

Acton
Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 19, 2017, Town Hall, Room 9, 7 P.M.

Attendance

Regular (voting) members present: Bob Farra (Vice Chair), Paula Goodwin, Bob Guba, Joe Holmes, Bruce Rachman (Chair), Jim Snyder-Grant, Laurie Ullmann, John Watlington, Joe Will (Minutes)

Associate (nonvoting) members present: Andy Gatesman

Nonmembers: Bettina Abe (Acton Natural Resources Assistant), Janet Adachi (Acton Board of Selectmen (BoS) LSC liaison), Karen Martin (Acton Dog Park Committee (ADPC))

Bruce called the meeting to order at 7:04 P.M.

Guest (if any) introduction(s) and comments

Karen presented information on the work of the ADPC to give the LSC an awareness of what the ADPC is doing. She encourages everyone to take the dog park survey that is online. Jim will send out the url for the survey.

Review and approval of November minutes

An incorrect sentence was removed. Approval of the corrected minutes was moved and voted unanimously.

Girl Scout Trail Safety brochure

A third kiosk box for the brochure would be “busy.” If a steward wants to laminate and post the trifold brochure on a kiosk, s/he can do so. Otherwise, the brochure will

– be inserted into the brand-new Conservation Land (CL) Guidebooks (which are being “bought like hot cakes”).

– be available on the land-use counter at Town Hall.

– have its image on the Acton Trials website (by Jim)

Question about the circular “Acton Golden Trails 19 Miler” emblem in the brochure which shows SM, HH, GB, JL, BL each subtending about 14° of arc, WL, GP, CA, PB, AM each subtending about 22° of arc, and SH, NB, GH, WH, NH each subtending about 36° of arc, “Are these proportional to the sizes of the Conservation Lands?” Not sure.

Junk on Conservation Land

No comments. (The November meeting had left open the possibility of further discussion on this topic.)

“Entering Acton” signs?

Joe H is wondering whether there should be such signs on the few places where trails cross into Acton CLs from other towns. They could 1) help keep people from being lost and 2) inform people that they are now under Acton rules. Discussion: Signs couldn’t hurt, but it’s not a problem. Boundary markers in some CLs are old and they get “eaten” by trees. Re Robbins Mill and Carlisle, it’s evident that you’ve gone into Carlisle by the nature of the markers. Why more signs? There should be minimal signage. An informal vote suggested that there is no need now for such signage.

Place for LSC Gear (Morrison Farm shed)

Joe H had a work party clear the Morrison Farm shed of bittersweet. The shed houses the field mower and a trailer for transporting the mower. The shed's roof is essentially non-existent over the mower and Joe is willing to help fix it, but won't unless the LSC wants him to. Subsequent discussion centered on LSC gear that is, in great part, stored on Bob G's property. This includes four town-owned brush cutters, a big tool chest, a 2000-pound winch, and a Sawzall. (Bob has filed equipment lists in the past.) Much of the gear needs to be stored in a locked building. Two current town sites were discussed and dismissed as impractical. Jim suggested that a "right order" for addressing this problem is to first identify a person who could care for the equipment, keeping the equipment where it is until such a person is found. Bruce: Let's get a few LSC members to study this and report at the next LSC meeting. Bruce and Joe H volunteered to head such a committee. They will try to make lists of inventory and possible storage locations. In the meantime, the LSC says "No" to having Joe repair the roof on the current shed . . . although Joe can do so on his own.

New map features

There were various discussions on trails.

- A trail from Carlisle Road that would stay strictly on a very thin strip (not "good land") of Robbins Mill CL connecting the two parts of the Robbins Mill CL is not feasible. The current trail plan will take one from Carlisle Road across Scoutland and then straight along the boundary of Nashoba Brook and Robbins Mill CLs to the Nashoba Brook bridge at Wheeler Lane.
- Joe H showed a Heath Hen Meadow map updated to show most recent decisions.
- The computer maps show a "hierarchy of importance" by showing important CLs with a bigger font than unimportant ones. The less-important ones disappear as the viewer zooms out.
- Coloring of trails was discussed, hand-drawn vs. new. On hand-drawn maps, one doesn't see the trails because of the colors. What's currently on the website is easier to read.
- Canoe Launch, Robbins Mill, and Pacy have new Guidebook maps.
- Some maps are missing some parking (P) and kiosk (K) symbols. First task for computer maps would be to insert the missing items, then worry about color fixes. Such fixes are not possible on the hand-drawn maps.

