

Acton
Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, July 21, 2015, Town Hall, Room 126, 7 P.M.

Attendance

Regular (voting) members present: Bettina Abe (Chair-elected), Bob Farra, Bob Guba, Jim Snyder-Grant (Chair-retiring), Laurie Ullmann, Joe Will (Minutes)

Associate (nonvoting) members present: Joe Holmes, Sherman Smith

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

Jim called the meeting to order at 7:07 P.M. John Watlington brought cookies but couldn't stay.

Review and approval of June minutes

Approval was moved and voted unanimously.

Elect officers

Joe W has agreed to be Clerk; there were no other nominations.

Bruce has agreed to be Vice-Chair; there were no other nominations.

Bettina has agreed to be Chair; there were no other nominations.

Approval of officers was voted unanimously.

Change Chairs

Bettina and Bruce understand and agree that (circumstances allowing) Bruce will be Chair next year. There was a brief discussion of the Chair's duties.

Bettina pointed out that any LSC member can answer emails; just CC the rest of the committee. But she cautioned that we hold long conversations (e.g., brush mower, trail blazing) offline without involving a quorum of members to avoid breaking Open Meeting Law. One should know the members who are interested in a topic and limit emails to them. Then get such discussions onto the next meeting agenda.

Review roster of Committee members

Bettina reviewed the list of LSC members. Our newest Regular member is Gary Kilpatrick who was just sworn in. He is the new Steward of Grassy Pond. Paula Goodwin will be the new Steward of Heath Hen Meadow. Paula may become an Associate member of the LSC, but the process will take a while as the Board of Selectmen, which has to approve the appointment, does not meet again until September.

An updated roster will be shared with the Committee along with or close to the distribution of the draft of these August minutes.

It was noted that if there are Associate members who regularly show up for meetings and Regular members who don't, then it makes sense to switch the roles of those members.

Trail Through Time (TTT) update

Bob G shared his observations on the new trail Linda has proposed and showed on a map what he feels the trail should be. There is agreement among all that there should not be "lollipop" trails. Bob observed that a recent email from Linda suggests that she wants more trails than she had previously

proposed. Jim read Linda's email aloud and the Committee tried to follow along. It was observed that Linda probably has a clear idea, but that she has not explained it well. The LSC needs to understand the big picture better. Bob and Bettina will meet with Linda to try to clear things up. Bob observed that, in general, the LSC proposes a trail and eventually has to vote to approve it.

Linda and Doug Halley are preparing a PowerPoint presentation that they will use to update the Conservation Commission with an overall picture of the TTT, including any new proposals. An alternative approach for the LSC would be to review this presentation. The LSC will be invited to the presentation to the Cons Comm.

It was observed that Linda also wants something at the Robbins Mill quarry (upstream from Wheeler Lane). The LSC has flagged a trail up there, but have not approved (or blazed) it yet because of trail passage being blocked by Scoutland.

Field mower and trailer

The LSC discussed two models of Honda "Billy Goat" mowers, HW651HSP and BC26HHEU, both available at Richey & Clapper, Inc., in Sudbury. (Bettina will double check on their availability at R & C.) The LSC discussed details of these mowers. Bob G recommended the former, which R & C could sell to us for \$1595. R & C rents out the other model.

A basic 5'-by-8' trailer costs \$1200. While driving around town, Bettina spotted one for sale privately for \$450, and has been trying to get Tom Tidman to buy it.

Bob observed that it would be prudent to buy a mower before buying a trailer.

Bettina will continue to pursue mower and trailer purchase information.

Review reasonable expectations of Department of Natural Resources (NR) crew, e.g., mowing, tree removal, debris pick-up, deliveries

- Grassy Pond meadow: We need someone to do this.
- Wetherbee: NR's Shawn O'Malley is mowing the access, but can't do any more. Todd Tsarkiris has been using his own mower but there is some mowing that comes too close to the corn for Todd to do.
- Stoneymeade: Mowing Stoneymeade is difficult. Shawn mows this once at the end of August. Someone else has been mowing near the kiosk.
- Wills Hole/Town Forest: Bettina doesn't know who's been mowing here.
- Nagog Hill: Hybrid Farm wants someone to mow the "back field" where the yellow trail passes through heavy grass. Shawn does the field behind Young's (to the west from the back field), but can't do the back field.

