

**Acton**  
**Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, September 20, 2016, Town Hall, Room 9, 7 P.M.**

Attendance

Regular (voting) members present: Paula Goodwin, Bob Guba, Bruce Rachman (Chair), Jim Snyder-Grant, Laurie Ullmann, Joe Will (Minutes)

Associate (nonvoting) members present: None

Nonmembers: Bettina Abe (Acton Natural Resources Assistant), Ainslie Brennan and James Engell (Breezy Point residents), Robert and Marsha Hill (Bench proposers), Evvy Shoemaker (Girl Scout), Michelle Shoemaker (Girl Scout Co-Leader), Allen Warner (Junior High Workday Coordinator)

Bruce called the meeting to order at 7:07 P.M.

Review and approval of June and August minutes

Approvals, with minor corrections to August minutes, were moved and voted unanimously.

Junior High School Workday, Fri 09/30, ~9:30–1:00 — Allen Warner is coordinator

In this 12<sup>th</sup> year of the workday, 109 students are available for about 2.5 h of work.

- At Heath Hen Meadow, students can move seven sections of boardwalks; also put down woodchips if there is a need — 10 students. Bettina would have wood chips delivered to Prescott Road. Allen can provide backpacks and buckets.
- Students can spread wood chips at the entrance to the trail beside the Assabet River — 10 students. Bettina will provide the wood chips.
- Other two sites Allen has so far are the Iron Work Farm in South Acton and Liberty Field in Boxborough.

Other possibilities:

- There can be a crew at Wheeler Lane where there is pile of stone dust. The trail there could be scraped and the stone dust spread on the trail. There could also be a general cleanup. Laurie will supervise. Laurie is set for equipment, but the students can bring loppers and pruners.
- Bruce told of tasks that students could do at Camp Acton (brush out camp sites, split firewood, etc.) and what they would need to bring.
- The Newtown Road access trail to Grassy Pond could use a load of wood chips. Jim S-G is available on 09/30 for supervising and could supervise here.
- Allen should check with John Watlington for any needs at Great Hill and with Cathy Fochtman for any needs of the Acton Recreation Department.

Girl Scout Troop Bronze Award — Michelle Shoemaker

Michelle Shoemaker, Co-Leader of Girl Scout Troop 65298 in Acton, and daughter Evvy told the Committee of the Girl Scout Bronze Award. The Award would involve a project for the Acton community. Michelle and Evvy attended this meeting of the LSC to get some initial project ideas that they could discuss with the Troop within their parameters (e.g., participating scouts would be 10-11 year old 5<sup>th</sup> graders). Some ideas:

- Clearing trails (Scouts would like something more permanent in nature)

- Improving trails: Trail markers are sometimes hard to see; blazing could be improved.
- Observe animals, record observations, and create a brochure that could be handed out in schools and to other Girl Scout units. Also, put information gathered on the Acton Trails website.
- Define a wildflower garden, e.g., at Wheeler Lane.

The Troop's goal is to complete a project by the end of this school year, although it could trickle over into next year.

### Bench application

Bettina gave details of an application for a bench at Nashoba Brook in memory of the son, a worldwide conservation advocate, of Robert and Marsha Hill. Bettina proposed that it be across the footbridge below Wheeler Lane — somewhere that Natural Resources could easily pour a concrete pad. The bench has the approval of Tom Tidman, Acton's Natural Resources Director, it fits with Acton's Open Space and Recreation Plan, but it needs to be cleared yet with the LSC. This site would be about 0.6 mi from the Hill's home, but they are flexible on the final location. Laurie suggested that there could be a range of possibilities, including upstream from the bridge. Bob suggested that the bench could be across the old roadway to Concord that rises on the east side of the bridge. The bench would be wooden, as proposed by the Hills. Bettina suggested the teak Country Casual material as used for benches in the Arboretum. There would be a little plaque on the front of the bench with wording as proposed in the application.

When there's to be a bench on a Conservation parcel, there's a requirement that the LSC have a general sense of the number of benches on the parcel. At Nashoba Brook, there will be a Trail Through Time bench next to the Native American kiosk. There is also a bench at the Pencil Factory.

That the LSC accept the bench application as written, with exact bench location to be determined, was moved and voted unanimously.

To follow up, Bettina will be in touch with the Hill's, and may schedule a walk with them and/or Tom Tidman to note possible sites.

### Maps — Trails on [openstreetmap.org](http://openstreetmap.org); resolution for printing by Acton Police

Acton Police are all set.

### Maps — Listing questions about trail mapping and maintenance — Jim S-G

Bruce has seen some in OpenStreetMap (OSM) maps and is not sure how good OSM is. Jim met with 5 or 6 interested others from the LSC and found that OSM shows up in lots of applications, so getting the basic trails in OSM seems a good basic feature. Drawback: OSM does not show trails nicely with respect to distinguishing colors. Anyone can work with OSM. Jim corrected the Guggins Brook OSM map in 45 min. OSM is the Wikipedia for maps— a big database for trails. Jim finds OSM in other places, e.g., MapMyRun. If there are stewards interested in learning to work with OSM, Jim will be happy to teach them and turn them loose. If others are able to look at their maps and want edits made, let Jim know.

