



**Town of Acton
Open Space Committee**

Meeting Minutes

October 3 2025

8:00 AM VIRTUAL and in Person

Acton Town Hall Room 9, 472 Main Street, Acton, MA 01720

Committee Members Present: Karen O'Neill (Chairing Meeting Co-Chair, Full Member), Matt Mostoller (Full Member, AWD), Amy Green (Full Member), Terry Maitland (Co-Chair), Brandon Comstock (Full Member)

Committee Members Absent: Bettina Abe (Full Member), Michaela Moran (Planning Board Liaison),

Non-Committee Members Present: Ian Bergemann (Community Conservation Specialist), Susan Mitchell-Hardt (ACT), David Martin (Select Board - Liaison), Shawn O'Malley (AWD)

Meeting Open

8:00am. Karen O'Neill, Co-Chair called the meeting to order and conducted roll call.

I. Regular Business

1. Review meeting minutes of March and April, 2025

- a. 8:02am. The committee reviewed the March and April 2025 minutes. During the review, several corrections were noted:

For the March minutes: Matt Mostoller noted that Terra Friederick's name needed a spelling correction (first and last name) Matt also identified an issue where identical language was attributed to him in two different sections (Section 2 "Status of property conservation restrictions" and Item 3 "Update on any other land parcels")

For the April minutes: A reference to "Hope Road" needed to be corrected to "Pope Road" in relation to Triangle Farm. A reference to "ARAD" was clarified, as it appeared unclear in the minutes whether the 42 Taylor parcel approval was related to "A and R" or "ANRAD."

Terry Maitland moved to approve the minutes and the vote was unanimous (was this roll call?)

2. Status of property Conservation Restrictions (any changes)

- a. 8:12am. Chair Karen O'Neill asked if there were any updates regarding conservation restrictions. It was noted that there were no significant updates,



though Karen mentioned that the Piper Lane conservation restriction was moving through the state approval process well but was not yet finalized.

- b. Susan Mitchell-Hardt mentioned that the Acton Conservation Trust had questions about the 6 Piper Road Rear encroachments. She noted that she had been advised to get legal advice regarding the rock encroachments. Susan expressed that she would like to see the rocks removed and suggested that the dog park committee could potentially use some of the rocks that are encroaching on the yard land.
- c. Matt Mostoller inquired about outstanding conservation restrictions. It was confirmed that Piper Lane was still in process, while the Anderson property off Arlington Street (282) had been completed in December 2024. Matt also provided an update on a conservation restriction that the Acton Water District holds with ACT on a parcel in Concord. He mentioned that they had completed their baseline documentation and would be looking to schedule the first site visit probably during the winter. Matt clarified that this was an odd, skinny parcel with a tiny piece in Acton and the remainder in Concord, approximately 6 acres total with about half or a third of an acre in Acton.

II. New/Special Business

1. CPC Open Space Set Aside Request

- a. 8:15am. Brandon Comstock explained that applications for Community Preservation Committee funding were now open, with a deadline of November 24th (Thanksgiving). He clarified that this request would be just for the set-aside funding to add to the Open Space account, not for a specific project. Brandon mentioned that the actual presentation to the CPC would happen later, likely in January, when the committee could decide what they wanted to highlight, such as specific candidates for acquisition or past successes. The current task was simply to submit the application by the deadline. The committee discussed current funding levels, with Brandon estimating that there was near one million dollars (\$1,000,000) currently in the set-aside, as they had used about \$1,000,000 on the Wetherbee property and then added less than a hundred thousand afterward. Ian Bergemann noted that the CPC recommended a pre-application meeting for projects requesting over \$300,000, though it wasn't clear if this applied to the set-aside request. Karen offered to draft the application but requested assistance since this was not her area of expertise. Brandon suggested using the previous year's application as a template, changing only the dates and numbers.

2. Committee Reorganization for the year

- a. 8:22am. Chair Karen O'Neill brought up the topic of reorganizing the committee. She explained that she was experiencing health issues that were taking up "mind space" and causing her to make mistakes due to distraction. She asked if anyone would be willing to take over as chair. The committee discussed the committee's structure. Brandon looked up the committee's charge, noting it called for 7 regular



members and 2 associate members serving terms of 3 years, with 1 member from the conservation commission and 1 from the planning board. It was noted that there was no mention of the Acton Water District in the current charge, which some members found surprising since historically they had been included.

