

Acton
Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, August 16, 2022, 7 P.M., Hybrid

Attendees (in bold)

Regular (voting) members: Jon Campbell, **Dale Chayes**, **Zanna Gruber** (Vice-Chair), **Aaron Moore** (Chair), **Bruce Rachman**, John Watlington, **Joe Will** (Minutes)

Associate (nonvoting) members: Josh Haines, Everett Kenerson, Gary Kilpatrick, Mel Lima, **Bob Mackin**, Jim Salem, **Hilary Reid**, Bill Smith, Todd Tsakiris, **Tom Wolf**

Others:

Bettina Abe (Acton Conservation), **Ken Appel** (Maynard citizen), **Mike Gendron** (Acton Conservation Agent), **Jody Harris** (Acton Conservation Trust (ACT)), **Rachel Krebs** (Acton citizen)

Opening

Aaron opened the meeting at 7 p.m.

Regular Business

Review and approval of July 26 minutes

Approved as submitted.

Concerns from the public

none

Invasive plants 2022, Part 6

John Watlington is not attending this meeting, so this month's presentation is postponed until September.

Sawyer concerns

Bettina organized the most basic of sawyer training this past summer, and that was good. Per Dale, additional sawyer training is needed. Tim Ard, who has traditionally taught sawyers in Massachusetts, will be in our vicinity with a storm cleanup class the week of October 17. (Storm cleanup involves tangled trees with complicated stress. With trees lying on the ground, the worse that can happen usually is that a sawyer "gets stuck". With leaners under stress, sawyers can get seriously hurt. Learning how to take down leaners as a self-training effort is "bad strategy".) It would be good to get some of our sawyers into Tim's storm cleanup class. How is this done? Per Bettina: Chainsaw training is done through MIIA, the Town's insurance provider. Dale will provide Bettina with Tim's contact information. She will look into it and aim for getting our sawyers storm cleanup training. Dale cautions that only one day of training is not enough. A half day is spent in classroom discussion on how chainsaws work and chainsaw safety. The afternoon involves almost rudimentary saw work (three cuts, or so), typically in a parking lot. A second day of more intensive training is essential.

Dale points out that we currently use a Google list server and a Google spreadsheet to try to keep track of sawyer-specific requests.

Dale initiated a discussion about personal protective equipment (PPE). Points made:

- If sawyers were paid Town employees, OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) would require the Town to provide appropriate PPE.
- Good chainsaw PPE is very important, and sawyers are in the "awkward position" of having to provide their own. A chainsaw is essential, of course. They cost \$200 to \$1000. You must have your

own helmet (\$30 to \$250), and your own chaps or pants (\$50 to \$200). Boots are not required, but they are important (steel toe or no).

- Bettina provided a history of the LSC sawyers from starting with sawyers who were outdoor woodsmen who owned all their stuff, to the introduction of chainsaw classes and better understanding of the importance and expense of PPE, to the Town not budgeting for any chainsaw expenses beyond buying chains or sharpening saws, to today's world that has lots of rules and the heightened emphases on PPE.
- There should be a list (with today's date on it) of needed PPE and what it costs — a big “lift” for some folks.
- There was discussion on ways the Town could help with PPE gear and the accompanying awkwardness of doing so because of the personal nature of the PPE.
- Questions: If we had no sawyers on the Committee, how would the Town take care of tree issues currently handled by LSC sawyers? Would Town employees have to do tree cleanup?
Answer A: Such issues might be handled in various ways, with an example provided of a tree in Conservation Land falling across a sidewalk and the Town providing minimal, but essential, assistance, but with the bulk of the task ultimately being handled by a steward.
Answer B: Some available Town worker providing minimal, but essential, service.
Answer C: Our trails would end up looking like those in lots of other towns.
- Is there an action item out of this? It may depend on what this Committee's future relationship is with the Town pending the Natural Resources/Conservation reorganization. Mike suggests that we could start with a list of what a PPE budget might look like — what the LSC would be looking for at the very least. It would be helpful for him to have it on file so that he could share it with others in Town Hall to investigate the possibility of incorporating it into the Town budget.

Updates

– LSC Mission Statement 2022 Revision

Aaron told Jim Snyder-Grant of the Select Board that we approved the draft at our last meeting. Dale suggests that the sentence, “Associate members may be from towns near Acton at the discretion of the Select Board” should change to “Associate members may be from towns near Acton with the recommendation of the Land Stewardship Committee and at the discretion of the Select Board.” Reason for the change: To prevent some random person from some other town simply going to the Select Board and saying, “Hey, I want to be an Associate member of the Land Stewardship Committee”. While something like this would seem highly unlikely to happen, the proposed wording pulls in the LSC, as it should. Ken (see “Attendees, Others”) is from Maynard and is in the process of becoming an Associate member. The steps he and Bettina have taken to achieve this is a more likely scenario.

