

Acton
Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) Virtual Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 20, 2020, Virtual Meeting, 7 P.M.

Attendees (in bold)

Regular (voting) members: **Dale Chayes, Bob Farra, Zanna Gruber** (Chair), **Joe Holmes, Bruce Rachman, Laurie Ullmann**, John Watlington (Vice-Chair), **Joe Will** (Minutes)

Associate (nonvoting) members: **Jon Campbell**, Andy Gatesman, Josh Haines, **Philip Keyes**, Gary Kilpatrick, Mel Lima, Aaron Moore, Jim Salem, Jason Temple, Todd Tsakiris

Others:

Bettina Abe (Acton Natural Resources Assistant), **Susan Mitchell-Hardt** (Acton Conservation Trust (ACT) President)

Opening

Note: The recording of this zoom meeting ended for unknown reasons at 7 min, 29 s of recording time. It ended before the meeting began. The minutes are compiled from notes provided by most of the panelists.

Bruce opened the meeting at approximately 7:10 p.m., with a quorum of 6 voting members present — Dale, Bob, Joe H, Bruce, Laurie, and Joe W. Bruce chaired the meeting as Zanna was delayed in attending.

Regular Business

Review and approval of September 15 minutes

Approval of the minutes with one fix (adjournment time) was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously by roll call.

Citizens' concerns

Joe W shared the email from the High School re student volunteers. At this time, volunteer work done by students has to be virtual, so the feeling was that there is little that students could do now for the LSC.

New/Special Business

• Laurie Ullman Recognition

Susan told of the ACT's presentation on Sunday, 10/04, of the Carol Holley Conservation Award for 2020 to Laurie. Linda McElroy presented the award at the Wheeler Lane entrance to the Nashoba Brook Conservation Land, for which Laurie is steward. Former steward, Bob Guba, was among the guests.

• Green Acton Ecosystems Initiative

Zanna shared the email she had forwarded to the LSC from Matt Liebman and Mike Boss of Green Acton. Matt and Mike are thinking about starting a group with a focus on biodiversity/ecosystem health. Zanna will meet with them about it and it will be on the November agenda.

• Former roads in conservation parcels

Joe H shared the following list of roads or former roads in Conservation Lands:

– **Arboretum**: Billings Trail, Wood Lane parking to yellow trail; End of Wood Lane, straight in

– **Bulette**: red access trail

– **Camp Acton**: red and yellow access trails to camp sites

– **Canoe Launch**:

– **Grassy Pond**:

– **Great Hill**:

– **Guggins Brook:**

– **Heath Hen Meadow:** red and yellow access to the meadows from Robbins Street; cemetery yellow trail to the bridge

– **Jenks:** red access trail from the parking lot to over the bridge

– **Morrison Farm:** most paths in the meadows

– **Nagog Hill:**

– **Nashoba Brook:** Old road to Concord; Old Davis Road past the Pencil Factory

– **Pacy:**

– **Pratts Brook:** Surely the stone bridge had to be part of a road?

– **Robbins Mill:**

– **Spring Hill:**

– **Stoneymeade:** all trails

– **Wetherbee:** red access trail

– **Wills Hole:** parts of the yellow loop; the Nagog Park Drive-to-NARA unblazed walkway

– **Wright Hill:** yellow trail up the hill

Joe explained that the LSC trail maintenance standards say to clear the trails 4 feet wide, and 8 feet high. However, we have trails in 60% of our parcel that actually are former roads. Currently, these are often used by the LSC to bring in mowing equipment or for construction purposes. Another example of use is the delivery of picnic tables at Camp Acton. When a tree comes down across such a trail, do we cut a 4-feet passage, or do we cut the full road-width so an off-road car can make it through? Generally, we should maintain the width on the former roads that are still needed for access. Joe plans to develop and share a clear list of which trails to keep wide, and which not.

- **Work Parties**

Scouting's Order of the Arrow is trying to address the backlog of new members' need for work parties.

Additional Regular Business

Covid19-related issues

None

Parcel issues

- **Nashoba Brook**

– Joe W shared a video of the walkway from the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail to the brook at the Pencil Factory site. He, Bettina, Bill Dickinson, Chair of the Acton Historical Commission, and Dana McKeil of Integrity Building and Design of Acton walked the site yesterday. Joe reviewed Bill's proposal (that would include LSC participation in helping to clear the site) and asked that the LSC submit a letter to the Community Preservation Committee in support of the project. The LSC was in unanimous agreement, and Zanna will send the letter.

- **Heath Hen Meadow boardwalk and bridge replacement**

Bettina is working on this. More to come.

- **Canoe Launch**

– The abandoned boat has been hauled away by the town.

– Re possible construction at 67 Powder Mill Road (building set way back, but property extends to Powder Mill Road): Per Bettina, Natural Resources personnel will make sure that the Conservation Restriction (CR) does not get built on by mistake. Joe H wants to double check the CR with the proposed development to make sure there is not a mistake. The lot lines and CR lines are very complicated at the Canoe Launch. (Clerk's note: Subsequent to this meeting, it was pointed out that construction plans call for access to the new building to be through the Council of Aging parking lot, something that may not be allowed.)

- Morrison Farm

Joe H finalized the new paper (and pdf) map and emailed it to the LSC yesterday. It was made by the Acton GIS department using LSC trail data, parking, and kiosk locations. All the other data are from Acton GIS. This includes roads, wooded areas, and contours. The LSC mapping team went through four revisions with Aaron Green from Acton GIS as the team made suggestions to make it better. Bettina will print maps for the Morrison Farm kiosk map box. Joe plans to ask Aaron to print a larger map (~11" x 17" compared to 8.5" x 11") to post on the kiosk. (See =>)

- Other

Should a parcel show its steward's name (e.g., on the website)?



Website issues

Mark Hald, Acton's Chief Information Officer, finally updated the LSC map website, so the links from the online maps to the website descriptions are again working. Mark still has not provided the LSC with a way that the LSC can do its own updating. Joe H has several updates in mind which require access to the website files.

Online maps update

Two changes to the online maps:

- On the Morrison Farm map, Joe H added the parking lot "P" next to the soccer field on Concord Road in front of Woodlawn Cemetery as well as a new, nearby paved cemetery road. The map now is final so the website can "go live" with "Morrison Farm" on its website list of LSC parcels. Bettina will contact Peg Sestrich to do this.
- On the Arboretum map, Joe added the China Trail and its bridge. Whereas the Arboretum is the only conservation parcel in Acton with several trails named and with names shown on the map, some would like the China Trail name shown on the Arboretum map.

Next month's (November 17) agenda

The Green Acton Ecosystems Initiative

Evaluate meeting

"Awesome"

Adjournment

At about 8 p.m., the meeting adjourned.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, November 17, at a time to be announced.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

- Draft Meeting Minutes of September 15, 2020