

Land Stewardship Committee Meeting Minutes
May 15, 2013
Acton Town Hall

R E C E I V E D
JUL 1 2013

TOWN CLERK, ACTON

Regular (voting) members present: Bettina Abe, Philip Keyes, Peggy Liversidge, Nan Towle Millett, Jim Snyder-Grant (Chair), Ann Shubert (minute taker)

Associate (nonvoting) members present: Tom Arnold, Bob Guba, Bruce Rachman

Nonmembers present: Janet Adachi (LSCOM's Board of Selectmen liaison), Linda McElroy (head of Trail Through Time), Joe Will (Quaboag Road resident), Joe Holmes (Acton resident)

Meeting minutes: The April minutes were approved, with edits for clarity suggested by Jim based on an email from Joan Cirillo.

Hybrid Farm: The Conservation Commission has set up a licensing agreement with Hybrid Farm. Bettina made a checklist which ConsCom members took on their most recent quarterly visit to Hybrid. Some stipulations listed in the agreement are as follows: Hybrid will reseed the dirt pasture and will not put horses there until there is grass. Hybrid would like to put a fence across the dirt pasture and reseed one side at a time. Following this procedure all would not be reseeded until 2015. Hybrid is allowed to have the shed on the property and can move it if they wish. They are allowed to have no more than 32 horses. Bob questioned the other bare spots showing on the aerial map and wondered if those would also be reseeded. Tom Arnold said those bare spots were not discussed. In the licensing agreement it states that the bare spots in the pine woods will be discussed and addressed at a future time. There must be public access with people having the right to cross the property. A gate will be installed allowing people to walk through the property if they want. Bettina said that the gates have to be in working order before the licensing agreement is reapproved.

Robbins Mill trail: Bob, Philip, and Jim looked for a possible route through the Robbins Mill land that would go to the Robbins Mill parking lot and connect that land to Spring Hill and Nashoba Brook conservation areas. The uphill part of the land is good for a trail whereas the lower part has water/stream. Philip has laid out a loop trail in the uphill part. A spur of the loop would go to the Robbins Mill parking area. Another spur connects to Spring Hill near where the blue trail connects with the yellow trail on the Robbins Mill side of Spring Hill. There are a few wetlands crossings but they are not too big. There would also be access into Carlisle. About 50% of the trail already exists and the rest is doable without a lot of effort, according to Philip. There will also be a trail from the end of the Wheeler Lane footbridge to the planned observation platform (not yet built) at the Carlisle Road entrance to the Robbins Mill land. This trail, to be marked as an access trail, will also access an interesting rock outcrop thought to be the quarry from which the roof slabs for the stone chamber came. As such, this access trail will also be a part of the Trail Through Time. This trail will connect to the Nashoba Brook parking lot and to the viewing platform there. When these trails are more completely flagged, the Committee will be invited to walk the proposed trails before they are formally agreed on and then built.

Trail Through Time: Linda McElroy discussed an updated map of the TTT showing the placement of three informational panels that will be erected this season. The panels are in production now. Linda said there are some Indian features in the area where the new trail to the Robbins Mill land goes through in the uphill portion. There is a turtle effigy and a stone pile with quartz in the middle of it, which are fragile enough that they will not be made obvious. There are other interesting features, just off the main trail, which could be reached by a side path, as is being done in the Nashoba Brook parcel where the

stone pile clusters are located. It might be good if the trail went to these and other interesting spots. Linda is especially interested in where the trail goes into Spring Hill as there are Indian features there also. Bruce mentioned the dam at the Robbins Mill pond and wondered if it would be repaired and open for crossing. Linda and Doug Halley would like to have the dam repaired with a trail going over it. This could cost as much as \$600,000 in repairs, but Linda has ideas of how to fix the dam for much less cost to the town. Bob asked if the Davis foundation was going to need stabilizing. Linda said no, it is fine as is. The thought is that this was used as a pest house.

High School Senior Service Day debrief: A lot was accomplished on Senior Service Day. At Wheeler Lane bushes along the sluiceway were cut back and garlic mustard was removed. Jim supervised 12 girls at Great Hill who removed garlic mustard. Bob worked with Ed Russell at Guggins Brook. They supervised 12 senior boys. Ed had purchased and pre-cut lumber for the boardwalk. Bob advised where to put the sills. The kids hauled in 8' sections and put them down, and then brought in decking and put that down. Ed then joined the sections. 100' of new boardwalk was installed and 90' of old boardwalk was installed, thus repairing damage from Hurricane Sandy. Bettina supervised six kids at the Arboretum where a lot was accomplished. Nan supervised eight kids at Iron Work Farm. They moved a huge log and hauled out all the dead stuff that was there.

Invasives update: High school kids removed the remaining garlic mustard at Wheeler Lane and at Great Hill. Scouts from all troops removed all the remaining garlic mustard from Camp Acton. The only big areas of garlic mustard left to clear are at the Arboretum.

Bettina has two water chestnut days scheduled at Ice House Pond. On June 23 there will be mostly high school kids to help, though all are welcome. And on July 14 from 10 am to 2 pm all are welcome to help. Please contact Bettina if you are available to help on this project.

Proposed town land purchase: There will be a special Town Meeting on June 3. An issue up for discussion is the purchase of the Anderson Land at 180 Newtown Road. It involves 40 acres. The Town will acquire 20 acres with a combination of CPA funds and free cash. There will be a PCRC on the other 20 acres which will result in the protection of an additional 14 acres.

Parcel updates: *Wetherbee*: Bob and Tom Arnold will go to Wetherbee to discuss land boundaries between Wetherbee and the adjacent properties. Bob will show Tom where the issues are, where the wells are, and so forth.

Spring Hill: Camp Acton still has all the planks for the Spring Hill boardwalk project in its parking lot.

Heath Hen Meadow: Bob said that the beavers that had been building under the bridge are gone for now.

Great Hill: Bob thanked Rick Cushman by email for taking care of the blow down.

Signs needing repair: Bob said that paint is peeling off several of the conservation land signs. Stewards should report any bad sign condition so that it can be repaired.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:25.

The next meeting will be held at 4 pm on Wednesday, June 19.

Documents that serve as background for these discussions can be found at <http://doc.acton->

ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-5359. They are titled:

- 0 - LSC Agenda for 2013 May 15
- 1 - draft minutes for 2013 April 17
- 1.1 April Minutes - suggested improvements (link to email)
- 2.1 - Hybrid "ABC" map
- 2.2 Hybrid License Compliance checklist
- 3 - rough map of proposed robbins mill trails
- 4 - high school senior service day
- 6 - Jenks Parking lot update
- 8 - parcel updates