

Acton
Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 16, 2014, Town Hall, Room 126, 7 P.M.

Attendance

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

Associate (nonvoting) members present: Elan Riesman, Sherman Smith, John Watlington

Nonmember present: Janet Adachi (LSC's Board of Selectmen (BOS) liaison)

Jim called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M. Bruce was designated timekeeper for this meeting.

Review and approval of November 18 minutes

- Identified the Canoe Launch meadow as being privately owned and did not name the owner. With this correction, approval of minutes was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously.

Laurie observed that the minutes come along with lots of emails. Maybe Joe and Jim can do a better job at getting minutes out earlier. No comment from Joe and Jim.

Heath Hen Meadow (HHM) beaver update & next steps

Jim and Bettina reviewed the contents of the email Jim sent today on this topic.

- John claimed that the dam near Nash Road (discussed in the email) is upstream, not downstream, from the dam causing concern beside the bridge to HHM.
- Jim's concern is that the cage is not large enough. Bob says that the cage should be in deep water and explained how to proceed to get proper flow through a deceiver. At present, the beavers are hearing and reacting to the rush of water into the cage. They have also been gnawing the polyethylene pipe, so Bob had to wrap it. Another 10 ft would extend the pipes into deeper water.
- If the Town crew had chest waders, they could clean out the muck collecting on the beaver deceiver cage. This would be a minimal thing they could do.
- Jim is still wondering about consulting Beaver Solutions. Now the water is 6 in. below the stringers, so it is okay to wait until spring. Jim said that the LSC will revisit this in the spring.

Robbins Mill loop trail

Bob Farra, Bob G, Jim, and two abutters cut the previously-flagged loop trail to the small pond off the red trail to Carlisle. Jim shared a map showing the trail. Committee members are urged to check out the new trail. It is not yet blazed. Question: What color should the blazes be (a case could be made for each of yellow, blue, or red)? Blazes should not be white because white is used for the Bay Circuit Trail. Laurie settled the discussion, citing Acton's *Guide to Conservation Lands* description, "Secondary trails — either smaller loops outside the main trail or crossover trails within the main loop — are blazed blue."

It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to use blue blazes.

Mapping follow-up

Jim will call a meeting of the people who volunteered at the previous meeting to work on new mapping. He will post it as a meeting of the LSC. He will aim for sometime in January before the next

regular meeting.

- New parcels don't have Tom Tidman's maps as a basis. Tom has offered to draw more maps.
- Bruce has tried to do things with the current maps, but the software has "moved on." He can't duplicate what exists, but he can get close. He suggests that we look at a better mapping routine, something supportable in the future. He owns a DeLorme map package, has tried a map with it, believes it to be better than other programs he has tried, and is willing to let the LSC use it.
- Jim has been exploring the use of TileMill and Mapbox and will continue to do so before the special meeting. He points out that, in addition to mapping the trails, side projects are possible with the maps, such as moving our trail data to public sources of map data such as Open Street Maps, Google maps, Apple maps, Nokia maps, etc.
- Jim will send out a Doodle poll to help set a January meeting date.

Great Hill bench

Joe noticed the freshly-installed bench had been dislodged and told Bettina. Bettina notified the Town staff, and the staff removed the bench. Subsequently, it was reported as having been stolen. (See Bettina's and Jim's emails about the bench.) Observations:

- If the Town knows of something like this, it should notify the Steward of the parcel.
- There could be a sign put up about the (missing) bench.
- Quick-setting cement should be used (as it was), and someone should stay on site (didn't happen) until bench attachments are set in the cement.
- If there is a weakness in a structure, vandals will exacerbate that weakness. For this bench, the attaching brackets were deficient.
- NARA benches are well made.
- Bruce shared some ideas on how to securely install a bench and will drop a note to Natural Resources on how to do this.

Annual Report

Jim used last year's Annual Report as a basis for this year's. He has asked for and received from various people lots of details to fill in. He has also gotten a couple ideas from this meeting. Jim will send out a version for people to review before filing a final version with the Town.

Mission Statement

Jim sent a draft to the Conservation Commission and got comments back. Some LSC observations:

- We say, "maintain trails and structures" but don't say that we can do certain things like remove invasive plants.
- The "red stuff" (in the report—due to change tracking) is difficult to decipher. Jim shared a version without the tracking.
- The use of "may" in certain places seems a bit indefinite.
- Mission Statements are not bylaws. Town Counsel says to call this a Mission Statement, not a Charter. The version Jim is sharing tonight came out yesterday. Jim would be comfortable with a motion to adopt it tonight, or he could wait until January.

It was moved, seconded, and voted (near unanimous — Joe abstained) to adopt the Mission Statement. Jim will have the Conservation Commission review the final version. The BOS has to approve it.

