

Land Stewardship Committee Meeting Minutes
June 17, 2009, 4:00 P.M.
Acton Town Hall

Present: Bettina Abe, Joan Cirillo, Dave Cochrane, Bob Guba, Philip Keyes, Peggy Liversidge (minute-taker), Nan Towle Millett, Rich Rhode, Jim Snyder-Grant (chair), Tom Tidman
Guest: Joan Apkin

Meeting minutes: The May minutes were approved.

Charter update: Since the last meeting Jim has discussed the proposed LSCOM charter with Janet Adachi of the Conservation Commission and then with Paulina Knibbe of the Board of Selectmen. Both have made numerous suggestions, many of which Jim has provisionally accepted, but there has been some disagreement about wording about our decision-making process. Jim plans to talk next with Peter Berry, also of the BOS, to try to iron out the differences. He has also requested input from any interested LSCOM members, and Joan and Philip have offered to help review the revised document before it is submitted to ConsCom and the BOS for final approval. Linda (McElroy, former LSCOM chairperson) has offered to help with editing. Paulina has told Jim that the BOS is working on policy guidelines for Town committees, so we will wait to submit our charter document until after that is released, allowing us to be sure that our language agrees with the guidelines.

Quail Ridge trail update: Jim reported that there is a new owner of the Quail Ridge Country Club, QR Properties, but the trail easement worked out with the prior owner is registered with the Middlesex County Registry of Deeds and must be honored. This will include the requirement that they build a boardwalk over the wet area. The trail is still flagged. Jim has a call in to QR Properties and will follow up with a letter.

Central Street resident's concern about Pacy Land trail: Several days ago Jim was contacted by Joan Apkins, whose property at 45 Central Street abuts the Pacy Land, including its trail access, about her opposition to having a trail on the property. She has had an initial conversation with Tom and Jim, has submitted a list of 10 questions based on her review of our meeting minutes (Jan. 2006-April 2009), and attended today's meeting. Prior to the meeting Jim advised her that there was insufficient time before today's meeting to properly look into these questions, but he agreed to review them soon, meet again with her and Tom to try to answer her concerns, and, until that is done, call for a suspension of any further work on the trail.

Dumping on Pacy Land by Tupelo Way homeowner: Regarding the dumping of grass clippings at 11 Tupelo Way that Philip has reported, Jim has asked Tom to contact the owners. Also, Bob noted that someone has removed some debris piles he saw earlier at the conservation land parking spot on Tupelo Way.

Morrison Farm update: Dave reported that on June 2, after some preparatory weeding, three classes of first-graders and one class of fifth-graders planted their garden area at Morrison Farm with seedlings they started indoors. They had a good time, and both the teachers and assisting parents seemed very enthusiastic about the project. Several volunteers will be weeding and watering over the summer, and the kids' families are also allowed to harvest things. Crops that ripen after school begins again will be harvested and cooked by the classes.

Chamber update: Nan reported that Andrew Kappel, the Eagle Scout who worked on the chamber trail, had his Eagle ceremony recently. Also, the plants that were installed on top of the chamber are doing well.

Possible boardwalk at Town Forest: Philip questioned whether a wet area of the yellow trail in the northern part of the Town Forest might be a place where we need a short boardwalk, perhaps of a sturdy design that could accommodate the horses that are frequently ridden on this trail. It was suggested that this could be an Eagle Scout project and that the Scout might approach businesses along Nagog Park Drive for possible funding.

Parcel updates: *Canoe launch:* Nan reported that a second tarp has been put down, extending the area where we are trying to smother the Japanese knotweed. Also, she and Bettina tried using gin and vinegar on cut stalks, but it rained soon after so the application probably had no efficacy. Bob suggested that we define the parking area with posts in order to keep cars off the grass.

Grassy Pond: Bob stated that the Town crew used a backhoe during the course of burning a pile of debris at the Grassy Pond meadow during the winter, and in the process they gouged out a hole and dug up several boulders, which will make mowing more difficult. He would like the damage to be repaired.

Great Hill: Nan reported that Bettina has put up the "No Through Trail" signs on the (former) red trail leading out of the playing field.

Guggins: Jim reported that he has installed one signpost with an arrow in the meadow area near Central Street, and he has one more to install.

Stoneymeade: Nan reported that bluebirds have fledged here.

Town Forest: Bob reported that a Town crew moved a boulder that was blocking the yellow trail (near NARA).

Appraisal of Anderson property: Tom reported that the Town's Open Space Committee is getting an appraisal of the Anderson property, west of Arlington Street at the Newtown Road end. The property, approximately 39 acres, has eskers and vernal pools and is traversed by the Grassy Pond Brook.

Philip's photos on display at library: Philip brought in publicity posters for an upcoming exhibition of 24 of his photos of Acton conservation lands that will be on display at the library in July and August. He would like to have them displayed elsewhere later and is considering approaching the schools (Dave said he will bring up the idea with Eileen Sullivan). Other ideas were Powers Gallery, Sweet Bites and Savoury Lane (both in West Acton), and the Town's cable channels.

Blazing and signs requests: Peggy requested that stewards make note of any areas where blazes are particularly faded to aid her and Bettina as they work on reblazing. Jim noted that the rocky part of the Grassy Pond yellow trail near Willis Holden Drive is difficult to follow. Bob also noted that many parcel signs are in bad shape and need at least to be repainted, so it would help to get these onto a list as well.

Next meeting: The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 15, at 4:00 at Town Hall.