It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously by roll call that the wording of the LSC Mission Statement be changed as proposed.

The rewording has already been sent to Jim Snyder-Grant to be put on a future Select Board agenda.

– Bridges, Heath Hen Meadow, Nashoba Brook

Hopefully, we will be getting our Wetlands Order of Conditions from the Conservation Commission tomorrow night for Heath Hen Meadow. Bettina will start ordering materials and setting up workdays. For the Nashoba Brook bridge, Tom sent out “incredible” diagnoses and plans last night for its repair.

– Trail reroutes

Bruce reviewed the Spring Hill reroute of its yellow trail as described in the LSC June minutes using the reroute maps shown in the LSC July minutes. The purpose of the reroute is to avoid a rocky, muddy section that is almost always wet as it is downhill from the spring in Spring Hill. It is a fairly straightforward redirect, but it doesn't sound like it. The reroute is already cut and cleared of all dead fall. We could widen

the new yellow (former blue) trail section on a workday. We could pull a log onto the closed yellow section, or maybe simply use some tape and a sign saying that the new trail reroute is much nicer. Jody will have to do some work with the blazes. She will visit the site this weekend and will be in touch with Bruce if she has questions. Additional arrows might be helpful. (Jody has an endless number of them.) Bruce should send to Bettina a list of suggested placements and colors for arrows that Jody could post. Bettina will add her ideas re signage and send the information to Jody

Adjacent to Morrison Farm, near the northeast corner of the soccer field, there is a trail through the cemetery woods to the Farm's large meadow. John has flagged a reroute so that it enters the woods next to the stone wall about 20 yards south of the current entrance. This is in response to the Cemetery Commission's efforts to move dogs away from developed cemetery land. This reroute will require some blazing changes that Jody will address. Finalizing the reroute should happen only after the Cemetery posts its planned new signage.

– Maps
no update

– Website
It has a new Camp Acton map. A lot of other new maps will be posted as soon as they are ready. We should advertise that we are looking for a new Spring Hill steward — although Phil Keyes has not yet submitted his official resignation.

On the Town website, the LSC minutes are posted only through January. That will be fixed.

– Acton's Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP)
No update. It will be taken off the agenda for the time being.

– LSC membership
Bettina introduced Rachel, and Ken, who, until tonight at least, is planning to join the LSC as steward for Assabet River B & G Trail and Canoe Launch. Rachel's parcel is still to be determined.

Parcel issues

– Bulette

We are in touch with Jamie Hryniewicz, the developer of the homes on Genevieve Lane, who will be building a bridge over the brook running through the PCRC land that will become part of Bulette. Bettina has given him all the guidelines. He will have a look at some of the bridges/boardwalks in other parcels and will be in touch with Bruce if necessary.

Tuesday, August 23 at 4 pm, Mike and Bettina will be hosting a clean-up work party at the end of Genevieve Lane. A forest fairy has gathered lots of scrap pieces of automobiles that had been abandoned in the woods in the past hundred years or so. The pieces have all been moved to neatly line the trail. They will be moved by the work party to a front loader, and thence to a dump truck. Bettina has sent an email to the LSC volunteer list and to all the teenagers who have been volunteering at the Arboretum. Any LSC members who want to participate should let Bettina know.

– Assabet River B & G Trail and Canoe Launch.

Bettina is working on getting Ken the proper electric tool so that he can stay on top of the knotweed at the Canoe Launch and the brush at the B & G trailhead. Also, the observation platform in the river needs jacking up.

Next month's (09/20) agenda

Joe's suggestion: We talk about citizen oversight by Actonians of Ice House Pond, the East Acton Village Green (EAVG), the Community Gardens, and the rail trails. Bettina points out that the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail provides citizen oversight. Joe counters that the FBFRT is not an Acton citizens group.

Neither is Corey York and the DPW that provide oversight for some of the sites above. As for the EAVG, Bettina has put together a volunteer group that she hopes to make a little more robust. Another possibility would be to get the Acton Garden Club involved.

Second suggestion: The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) apparently will be asking folks who will be seeking Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds to provide, as best they can, their request plans for the next five years. The LSC has nothing on tap for 2023, but does it have any idea about projects farther out?

Adjournment

At 7:58 pm.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, September 20, at 7 pm.