Website future

The website hosting package will no longer be available. We need to find a new host.

- Does the Town have such a service? Jim: We can't use the domain supported by the Town, as we want to use “actontrails.org.”
- Jim suggests that we use “weebly.com” where Jim has made a website for his condo association. It is visual and easy to use, and can support multiple editors.
- Jason and Bruce mentioned other possible providers. Bruce also described what he uses for his work. In fact, Bruce can give us space—no problem. We could move the current site there without changes. There is full ftp access. Bruce could also provide a data base if we should need one.
- As with the mapping, we'll form a website group: Jim, Bruce, Jason, and John. Jim owns the registry and domain name.
- We have until the end of February to make this move. A plan would be to move actontrails.org as it is. Jim will let Bettina know of any costs, e.g., domain registration. Per Bettina, Natural Resources will back us with needed \$.

Parcel reports

- Stoneymeade

A Stoneymeade report is the only parcel report missing this month.

- Great Hill

There is a dump-truckload of debris behind the houses north of the north Piper Road entrance. The debris is old and probably not put there by current homeowners. Cleanup is probably too much for a volunteer project. It would have to be a Town project. Homeowners would have to allow access.

- Canoe Launch

Joe Holmes will be doing reports. The firewood is gone from the site.

- Wills Hole/Town Forest

Joe will check with Philip Keyes about removing two minor blowdowns.

- Grassy Pond

Andy Gatesman will take care of Ann Shubert's concern here.

- Camp Acton

Bruce is not leaving any leaners near any campsite. He uses Bob's rope system to help remove them.

- Nashoba Brook

The pencil factory kiosk needs new roof shingles, a ridge, and a cap. Tom Tidman wants cedar shingles. Bruce will measure this weekend. Bettina will write up a Purchase Order.

- Miscellany

– Will there be any chainsaw training sessions? Nothing near us right now, but if some come up, that information will be shared.

– If any LSC sawyer wants new chains, email Bettina with as much information as possible. The Town will purchase the chains.

– Stewards should be sure to give Bettina clear information on kiosk sign needs.

– Bruce suggests guidelines for posting items on trails (kiosks, etc.), e.g., how to laminate, where to staple.

– Bettina will make more arrows this winter.

– Laurie's basic method to take out potential blowdowns: Push on the tree. If it resonates, push harder in rhythm with the resonance. Always have a clear rapid exit path.

Consider what agenda items to deal with in January, and the rest of the winter

Jim had e-provided a list of possible future agenda items. Jim took the LSC through the list asking it to identify agenda items for 1) the January meeting, and 2) a later winter meeting.

Evaluate this meeting

- The timing is good. We finished a half hour early.
- Audience participation (last item above) was good, i.e., doing things, not listening and talking.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 P.M.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, January 20, at 7 P.M., in Room 126.

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

"some possible winter agenda items to consider for our next meeting" December 16, Jim Snyder-Grant
"website future - for next meeting" December 14, Jim Snyder-Grant
"mission statement - ready for adoption." December 15, Jim Snyder-Grant
"starter for 2014 annual report" December 15, Jim Snyder-Grant
"Bench in Great Hill" December 6, Bob Guba
"Bench NOT stolen" December 16, Jim Snyder-Grant
"Robbins Mill Pond Loop Trail" November 20, Bob Farra
"Egress from Log Hill Road" November 18, Jim Snyder-Grant
"Quick trail reroute near Carlisle: Sunday afternoon, most likely" November 22, Bob Guba
"HJM bridge beaver problem" December 16, Jim Snyder-Grant
"Chainsaw help requested" December 7, John Watlington
"Grassy Pond" December 14, Ann Shubert
"Guggins Report" December 14, Jim Snyder-Grant
"Bulette/TF" December 14, Andrew Gatesman
"Robbins Mill December Report" December 14, Bob Farra
"Nashoba Brook Report" December 14, Laurie Ullman
"Camp Acton Report" December 14, Bruce Rachman
"Great Hill Trail Update - December" December 14, John Watlington
"Wetherbee Trail Report - December" December 14, John Watlington
"Arboretum and Canoe Launch Parcel Reports" December 15, Bettina Abe
"Canoe Launch Report, forwarded from Joe Holmes" December 15, Jim Snyder-Grant
"Pratt's Brook Report - December" December 15, Sherman Smith
"WWhole/TF Report" December 15, Joe Will
"Spring Hill Report 12/15/14" December 15, Philip Keyes
"Nagog Hill Report" December 16, Elan Riesman
"HJM" December 16, David Cochrane
"11/18/14 minutes draft", December 15, Joe Will