

Acton
Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 17, 2015, Town Hall, Room 126, 7 P.M.

Attendance

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

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

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

Jim called the meeting to order at 7:08 P.M. Bruce brought blondies and was designated timekeeper for this meeting.

Review and approval of January 20 minutes (There was no February meeting.)

- Approval of minutes (with one name-spelling correction) moved and voted unanimously.

Proposed "Leave No Trace" poster

Bettina brought a final form, laminated. Laurie pointed out that there is duplicity between the "Leave No Trace" items and the "Acton Conservation Land Regulations," and his two kiosks are "filling up." Bettina feels that the regulations should be on the kiosks so that we can say, "regulations are posted." Putting up the signs for a year and collecting feedback on them was moved and voted unanimously.

Scoutland easement progress report

Bettina talked with Bill Klauer, one of two Scoutland trustees (one in favor of and one against the Town owning Scoutland). Is there a new license yet (for crossing Scoutland)? No. Is there a third trustee yet? No, but Bill is hoping yet to get a third trustee. Bill completely agrees with the idea of preserving the land.

The Scoutland Trustees own the land, not the Boys Scouts of America. Perhaps it would be helpful to know the basis on which the Trustees claim tax-exempt status for Scoutland.

The clock is ticking in that we would like to reroute the Bay Circuit Trail through Scoutland when the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail is completed.

Mapping progress report

Since the previous LSC meeting, Jim hosted a mapping meeting for anyone interested at the Common House of Half Moon Hill. He indicated there are four parts to the impending work:

1. Need a common repository for the source data (e.g., the kml files that Bob G has been managing).
2. Identify ways to use that source data for a new static printable map. Bruce and Bob F will work on this using the Robbins Mill map and Bruce's Delorme data. However, Delorme can't use the high-resolution format that Bob G uses. Bruce will look into what Concord uses to produce Concord's "beautiful" map of Estabrook Woods.
3. Identify ways to use that source for creating an online interactive map. This has been taken on by a large number of people with no follow-up specified.
4. Move the data into the various available on-line sources. Sherman has signed up to help with this, will need some guidance on how to proceed.

The “actontrails” website has been moved to a server that Bruce controls. We can control the domain as the town can control only “.gov” domains. According to Jim, we have a number of people interested in helping with the maps, but we need direction. Next steps: Jim will seek volunteers to move the various parts forward.

Chair transition - update & discussion

June is probably Jim’s last month as Chair of the LSC (maybe July if BoS is slow on appointments). Jim will continue on as a steward. Prior to the meeting he e-detailed for the LSC his duties as Chair. The LSC discussed what might become of some of the duties.

Bettina is willing to work with the Clerk to set agenda and run meetings as a moderator but she doesn’t want to be Chair.

Instead of sharing a first draft of a meeting’s minutes with Jim, Joe will send a first draft direct to the entire Committee from now on. Joe may shorten the minutes.

Re Jim’s list of issues that he shares regularly with Tom Tidman: Bruce will be “issue manager” for 6 months or a year. He will try to develop some plan for periodic meetings to go through the list with Tom during work hours (8-5) and track them.

Bettina will take over resolving inconsistencies that occur in lists of rule for Conservation Lands. She will develop one list for submission to and approval of the Conservation Commission.

We’ll deal with the rest of the duties of LSC Chair at a future meeting.

High School Senior Community Service Day

This will involve many of the High School Senior Class on Friday, 5/1. Bettina has students for the Arboretum and Linda McElroy has students for Wheeler Lane. Laurie is available to supervise. Last year, two crews pulled garlic mustard at the Arboretum (Wood Lane) and Great Hill. Jim would suggest those two sites again. The Service Day still needs adult volunteers to supervise.

Eagle Scout projects

Bettina had sent out a list of projects to the Committee, but omitted James Gong who will be building a boardwalk at Grassy Pond. For the Open Space and Recreation Plan, we listed several ways for Conservation Lands to have better amenities for folks with different ranges of abilities. Could we suggest such projects for Eagle Scouts?

Some project possibilities:

- Assemble picnic tables (with frames delivered by the Town) and do trail work.
- Assemble and paint wooden benches.
- Develop a perimeter trail around the Grassy Pond meadow, or a stone dust trail along the meadow edge to a picnic table.
- Develop wheelchair considerations at Camp Acton.
- Build suitable ramps to the Nashoba Brook bridges.

