

Acton
Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, August 16, 2016, Town Hall, Room 9, 7 P.M.

Attendance

Regular (voting) members present: Bob Farra (Vice Chair), Paula Goodwin, Bob Guba, Joe Holmes, Bruce Rachman (Chair), Laurie Ullmann, John Watlington, Joe Will (Minutes)

Associate (nonvoting) members present: none

Nonmembers:

Bettina Abe (Acton Department of Natural Resources), Janet Adachi (LSC's Board of Selectmen liaison)

Bruce called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M.

Review and approval of June minutes

June minutes not yet ready. Approval will have to wait until September meeting.

Junior High School Workday, Sept or Oct — Allen Warner is coordinator

No date known yet. Bettina will touch base with Allen. School starts 08/31.

Bettina will be able to involve a lot of kids pulling up black plastic fencing on the Assabet River trails.

John says 5-10 kids could be kept busy with the glossy buckthorn at Pratt's Brook.

Joe H could possibly use some at the Canoe Launch.

Garlic mustard picking in 2016 — Jim S-G

Move this to September agenda.

Morrison Farm Conservation Restriction (CR)

Joe W said that the Open Space Committee is suggesting that proceedings begin for a CR for the woods that form the northern part of Morrison Farm (map provided). A brief discussion of what this is about ensued.

Morrison Farm Board of Selectmen (BoS) directive

Bettina gave a summary of BoS Chair Peter Berry's request, made of all Town committees and commissions, for feedback on future possibilities for the Morrison Farm farmhouse. Janet and Joe W provided additional background information. LSC members present voted "Tear it down" in a near-unanimous "straw" poll. Joe H had no opinion. Bruce will communicate this result to the BoS. It was pointed out that this left moot the question of whether a parcel containing the farmhouse should be sold to private interests. Janet said the BoS is looking for feedback on the barn as well. A brief discussion ensued, but the LSC offered no collective suggestion.

176 Central Street stewarding

As this parcel has been purchased by the Town with the aid of Community Preservation Act funds and will therefore carry a conservation restriction, what will be the LSC involvement with it? The LSC felt that it could be tied into the Heath Hen Meadow (HHM) conservation land and Paula, the HHM

steward, could be “steward in residence” until the LSC has formal stewardship approval. It was pointed out that the LSC and the Cemetery Commission have an agreement saying that the LSC can use a chain saw on its land, but cannot blaze on it. One problem: Where exactly is the boundary line of the parcel with the cemetery?

Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company pipeline maintenance

Bettina, Bruce, Bob F and Bob G gave some background information on the pipeline that crosses Robbins Mill land. Apparently Tenneco, the company, has said to not worry, that it will move bridge sections out of the way and then back as necessary. So far there is no evidence of this happening. Bob F suggested that the bridge sections could be numbered to help keep them in the same order.

Mass Audubon Trail Stewardship Training Series

Only 2 people, Bettina and Jim Snyder-Grant, have signed up, and Bettina has not yet heard whether they’ve been accepted.

Non-Parcel Updates:

a. Nagog Pond and Concord

September 12 is the continuation of the BoS hearing from the past Spring. Per Janet, Acton has not yet seen anything new from Concord. If Concord should change anything from the Order of Conditions, the Acton Conservation Commission should look at the changes to decide whether further approvals are needed.

b. Assabet River Trails Project — Bettina

There have been 7 workdays with volunteers, most of the time spent on improving existing trails (some probably centuries old); some on cutting multiflora rose and some on bench cutting. There have been a few alterations to the plan, example: no switchback needed where one was planned. There was discussion on a bridge plan that could be used; also on the 16-ft-long MBTA boardwalks that Bettina has salvaged. Bettina will schedule a walk of the land sometime if anyone is interested. In particular, she would like to bring the LSC bridge-construction people to the site so they could have a look, both for a new bridge and for use of the MBTA boardwalks.

c. LSC website — Stewards’ access

Some already have full access. Anyone else who wants it should call Bruce or Jim Snyder-Grant. How to upload? How to put in a link? Bruce explained both. In general, if there’s a problem with the site, call Bruce or Jim.

d. Workdate calendar

Do postings get removed after their date passes? Bruce: He or Jim, no one else, needs to remove them, but it’s kind of nice to have them archived. Joe H has been using the calendar, but with little success at getting volunteers. Makes him wonder why people don’t show up for weed pulling (his requests) but do show up for building trails (requests from others).