3. Discussion of Open Space & Recreation Plan parcel list

- a. 8:26am. Ian Bergemann shared a map showing priority parcels from the Open Space and Recreation Plan. The map displayed parcels in lemon color that were listed in the priority parcel prioritization list found on page 302 of the plan. The committee noted that some parcels on the map were now outdated, as they had been acquired or protected. Susan Mitchell-Hardt mentioned she was working on a couple of parcels but preferred not to discuss them until there was more substance to talk about. Karen O'Neill referenced a parcel she was working on, explaining that the owner had initially been interested in donating it about 3-4 years ago, but after his wife died, the process stalled. She indicated she would follow up with the owner again. The committee discussed other potential parcels: Ian mentioned the Donald property, which had been looked at extensively. A parcel on Piper Road that was once going to be gifted but the owner changed their mind, then recently considered gifting it again for low-income housing. Several parcels owned by the state near the Concord prison, which might become available given the prison's closure. State-owned parcels at the back of Wetherbee with an informal trail used by the neighborhood. Ian noted interest in pursuing potential easements for trail access
- b. Matt Mostoller suggested keeping the parcel discussion as a standing agenda item for future meetings, encouraging members to bring information on parcels not currently on the map or updates on parcels reaching a stage where they could be discussed.
- c. Ian Bergemann also announced that the Open Space and Recreation Plan had been extended to 2034, making it a 10-year plan. He explained that the state had rewritten the whole open space recreation plan workbook in January and was now making it a 10-year plan. The digital version would be updated to reflect this extension.

4. Note on Upcoming 549 Main Street Opening

- a. 8:40am. Matt Mostoller provided a correction, noting the opening would actually be on October 28th at 2:00 PM rather than October 23rd. He mentioned he would send an invitation to the Open Space Committee. The committee engaged in a discussion about the naming of the parcel. Susan Mitchell-Hardt asked about the status of naming the property, expressing concern about it simply being called "549 Main Street" rather than something more descriptive that acknowledged its importance. She suggested incorporating "Acton Water District" and possibly "Conant" in the name to provide context.. Matt Mostoller explained that the Acton Water District Commissioners were considering the naming issue but hadn't made a final decision. He suggested Susan put her naming recommendations in writing



with specific rationale and suggestions. Several committee members offered naming suggestions, including: Brandon suggested incorporating "Minuteman" to highlight the trail that the Minuteman took place. "Isaac Davis Trail" was proposed. "Old Strawberry Hill" was suggested since the road used to be called Strawberry Hill. "Strawberry Hill land" was another option.

- b. Matt explained that the commissioners had a naming convention in place that avoided assigning specific names and that they didn't want to elevate one of the property's values over others through the naming. He noted that the Isaac Davis Trail was its own standalone feature, and the Conant connection was already covered by two nearby wells named after the Conant family. Ian Bergemann added that they were specifically against calling it "conservation land" because it would create confusion since the rules would be different from other conservation lands, particularly regarding dogs not being allowed.

5. Status update of Wetherbee/Moritz CR

- a. 9:00am. Ian Bergemann provided an update on the Wetherbee/Moritz Conservation Restriction. He reported that all the boundary markers were in place, the trail had been blazed, and the kiosk had been installed. They were working on creating a trail map, having updated their online maps but still waiting for updates across different servers. Ian mentioned that a Scout had completed the kiosk project about two weeks ago. The next steps would be managing the open fields in which they had met for the opening; and potentially working with Eagle Scouts to build a picnic area. He noted they planned to install a chain to prevent vehicle access, though people would still be able to park on the Wetherbee Street shoulder. Ian also mentioned they were working on developing a Bruce Freeman connection but had not yet figured out the safest approach due to the steep terrain. He highlighted that a new trail had been created that connects to the back of Wetherbee, creating a well-connected trail system.

6. Updates on any other land parcels (42 Taylor)

- a. 9:06am. No update

7. Next Meeting/ Meeting Times/ Meeting Location

- a. 8 am, Room 9, November 7th 2025

III. Consent Items

1. None

IV. Next Meeting:

1. Nov 7, 2025

a. 9:07am. Karen O'Neill asked for a motion to adjourn. Terry Mainland motioned to close. Roll call vote was taken and all voted yes.

