

Land Stewardship Committee Meeting Minutes

May 21, 2008, 4:00 PM

Acton Town Hall

Present: Bettina Abe, Joan Cirillo, Dave Cochrane, Bob Guba, Peggy Liversidge (minute-taker), Nan Towle Millett, Rich Rhode, Jim Snyder-Grant (chair), Tom Tidman, Laurie Ullmann
Guest: Detective Keith Campbell

Meeting minutes: The April minutes were approved.

Request for projects for youth offenders: Det. Keith Campbell presented a brief overview of a new program that the Acton Police Department is initiating for youth offenders, designed to keep them out of the court system by providing an alternative that involves, in part, community service. He is trying to find projects for the program's first offenders, four eighth-graders who were caught spray-painting graffiti; they will each be responsible for completing about 10 hours of work by mid-July. Bettina mentioned that a number of picnic tables at the Arboretum need to be stained, and to this list were added approximately 10 picnic tables at Camp Acton, two at Great Hill, and one at Wheeler Lane. Other suggestions were staining blocks of wood for signs and putting down wood chips. Det. Campbell was pleased with these suggestions. He clarified that we will not be responsible for supervising the teenagers and that we would be reimbursed for any materials bought for any projects done under the program.

Other volunteer work: (1) A crew from the Beth Elohim congregation worked with Linda on the TTT project. (2) On April 26 (town cleanup day) a group of 25 Cub Scouts and their parents picked up trash around the Rt. 2A/Rt. 27 intersection in North Acton. (3) On May 1 a group of 15 Girl Scouts closed off the trail leading to the vernal pool on the Idylwilde side of Jenks. (4) Jim said that he is considering having a volunteer work day at Guggins to do more wood chipping on the red trail from the Rt. 111 parking lot.

Money in budget: It has been determined that we have \$1,200 remaining in the current fiscal year's budget, and Tom recommends that it be spent as soon as possible. Bob will spend approximately \$700 on wood for the Grassy Pond boardwalk and for a short extension of the Nashoba Brook boardwalk. It was also decided that we will buy a weed wrench (around \$100-\$150).

LSCom chairmanship: Indicating that he thinks we would benefit from periodically having new committee leadership, Jim announced that he will step down as committee chair in June 2009. Over the next year there will be time for discussion and a decision about who will take over.

Hats: Bettina has investigated getting baseball-type hats for stewards and brought pictures of green hats with the triangular logo and/or the words "Acton Land Stewards," in blue, from two possible suppliers. It was decided that she will order 12. It was noted that the money for these comes not from Town funds but from fines paid by developers.

Walk with Concord Water District representative re Quail Ridge easement trail: Jim reported that he, Tom, and a Concord Water District representative, Matthew Mostoller, walked along the boundary area between the water district and Quail Ridge properties and discussed the possible route for an easement trail between Nagog and Rt. 2A. The hope is that the trail might occasionally go onto water district land to get around wet areas. Jim said that Matthew did not rule out this possibility and said that we could submit a proposed route to the Water District

Also in connection with Quail Ridge, Jim noted that Roland Bartl is working with the Town counsel on the wording about the easement.

Guggins Eagle Scout project: Jim reported that he and Bob met with Eagle Scout Ryan Crumlish about a project to build and place 8-foot boardwalk segments (approximately 100 feet total) along the stretch of blue trail that parallels the Idylwilde field. Bob gave Ryan various design suggestions, and he will be submitting a revised plan. He needs to be finished with the project by September, when he turns 18.

Chamber progress: Nan reported that she and Bruce Carley have planted the chamber dome with ferns she got for free at the end of an Acton Garden Club plant sale, but she is looking for about two dozen Christmas ferns. Seven shrubs have also been planted. Eagle Scout Andrew Kappel has done a lot of clearing and has completed the trails to the chamber entrance and to the Milldam houses. In addition, the information panel is almost ready.

Trail Through Time meeting with Wheeler Lane residents: Jim reported that four or five households were represented at the recent meeting at Wheeler Lane about the Trail Through Time. It was a positive session, with attendees curious and interested about the plans and the history. Residents had some concerns about traffic and parking, and Jim felt that Doug Halley answered them suitably and allayed the concerns.

Ron McAdow presentation: Bob and Rich reported that Ron McAdow presented an interesting talk and that there was a good turnout, including quite a few kids.

Earth Day: Bettina reported that she went to the event at St. Matthew's Methodist Church, where she set up the LSCOM display boards and sold seven guidebooks.

High school Senior Service Day: Joan reported that the seven students assigned to at Nagog Hill her worked hard and that they had the tools they needed. The two truckloads of chips seemed smaller than in the past, however, and there was a lot of trash mixed in. Students also worked with Linda on the Trail Through Time and at the Arboretum and NARA.

Canoe launch: Bettina reported that the Japanese knotweed that is not covered by the tarp is one to two feet high (this despite the fact that Bob cut it just a week ago). She also reported that the black tarp covering some of the knotweed is intact, with a few very small holes (possibly chewed by mice), but it is not degrading. In response to the observation that the for-sale sign is on the ground, Tom noted that he had taken it down, since the owner/seller is not allowed to put the sign on the area covered by the conservation restriction. It was clarified that whoever buys the property will have to respect the CR, which guarantees access by canoeists.

Jenks parking lot issue: Tom and Jim have been in touch with the Town engineering department, which has indicated a willingness to move the boulders located along the right side of small parking area further to the right so that they will be along the property boundary. It was noted that there is a new head of the engineering department, Bruce Stamski.

Robbins Mill status: Tom reported that Eagle Scout Mike Hatfield has completed his 75-foot section of geowebbed trail, and there is another Eagle Scout who is interested in completing the trail (another 75 feet). In addition, Steve Marsh, the developer who will be building the observation deck, has Bob's plans for that structure. Tom also clarified that we can walk the Robbins Mill land and flag trails, but the land transfer won't be done until the final phase of the development project. He also said that the construction is still going on, despite the current slowdown in the construction industry.

Nagog Hill mowing: Bob has started mowing the field behind Jimmy Young's house at Nagog

Hill. He reported that the Town doesn't have the time to do this mowing at this time of year and that the price of diesel has made it too expensive for Jimmy Young to do it.

Stow Conservation Trust boardwalk: Bob reported that the Stow Conservation Trust's Red Acre Woodland has a new trail, which includes a long stretch of boardwalk that uses Bob's design with the lightweight corrugated piping. This property is on the left side of Stow Road as you head out of South Acton, not far beyond the Capt. Sargent land accesses.

Next meeting: The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 18, at 4:00 P.M.