

Acton
Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 17, 2019, Town Hall, Room 9, 7 P.M.

Attendees (in bold)

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

Associate (nonvoting) members: Larry Boisvert, Andy Gatesman, Josh Haines, Philip Keyes, Gary Kilpatrick, Nan Towle Millett, Aaron Moore, Jim Salem, Sherman Smith, Jason Temple, Todd Tsakiris

Others:

Bettina Abe (Acton Natural Resources Assistant)

1. Opening

Bruce opened the meeting at 7:07 p.m., with a quorum of 6 voting members present — Dale, Bob G, Joe H, Bruce, John, Joe W.

2. Regular Business

Review and approval of November minutes

Approval was moved and voted unanimously.

Citizens' concerns

None.

Parcel Issues

• **Grassy Pond**

– The holes in the parking lot have been filled with gravel.

– If looking into the parking lot, where is the parcel border to the right? The next long stone wall. Trees have fallen into the area “just up” from the parking.

– A possible project for Grassy Pond would be a boardwalk or bridge at the lowest point (on the map) of the yellow trail.

– A month or two ago, Scouts wood-chipped the trail to the east of the previously-mentioned location.

– Joe H blazed the new red trail in the new addition to Grassy Pond along Newtown Road two days ago. Bettina has, in the shed at Morrison Farm, a sign for the new entrance — to install when the ground isn't frozen.

• **Nagog Hill**

– Dale, Bettina, and Tom Tidman have looked at the parking lot on Nagog Hill Road. It's small and, in the summer, it's dark. There's a handful of trees (Dale has flagged) that could be taken down. Also, on the surface, snowplow piles could be pulled back and some gravel put in. It seems advisable to let Tom take down the trees as they are close to the road. Dale would be happy to help. The LSC agrees that it is okay to proceed with this. Bettina says that Tom has it on his list.

– The Town has not yet mowed the big meadow. That meadow needs it; It's been neglected for quite a while.

– Dale has some Scouts scheduled to help work on trees Saturday morning for their Community Service merit badge.

- Camp Acton

- If successful with the above work at Nagog Hill, Dale and Scouts will tend to two trees at Camp Acton.

- Dale is very motivated to take down the “rotten” Camp Acton sign — the one in from the road. It looks <terrible>, as if someone karate-chopped it.

- Nashoba Brook

- Joe W read a note from Bill Dickinson, Chair of the Acton Historical Commission, on his effort to establish a bridge at the pencil factory. LSC reaction was “Sounds good” with a brief discussion.

- There was discussion on artifacts at the pencil factory site that could have come from the factory, and other artifacts that can be found farther away. The nearby items get thrown into the brook now and then (one instance cited of items being found in the brook after initially being chained to a tree). There is a major dump in the woods at Nashoba Brook, in from the Davis Road entrance (close to the eastern junction of the yellow trail and the blue crossover trail). Stuff found near the pencil factory may come from there. The Historical Commission folks may want to check all this out and figure out how to preserve the items that should be preserved.

- Per Bettina, there has been some recent damage at the stone chamber, as if people have been playing there and have dislodged some stones.

- Heath Hen Meadow (HHM)

- On the north red trail in from Prescott Street, on municipal property, there is a little meadow where the trail goes down and then up to a stone wall. Per Joe H, it’s usually wet there and he recommends putting in a bridge or boardwalk. It would be about 10 ft long. We have planks that can be cut to size. We can put this on the parcel priority lists.

- Joe H fixed another HHM problem by making a brand-new half section to extend a boardwalk. He leveled it yesterday.

Website issues

Progress with moving website to new server: We need to put maximum pressure on Mark Hald, Acton’s Chief Information Officer, to get this done. Mark apparently started this, but then got sidetracked. What the problem is (if any) is not known, and the LSC is frustrated over this. Bruce and Bettina will visit Mark in person to discuss.

Online maps new feature(s)

- Joe H updated the Grassy Pond map to show the new red trail in the new addition to Grassy Pond along Newtown Road.

- Joe H shared a “draft” map on paper of Great Hill that was prepared in collaboration with the Town GIS Department (in particular, Aaron Green and Kristin Alexander). Joe reported that The Town agreed over a year ago to use its software (ArcGIS) and skills to make PDF maps for all of the LSC parcels. The purpose of these maps is to replace the hand-drawn maps we have now. Features of the draft map originated from both the LSC and the Town data bases. Joe is looking for feedback, some of which follows:

- Put labels on the contours. The map does show contour intervals.

- Stones are not “in proportion”. Per Joe: The Town’s data base is not super accurate, and not all is necessarily correct. The stone wall depictions are correct, but there could be 20-ft errors in their placements.

- The current LSC map has callouts. Joe has yet to give the Town the data base for the LSC callouts. Joe did provide the Town with kiosk locations, so they show on this draft.

The final map will include things like the grinding stone. There will be an acceptable ID for the big boulder near the water tower.

The former steep blue trail has been unblazed and is dotted (no longer blue) in the current online map. It is blue in this draft map.

The draft map is very nice; incredible!

When will maps of all 18 parcels be finished? Joe estimates in a year, perhaps, if it's possible to do one every three weeks.

We can suggest which parcel to do next. Suggestion: Grassy Pond.

If we are making "real" maps, then show true north (two-tipped arrow), not magnetic north (one-tipped arrow).

This map should show the dotted trail to the Victor School as "closed".

Joe is thinking that this map is what would go into kiosk boxes; also, a large copy could be posted on the kiosk itself. When this Great Hill map is finished, Joe will share it again with the Committee for additional review.

3. New/Special Business

Sawyer requests, prioritizing and tracking

Dale created a Google sheet for sawyers to use. Here is a link to a "LSC-Sawyer-task-list":

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1QuPcm6VYZ8eMA9FOf4BDgIfMjza7f91xhmBMhvinIyM/edit#gid=0>

It shows dated requests, dated conclusions, and by whom in both instances. It also shows "low", "medium", or "high" priority estimates. This makes it easier to track. Everyone has access to the sheet, so it doesn't need a "coordinator". Dale suggests that sawyers "go shopping" on it once a month for a few minutes, prioritize according to their situation, and communicate about issues as needed.

Dog flyer

Susan Mitchell-Hardt shared a flyer re dog and dog-owner behaviors in public places. The flyer could have the "Acton" name on it and be placed with parcel kiosks. Discussion points:

- Problem: People bag dog poop and then leave the bag.
- The flyer is a waste of paper.
- Dog owners know all that's suggested in the flyer, but they don't follow the suggestions.
- Putting flyers out won't change bad behavior.
- Once a year, post Scouts at each entrance and have them ask everyone to pick up dog poop.
- In spring, the Arboretum is a poop pile when snow disappears.
- "Pick up your poop" signs at campsites have helped considerably. Just put up signs "Pick up your dog's waste".

The Committee took no action on the flyer.

Community Preservation Act (CPA) Proposals

Joe W shared CPA proposal information with the Committee, noting in particular the proposals for adding to the open-space set aside fund, and development of the East Acton village green, the 53 River Street property, and a small arboretum near NARA (since withdrawn).

Other new business

Bob led a brief discussion on mower parts, how they get damaged, and what one could do if s/he

notices what might be damage to a mower's wheel(s).

Bob also announced that he is retiring from the LSC and that this is his last meeting.

4. Additional Regular Business

Next month's (January 21) agenda

Jon Campbell's draft of orienteering maps.

Evaluate meeting

Not done.

5. Adjournment

At 8:40 p.m., it was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, January 21, at 7 P.M., in Room 9.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

- Draft Meeting Minutes of November 19, 2019