Bettina has two calendar dates for September. 09/11 will feature WildAware Wildlife Appreciation. 9/18 will celebrate the Acton Arboretum birthday with a party. Bettina will send these to Bruce for calendar insertion.

Parcel(s) specific:

a. Camp Acton update

Bruce: Camp Acton is looking to add a handicapped campsite near the Camp 1 space. Bruce told of what he knew would have to be done to have a fully-accessible handicapped camper campsite. A

problem: Although Bruce has done some research on this as well as an initial design for Tom Tidman, he doesn't necessarily know what handicapped people, or people who work with same, look for in a campsite. Does the LSC have any ideas? Suggestions: Check with the Acton Commission on Disabilities; also, the Miracle Field's Andy or Lauren Richardt.

b. Great Hill update

Nothing has changed on relocating trails. Joe W said that someone in town is promoting the idea of a dog park at Great Hill. The new boardwalk to Piper Lane is really nice . . . prompting a discussion on existing boardwalks.

c. Nagog Hill (away from Nagog Pond)

There had been a request for serious help on clearing away the multiflora rose. Things look great now. A good project would be to cut away vegetation to expose the stone wall to the north of the Nagog Hill Road south parking.

d. Spring Hill update

It is not clear what is happening with developments proposed for land next to Spring Hill and Camp Acton. Susan Mitchell-Hardt would be the person to ask about this as she is an abutter.

e. Other parcel information

• Jenks

Josh Haines wiped out on a bike, fractured his pelvis, and is out of commission as Jenks steward for about a year.

• Robbins Mill

Bob F shared a photo of the "Robbins Mill" sign at the playground entry. There was a brief discussion on sign "protocol" as there is much variation in existing signs. Should there be specs for signs? Bettina: No (resoundingly).

• Nashoba Brook/Spring Hill

– Signs between these two parcels are not boundary markers and thus do not need to be placed exactly on the boundary. They should be located in a "nice place," and the fewer the rocks the better.

• Nashoba Brook

– Bob G shared his just-finished design drawing of a truss bridge that could be used to span the sluiceway. All present approved the design. When the LSC is ready to propose that it build the bridge, Bob should submit a materials list.

– The elm tree at the Davis Road parking lost a huge limb. Laurie cut it off but says that the tree might need some repair and wonders if the Town should know about this. Bettina will tell Bruce Carley (Town maintenance worker).

• Heath Hen Meadow

When to revamp the beaver deceivers? Unanswered.

When to try moving the boardwalks from the Overlook Trail? Perhaps this could be a project for the 8th graders after the boardwalks have been cleared. If so, contact Allen Warner.

Discussion on beaver deceivers and moving the boardwalks reiterated discussion from previous meetings.

• Wills Hole/Town Forest

Parcel Steward has to tell people when growth such as at the Captain Handley entrance has to be mowed down.

Brainstorming stories for the LSC website

• Joe W suggested Conservation Restrictions as a topic.

• Joe H has a first draft on fly fishing. He'll revise it, then give it to Paula.

- Paula is planning for a WildAware article for March on fishing to anticipate springtime stocking of streams.

September agenda

- Trails on OpenStreetMaps

- Resolution of maps that Acton Police may want to print

(The latter could be taken off the agenda if Rich Burrows, Acton Deputy Police Chief, would contact Bruce directly soon, or would agree to a lunch meeting with Bruce and Bettina.)

- Non-agenda: Bruce is willing to host a party for the LSC, and for non-members who regularly attend LSC meetings. Discussing LSC business at the party would be taboo.

Evaluate meeting

Congrats for the meeting “ending 10 minutes early.”

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 P.M.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, September 20, at 7 P.M., in Room 9.