

**Acton**  
**Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) Virtual Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, September 15, 2020, Virtual Meeting, 7:30 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), **Clare Siska** (Acton Dog Park Committee). Note: Other names appeared in the Zoom Participants lists but disappeared when the host addressed some zoombombing that occurred about 20 minutes into the meeting.

**Opening**

Zanna opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m., with a quorum of 7 voting members present — Dale, Bob, Zanna, Joe H, Laurie, John, and Joe W.

Zanna read the script provided by the Town for remotely-conducted open meetings.

**Regular Business**

Review and approval of August 25 minutes

Approval of the minutes was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously by roll call.

Citizens' concerns

None

**New/Special Business**

Acton dog park letter

In September 2019, the LSC sent a letter to the Acton Board of Selectmen (BoS) in support of a dog park being located on DPW land and against a dog park being located at 70 Quarry Road, a piece of municipal land which is also part of the Wills Hole/Town Forest parcel. Zanna reviewed the letter for the LSC.

Then Clare updated the LSC as to where the dog park stands before the BoS. The BoS is considering four sites for the dog park: 70 Quarry Road (since approved by the BoS as a site for a mountain bike pump track, the sharing of which with a dog park seems unfeasible), Morrison Farm (for which there already has been significant community “uproar” against such use, and at which the Acton Dog Park Committee (ADPC) believes there is no “practical” site possible), School Street playing fields (not municipal land), and the combined parcels at 348-352 Main Street. Clare’s intent is to give the LSC the opportunity to weigh in on any of the sites because the LSC cares about such property issues in town.

It was moved and seconded that the LSC resend the September 2019 letter to the BoS. The motion was defeated 4-3 in a roll call vote. (No: Joe H, Joe W, Bob, Zanna; Yes: Laurie, Dale, John). The principal objection seemed to be the letter’s now-irrelevant commentary on the DPW site.

Then, after a brief discussion on where members’ minds are on Morrison Farm, it was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously by roll call that Zanna write a letter to the BoS that essentially repeats the LSC’s September 2019 views about the 70 Quarry Road site, and says nothing about the DPW and Morrison Farm sites.

## **Additional Regular Business**

### Covid19-related issues

Mel is seeing extra masks lying around, especially in Pratts Brook parking areas. Bettina is finding them too, and advised and cautioned the committee on picking up trash during the pandemic.

### Parcel issues

- Canoe Launch: Abandoned boat

Joe H previously reported on a boat that apparently has been abandoned at the Launch. It was still there today. Joe could move it with his trailer, but it is too heavy for one person to pick up, so he could use some help. (He could also use such help to move the heavy picnic table to facilitate his mowing.) Bettina will ask that Natural Resources use its dump truck to move the boat to the transfer station.

- Nashoba Brook

– Laurie reported difficulty in removing graffiti from the Trex plastic railings of the new bridge at Robbins Mill using paint thinner, a wire brush, and cleaner from the shed at Morrison Farm. Bettina has also tried. It's now unreadable but there still is discoloration that Laurie believes should be removed. Bettina will call Littleton Lumber and report that the product it recommended hadn't worked.

– Susan reported that the LSC is invited to Wheeler Lane on Sunday, October 4, from 3 to 4 pm when the ACT will be presenting Laurie with its Carol Holley Conservation Volunteer Award. Linda McElroy will be making the presentation. Bob Guba will be invited. Dave Hardt will video record it for posting on the ACT Facebook page. Susan will provide gingerbread cookies in the form of axes.

- Wills Hole/Town Forest

The BoS approved the Eagle Scout project of the installation of a pump track at 70 Quarry Road. Joe W sent the Scout's PowerPoint presentation to the LSC.

- Arboretum

– In response to Joe H reporting that, while the field mower is attached to his car, he is willing to consider mowing anything that needs it, Bettina cited the two sides of the walkway from Minot Avenue down to the Arboretum bog. Joe said he would tend to it. A brief discussion of mugwort followed.

– The kiosk at the Wood Lane entrance needs replacement, as do many of the items posted on it.

- Stoneymeade

– We have a possible new steward for Stoneymeade, Everett Kenerson, who lives on Stoneymeade Way. He was "found" by Dale, and will replace the family who had volunteered to watch the parcel. Everett will go through the Volunteer Coordinating Committee process. Also, there is a Boy Scout troop available to back him up. Joe H would like to meet with Everett. Bettina will send Joe appropriate e-information.

– The kiosk needs replacement, as do many of the items posted on it.

- Morrison Farm

– The kiosk roof needs replacement.

– Given that three kiosks need work, Bettina should be able to order the needed materials. Bettina will talk to Bruce Rachman about the Wood Lane, Stoneymeade, and Morrison Farm kiosks.

- General

– The Stoneymeade discussion included reference to dealing with some tree debris. Laurie pointed out that some folks remove such debris for firewood. The "Forest Health" booklet that John shared with the LSC encourages that coarse, woody debris remain on the forest floor. Per Joe H, our President suggests it should be raked.

– John pointed out, for anyone with a meadow in their parcel, that Town mowing is coming up. Any part of a meadow that does not need mowing should be marked off. Also, any obstacles, such as downed tree branches, should be removed.

– Bob and others indicated that they have been having difficulty with contacting sawyers regarding downed trees. Clarification needed. Bettina provided: [lscsawyers@googlegroups.com](mailto:lscsawyers@googlegroups.com)

### Website issues

- Town update of website

For two months Joe H has been trying to get Mark Hald, Acton's Chief Information Officer, to update the mapping website so we can make changes. Mark has not been cooperative, so Joe is wondering whether we should use some platform other than Acton's. Now that the Town's involvement with the primary election has passed, both Bettina and Jim Snyder-Grant have been in contact with the Town about this. Joe is suggesting no action item at this time, but if Mark doesn't cooperate soon, the LSC will have to "pull the plug" on what it started two months ago. The Town update of the LSC website will be on the LSC agenda for October, at which time alternatives can be discussed, if necessary.

### Maps update

There are no online map changes since last month. The Map Committee met today to discuss the Morrison Farm trail map that is still being fine-tuned. Joe H hopes to have a Morrison Farm map finalized by the next meeting. He will send it to everyone when it's final. Joe would like a large laminated map for the Farm kiosk. Bettina will look into printing an 11" x 17" map and may be able to laminate whatever map she prints.

### Next month's (October 20) agenda

So far, a rehash of the abandoned boat at the Canoe Launch, and whether Mark Hald comes through re the website. Send any other agenda items to Zanna, Joe W, and Bettina.

### Evaluate meeting

For the last couple of years, the agenda had the expected durations of items in order to help keep a meeting on track. Now agenda items have become more generic and specifying times is difficult. Generally, 5 minutes had been the default time limit. On special things, we could allow, say, no more than 15 minutes. At the start of a meeting, we could look at the agenda and decide how long to spend on items. Perhaps we could assign a timekeeper. Any volunteers for timekeeper? Yes . . . Dale! Dale will think about how to indicate "Time!" virtually.

### **Adjournment**

At 8:27 p.m., the meeting adjourned.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, October 20, at a time to be announced.

### **Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting**

- Draft Meeting Minutes of August 25, 2020