Review Conservation Land Use activity sheet

Bettina shared the activity sheet she developed and asked for comments.

- Footnote about horses should say: Horses are not permitted on boardwalks/bridges.
- Add Mountain Biking.
- Put 4 or 5 of the most popular activities at the top of the list. #2 should be Mountain Biking.

- Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing should be together.
- Dog walking is not on the list. It's part of hiking/walking.
- What's a "water feature"?
- What's the meaning of "N"?
- For parking, give an estimate of the number of cars that can be accommodated.
- Change title to "Suggested Use Activities".
- Round off the Robbins Mill acreage.
- Include the Morrison Farm woods.

The committee reviewed and commented on the cell entries. Bettina will send out the sheet with changes. Once a year we can update this.

Stow-via-Heath-Hen-Meadow trails update & discussion

Should there be blazed trails (that would encourage walkers) on the Whitcomb land, where hunting has traditionally occurred? We'll talk more about this when Acton Conservation Trust, which owns the land, acts on this.

Parcel reports

Parcels have been fairly inaccessible, but we had reports on most of them.

Any issues? Kiosks don't need signs that give overlapping information about the parcels.

Are we using QR codes? Yes. We can make them smaller than 8½ by 11.

Laurie showed new Bay Circuit Trail signs.

Cub Scout Pack 32/Den 5 would like to do some service work in June, possibly working with chips in Pratt's brook.

Agree on agenda items for April, along with identifying who will do any required preparatory work

Jim listed several possible future agenda items and wanted to add who will be doing the necessary work to prepare for them.

- Kiosk layout: What gets posted on a kiosk and where? Preparing for this will be Laurie's task, and it will be ready for May's agenda.
- Fishing: Bettina and Joe H will take this offline and get back to the Committee in a few months.
- Great Hill trail routes: John will prepare, for sometime in May.
- "You are Here" holders: Whether and how to use them – Bruce in April.
- Morrison Farm: Joe W in May.
- Invasives priorities: John and Bettina, for the April agenda.
- Field mower: Bruce will review the state list and report in April. We can't depend on Town for truck. Bettina will have some useful maintenance information.
- Wright Hill: Jim has someone who may be steward. Will report in April.
- Chair tasks: Jim to continue discussing these in April.
- Wetherbee Steward: John will post signs and report back when/if something happens.
- The clock is ticking in that we would like to reroute the Bay Circuit Trail through Scoutland when the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail is completed. By then, we will need a trail license or some other way to have a right to maintain a trail.

Evaluate meeting

We ran 15 s over the planned time. Bruce's blondies were a hit. John volunteers food for April.

The meeting adjourned at 8:44 P.M.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, April 21, at 7 P.M., in Room 126. (Patriots' Day week).

These documents that served as background to this meeting were sent by email to the lsc@acton-ma.gov list:

"Spring Hill" Mar 17 Philip Keyes
"Guggins report", Mar 12, Jim Snyder-Grant
"Updated draft for your review", Mar 16, Bettina Abe
"Arboretum Report" Mar 15, Bettina Abe
"Grassy Pond" Mar 6, Ann Shubert
"Nagog Hill Trail Report", Feb 28, Elan Riesman
"Pratt's Brook report", Feb 16, Sherman Smith
"Stoneymeade. Report..." Feb 23, Nan Towle Millett
"RM Report", Feb 22, Bob Farra
"Canoe Launch Report", Feb 18, Joseph Holmes
"Bulette/TF", Feb 17, Andrew Gatesman
"Pacy Update", Feb 16, Jason Temple
"Jenks and Guggins Pictorial Report", Feb 16, Joshua Haines
"Camp Acton Report" Feb 16, Bruce Rachman
"Robbins Mill", Feb 16, Bob Farra
"Nashoba Brook / Spring Hill" Feb 16, Philip Keyes
"Arboretum Report" Feb 15, Bettina Abe
"Jenks Report" Feb 15, Joshua Haines
"lsc Jan minutes draft and WHole/TF report" Feb 14, Joe Will
"revised Leave No Trace Poster" Feb 15, Bettina Abe