcels: *Camp Acton:* Bob reported that Eagle Scout Alex Jones is ready to start work on his project, constructing a boardwalk on the western part of the loop trail. *Great Hill:* Jim reported that the new portion of the access trail connecting to Piper Road near the corner of School Street has been flagged and cut. It is now ready to be blazed and to have a pedestrian access sign installed. *Town Forest:* Bob reported that Eagle Scout Ken Davidson has finished constructing his boardwalk on the northern part of the loop trail. While judging the work to be somewhat carelessly done, Bob said that it is structurally sound.

Next meeting: The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 20, at 4 P.M.

Documents that serve as background for these discussions can be found at <http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-4356>. These documents are titled:

00 – LSC Agenda 2011 June 15

010 – LSCom draft minutes 2011 05 18

011 – BLACKLINE draft May minutes v. 1 to v. 3
041 – Mashup of Robbins Mill parcels map and NBSHCA map
050 – Quail Ridge amended plans & proposal
06 – Roster 6-4-11
08 – OSRP copy of draft conservation parcel list
09 – ActonConservationLandTrails.kml
Parcel Reports - June 2011