Bob has Mapbox, an online platform for creating online maps. Zoom in on a Mapbox map and the map shows more details, something we may want to have eventually on the website and for Smartphones. There is a reasonable chance to get paper maps out of Mapbox. Jim will get together with Bob and with Joe Holmes on Mapbox.

Bruce will help Jim set things up in Gmap4, another mapping software. He will take this "offline" with

any interested parties.

#### Maps — Arboretum Tracks KML (mapping) file — Bob G

Bettina in response to Bob's observations on the Arboretum trails: We have no plans to change the map of the Arboretum. Bob: There is a tree down on one of the crossover trails. Bettina: Joe Holmes maintains the Arboretum's ancillary trails, but do we do maintenance on all the trails? Not really.

#### Garlic mustard picking in 2016 — Jim S-G

It's been a successful year. Jim got to all Conservation Land except for Nagog Hill because of its overwhelming size. He's had fewer volunteers this year, but also a lot less garlic mustard as his past efforts are having an impact.

#### Dog Poop Poster — Jim S-G

Jim brought a copy of the "There is No Poop Fairy" poster that Bob had viewed at the Mine Falls Park in Nashua, NH, and e-shared. It was noted that in our Conservation Lands, dogs generally go way off the trails. The winter before last was a problem as going off the trails was difficult due to the deep snow. It was pointed out that dog waste — different from other animal waste — off the trail is not good for the environment. Anyone with Photoshop could do an Acton version of the Nashua sign. The LSC has had these discussions every few years and it feels that the LSC kiosks are "pretty well signed." Paula will try to do a version of the poster for Heath Hen Meadow.

#### Non-Parcel Update — Nagog Pond and Concord Water Treatment Facility

Ainslie Brennan and James Engell updated the LSC on Concord's recent proposal as presented at a recent Acton Board of Selectmen's meeting, focusing primarily on the proposed fencing. The LSC is supportive of Acton's concerns about this project and, per Bruce, will do what it can if the LSC has any opportunity to have an impact in the future.

#### Non-Parcel Update — 176 Central Street stewarding:

Bettina said that maybe Joe Glannon (an abutter and advocate of Town acquisition of this land) could help with stewarding 176 Central Street, and suggested that Paula meet him. Joe W said that he was having difficulty finding any LSC agreement with the Cemetery Commission about this land. While he spoke, Jim was emailing Joe and Paula the agreement.

#### Parcel(s) specific:

- Great Hill: With pond water low, hockey goals that sank when winter ice melted have been exposed, Bruce will don chest waders and try to remove the goals. Bettina offered to help. John Watlington's Great Hill report expressed concern over the discarding of cigarette butts. Bob suggests there should be a sign to discourage this. Also, Bob points out that the crossover trail at the summit of Great Hill gets enough use that the LSC should consider adding that trail to the map. Place this on the October agenda.
- Nashoba Brook: Tom Tidman put the sluice bridge on Shawn O'Malley's work schedule for this fall. Recently, Shawn's crew has been too busy with funerals to tend to this type of work. It was noted that before the bridge goes in, it will be necessary to build up the retaining wall.
- Jenks: Bob feels that the Jenks Management Plan needs review. Right now Jenks is all goldenrod and Queen Anne's lace. Perhaps a rectangular swath could be cut in the lower meadow to see if the meadow could return to grass, or to a plant variety that we aren't getting now.
- Spring Hill: There is still a major blowdown on the Bay Circuit Trail. Bruce will take care of it. However, it's a huge thing and could be a two-person task.

- Other:

- Bruce will provide a QR code for the “Want to Volunteer” poster that Bettina will make available for all the kiosks.
- Has everyone had a chance to try the mower? There’s been no need to mow.

LSC Website, Brainstorming WildAware stories:

Paula has posted the article about Conservation Restrictions. Give any ideas for other stories to Paula.

- Bruce: There is a good environment for owls at Camp Acton. There will be a story on bard owls and great horned owls.
- Bruce: Animals and the drought could be a good article. Paula shared some ideas on this and asked others to share their observations about the drought. It was suggested that Paula contact Brian Butler, President of Oxbow Associates, Inc., a wetlands and wildlife consulting company, who “knows everything” about the effects of drought. Paula will try to do so.

LSC Website, Workdate calendar

Cyrus Comminos is offering a small group of Scouts, Grades 5 through 12, if the LSC has any service projects that need doing.

October 18 agenda

- Great Hill crossover trail
- The get together at Bruce’s house, October 22.

Evaluate meeting

“Superb.” “Well-chaired.” “Productive.”

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 P.M.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, October 18, at 7 P.M., in Room 9.