In general, it would be nice to have 3 stewards willing to mow. Bettina described a possible process, housing the mower at Woodlawn Cemetery.

Bettina will try to get a clearer picture from Shawn as to who's mowing what and will follow up, in general, on this with NR.

Also, Bettina described some of what has been happening in Town that involves NR, and some of the interactions of NR, Municipal Properties, and the Highway Department (Public Works). Currently, the Town is reviewing how best to use its resources. Bettina has been preparing some information about NR, what it is and what it does. She will distribute this to the LSC as soon as she can get something presentable.

Update on invasive species education

Bettina will create the display at Great Hill; Jim, John Watlington, Bob G, Bettina, and Sherm are creating a display <for where?>. Jim and Jason will meet <with whom about what?>.

Update on two bridge replacements at Nashoba Brook

One is at the pencil factory; the other is at Wheeler Lane. Bettina described what she's done as the NR person. Laurie described what could be done for people who want to go out to view Mill Pond.

Update on links among the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (RT), Bay Circuit Trail, and North Acton Woods (Nashoba Brook, Spring Hill, Robbins Mill) trail system

Laurie, Tom Tidman, Bob G, and Bettina walked these last week. They found a spot where we would want an opening in the RT guardrail in order to go through John Valentine's land. We will need a Notice of Intent to go through wetlands. Steve Tobin of the Carlisle Conservation Foundation has been emailed on this but we haven't heard back yet. Also needed, per CL restriction, is a "No bicycles allowed" sign at the exit from the RT.

Bettina has asked for a big copy of the RT plan. The LSC should make sure that during RT construction there are no changes of mind as to trail connections. Roland Bartl (Acton Town Planner) is aware of the current plan and will also be monitoring this.

Beth Gula and the Appalachian Mountain Club Work Day

This will be Saturday from 9 until 1, at the "same old place" on the Spring Hill trail. It is suggested that there be one bog bridge placed as a trial. If it works there could be a second. Beth has six participants confirmed. Others will be welcome.

New location for Luna's Bench at Pratt's Brook

It is too difficult for NR to install a concrete pad at the first-choice site, the stone ford. Instead, Bettina asks for LSC approval of a different location that she suggested.

Approval of a location of the bench in a grassy area of the Senior Park near Brewster Lane was moved (Jim) and voted unanimously.

It was noted that Luna would have approved this location.

Work possibilities for teenage community service —Detective Keith (CORI approval required for adults working with youth)

Bettina asked for workers for the Arboretum, 2:30-5:30 on Tuesday or Thursday. Detective Keith provided one worker.

Other parcel information

- Canoe Launch: A discussion centered on how to control parking. The public tends to park on the meadow grass instead of on the graveled space. Bettina will ask NR what it would like to do. Possibilities include planting sections of a telephone pole (like what was done at Grassy Pond), or using large rocks.
- Great Hill: John Watlington has prepared a letter that he wants to go out to the Mill Corner Homeowners Association asking for permission to take care of a trail on the Mill Corner property that links Little Great Hill with the Discovery Museum trail. Joe H will be fixing the picnic table near the pond.

August agenda

Suggest there be updates on Eagle Scout projects; also, on Scoutland. Bob F notes that Robbins Mill needs another bridge and a kiosk. Also, when is the Robbins Mill viewing platform to be built?

If Bob G has agreement with Linda, there is need to talk more about the TTT. It would help to have a better map of the TTT, e.g., one that overlays our Nashoba Brook map, and includes a little bit of Spring Hill.

Bob F will bring snacks.

Evaluate meeting

Bettina is doing great. We should keep agenda-item times on the board, and continue to use a timekeeper.

The meeting adjourned at 8:33 P.M.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, August 18, at 7 P.M., in Room 126. Jim and Joe H will not be able to attend.