

Land Stewardship Committee Meeting Minutes
July 18, 2012, 4:00 PM
Acton Town Hall

Regular (voting) members present: Bettina Abe, Dave Cochrane, Peggy Liversidge (minute-taker), Jim Snyder-Grant (chair), Laurie Ullmann

Associate (nonvoting) members present: Bob Guba

Nonmembers present: Janet Adachi (LSCom's Board of Selectmen liaison)

May meeting minutes: The May meeting minutes were approved. (There was no June meeting.)

Election of committee officers: The current officers—Jim Snyder-Grant, committee chair; Dave Cochrane, vice-chair; and Peggy Liversidge, clerk—have agreed to continue in their present positions, and there were no new nominations. A vote was taken and the current officers were approved for another year.

Benches at Nashoba Brook: Linda McElroy has indicated that she would like to install two benches at the Wheeler Lane entrance to Nashoba Brook as part of her CPA project. One would be placed in the field to the east side of the old parking area, the other along the new trail that has been installed to the west of the old parking area. The benches would be teak and have arms, as presently used in the Arboretum, and would be paid for from Linda's CPA funds. A vote was taken approving this placement of benches.

Jim then questioned whether there were other locations at Nashoba Brook where benches might be appropriate. One comment was that the bench that was placed some time ago by an unknown person overlooking the brook at the Pencil Factory site seems to be a good location for a bench, and that location was then retroactively approved as a bench site. Bettina suggested that an appropriate site might be near the stone chamber, and Linda McElroy has suggested that one might be placed later in the stone pile area that is currently being cleared on the upper portion of the loop trail. Either of these could be considered at a later date.

Quail Ridge update: Jim reported that he and Bob met recently with two representatives of the Quail Ridge development. The border of our trail easement has been staked, and the staking of the trail route has been improved. The Quail Ridge representatives stated that they will be hiring someone soon to build the boardwalk and will complete the project as soon as they can. Jim noted that the Planning Board has indicated that no building permit will be issued until the boardwalk is completed.

Hybrid Farm update: Jim reported that the ConsCom has had several discussions about this issue and that Tom Arnold has been working with Jim Coleman to draft a proposal that will work for both the McConnons and the ConsCom. The most recent draft requires the McConnons to take steps to restore the areas where grass cover has been destroyed by the presence of too many horses, as well as to propose a satisfactory solution to the problem caused by the horses passing through a wetland area to get from the house and barn area to an open area to the east of our trail system where they are frequently kept. A number of other details that are currently proposed include a quarterly check-in by the ConsCom; permitting up to 32 horses to be kept; and a \$1,000 annual license fee (up from \$300), with a yearly renewal of the license required. The current draft is on the agenda of tonight's ConsCom meeting.

Summer volunteer work days: There have been several volunteer work opportunities thus far this summer, and several more are planned or may be scheduled:

- Jim reported that student volunteers have helped him on two occasions putting down woodchips on the Rt. 111 access trail at Guggins and once cleaning up debris from pruned crabapples in the meadow at Wetherbee. He may organize another work day at Guggins this summer.
- Bob, Laurie, Jim, and perhaps Dave are planning to add a 15-foot boardwalk segment at Guggins.
- On July 28 the Natural Resources Dept. will hold a four-hour event to remove water chestnuts from Ice House Pond. Bettina said that about 40 people have signed up so far.
- Linda McElroy plans to organize a day in August to finish clearing the stone pile area on the upper portion of the Nashoba Brook loop trail.

Volunteer appreciation event: Jim reported that Tom Arnold has agreed to organize this year's volunteer appreciation event, but because Tom was not present at today's meeting, nothing further was discussed or decided.

Parcel updates: *Grassy Pond:* Bob reported that the tree that fell in June was removed from the long boardwalk and the damage repaired with help from Laurie, Jim, Bruce Rachman, and Bruce's son Greg.

Heath Hen Meadow/Mt. Hope Cemetery Woods: Dave noted that there are several vernal pools close to trails and, because the pools are dry in the summer, people and/or their dogs sometimes walk through them. He is wondering about putting up signs to inform walkers of the vernal pools and to request that they and their dogs try to stay off these areas. It was decided that he will check in with Tom Tidman about this.

Pacy: It was suggested that Beth Hickey might be put in touch with Karen O'Neill, a nearby resident who might be interested in helping with some of the parcel stewardship. Jim said he will do this.

Spring Hill: Laurie mentioned his interest in slightly relocating parts of the Spring Hill loop trail between the two red connector trails from Nashoba Brook (a stretch that is part of the Bay Circuit Trail) to avoid some of the rocks in this very rocky stretch. There was also some discussion of the logistics of replacing the long interior boardwalk, including the idea that several Eagle Scouts might be able to build boardwalk segments that could then be moved into the interior of the parcel. However, it was noted that segments of a regular, unvarying length might be hard to work with because of the irregular placement of rocks.

Wills Hole/Town Forest: Jim reported that Theresa Portante is expecting a baby and will soon be suspending her steward duties for several months. He is wondering if Philip Keyes might be able to fill in as interim steward as he did once before during a transitional period in the Wills Hole/Town Forest stewardship. Also, Bob mentioned the ongoing problems with trash/debris and partying/rowdy behavior at the Capt. Handley Road parking lot. He said the town has cleared out some of the vegetation around it that blocks visibility, but this needs to be done regularly. He wondered if nearby residents could be interested in taking on this ongoing maintenance and vigilance, and he suggested having a work day there.

Eagle Scout projects: *Grassy Pond:* A bridge over a stream on the yellow trail is being constructed by two Scouts: Michael Kilpatrick has completed his 14-foot section, and Greg Rachman is preparing to do another section nearby on the same trail. A third Scout, Declan Crooks, will be doing corduroying on an often wet stretch of the yellow trail, near where the Willis Holden access trail meets the loop trail.

Great Hill: Addison Reed is building a boardwalk on the trail that leads from the fire station parking lot to the “little playing field.” Tom Russell will be cutting the new trail down the east side of the hill.

Guggins: David Quantrille will be connecting and improving several boardwalk segments on the blue trail bordering Boxborough.

Next meeting: There will be no August meeting. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 19, at 4:00 P.M.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:25.

Documents that serve as background for these discussions can be found at <http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-4920> . They are titled:

- 0 – July 18, 2012 Agenda
- 1 – LSCom draft minutes 2012 05 16
- 2 – Committee Officer Nominations
- 3 – Bench placement, Nashoba Brook
- 5.1 – Latest Hybrid Farm proposed license
- 5.2 – Hybrid License appendix—map of areas
- 6.1 – Summer volunteer work days calendar
- 6.2 – Guggins work Day report
- 6.3 – Wetherbee Work day report
- 8 – Parcel updates (June and July)