Blaze Morrison Farm (Woodlawn Cemetery) trails?

Joe H proposed this for the agenda. Although this is not CL, the LSC can choose to take this on. An informal vote suggested that some LSC members are in favor of this. Joe W mentioned that blazing at Morrison Farm/Woodlawn was raised when blazing at Mt. Hope Cemetery/Heath Hen Meadow/176 Central Street was discussed and there was no LSC interest then. To blaze at Morrison Farm, one would begin by talking with Andrea Ristine, Acton's Municipal Properties Superintendent. If the LSC is interested in doing this, it should identify an LSC member who would be willing to take this on. The LSC can ask this question again in a month or two.

Arborwood: Build trail joining Robinwood Rd and Candida Lane?

Joe H showed the site on a map and explained that an informal trail made by neighborhood kids already exists. Also, a private landowner is open to an easement that would allow the public to use the trail. More information was needed and the topic was tabled.

"Dunn Conservation Land" or "Shepherd Memorial Conservation Land"?

Joe H proposed that the former be renamed as part of the latter. The two parcels are abutting, the Shepherd is much more significant in various ways, Stow Conservation has already blazed the one trail

from Shepherd into Dunn so it could seem appropriate for Stow to manage the two parcels as one. Acton Conservation Trust (ACT) holds a Conservation Restriction on the Dunn Land, so asking ACT would be part of a renaming procedure. An informal vote for renaming didn't pass, but this could perhaps be brought up again with better maps.

Parcel Updates

– Guggins/Central Street easement

Approved by BoS.

– Wright Hill-Guggins Brook easement trail

Sherman Smith, who is pursuing this, was not at this meeting.

– Robbins Mill/Scoutland

Nothing to report on Scoutland. There was continuing discussion on the portion of Robbins Mill CL that is adjacent to Nashoba Brook, mainly about the signage at the Carlisle Road entrance. Suggestion is to show a directional sign reading "Robbins Mill Pond," or "To Robbins Mill Pond," or "Pond Trail," (emphasizing the Pond as the feature of this part of the Robbins Mill CL). Discussion to be continued at the January LSC meeting.

– Nashoba Brook

Hooking up the Pencil Factory (east side of Nashoba Brook) to the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) is a long-term project. Currently a BFRT guard rail ends at the access trail to the Stone Chamber. BFRT users can access the Chamber and the Pencil Factory that way.

– Canoe Launch — blaze trail?

Joe H showed a map of a trail from the Canoe Launch along the Assabet River. Should it be blazed? The LSC was not supportive of blazing.

– Heath Hen Meadow — relocate 50' of blue trail?

Tabled for now.

– Camp Acton

Kiosk now has a top, but it needs new legs.

– Stonemeade

Joe H is still working to fix the broken Stonemeade sign.

– Other

Bruce made six map boxes and has given them to Bettina.

Concord/Nagog Pond, 11/29 Remand Hearing, any consequence for LSC?

Approval of the Concord Water Treatment Plant required 4 affirmative votes from the BoS. The vote was 3 yes, 2 no, so it's back to Land Court. The role of the LSC in this remains to be seen. In any case, Concord must meet with the LSC regarding trails within 45 days of the final decision.

Brainstorming WildAware stories

Two articles ready to go: Exfoliating Bark by Maggie Abe, and a story by Linda McElroy on a moose encounter she had. Ideas: Woodpeckers pecking at your house; Living with chickens (how they are threatened by wildlife).

January 16 agenda

Jim and Sherman might have something on Guggins/Wright Hill trail.

Evaluate meeting

The number of times Bruce tried to "herd" the attendees was appreciated.

The meeting adjourned at 9:03 P.M.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, January 16, at 7 P.M., in Room 9 (later changed to 126).