

Acton
Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 18, 2022, 7 P.M., Zoom

Attendees (in bold)

Regular (voting) members: **Jon Campbell, Dale Chayes, Zanna Gruber** (Vice-Chair), **Aaron Moore, Bruce Rachman**, Laurie Ullmann, **John Watlington** (Chair), **Joe Will** (Minutes)

Associate (nonvoting) members: Josh Haines, Everett Kenerson, Philip Keyes, Gary Kilpatrick, Mel Lima, **Bob Mackin, Bethany Nichols**, Jim Salem, Bill Smith, Todd Tsakiris, Tom Wolf

Others:

Kim Clark (Acton Natural Resources, briefly), **Susan Mitchell-Hardt** (ACT), **Bob Walton** (Acton citizen), **Russ Widom** (Acton citizen, briefly)

Opening

John opened the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

Regular Business

Review and approval of November 16 and December 21 minutes

It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously by roll call to accept the December minutes as presented. November minutes are still not ready; available, hopefully, at the February meeting.

Concerns from the public

None.

New/Special Business

Eagle Scout project ideas

Bettina had sent out an e-mail asking for project ideas.

Spring Hill: On the yellow trail, just west of its junction with the red trail to Jay Lane, there is a very long boardwalk over a swamp. At its west end, there is a depression in the trail that does not drain. A good 20-ft extension of the boardwalk across the depression would be a great Eagle Scout project.

Additional Regular Business

Parcel issues

– Guggins Brook beavers and trail rerouting

(See December minutes for Jon's rerouting suggestion.) Jon has not gotten the trail reroute signs up yet, but Guggins is as passable now as it ever is as everything is frozen. Also, the meadow mowing (along the trail that comes in from Central Street) didn't happen. The tractor made a single pass, got stuck once or twice, then left. Mowing in general was disappointing this year. The Town didn't get to the Arboretum meadow. It did mow at Heath Hen Meadow, but the edges need to be done again.

– Heath Hen Meadow bridge CPC presentation, 01/25

The presentation will be done by Bettina. As discussed previously, attendance and speaking out by others will be a big plus for what the CPC wants to hear. The meeting will be remote and the public will be there only as attendees but will be allowed to speak. The CPC has to cut about \$1M out of all proposals to get down to the amount of funds that are available.

– Nagog Hill update (repairs, orienteering)

The bridge down by the golf course had failed. Dale and Bruce repaired it. Dale had gotten in touch with Mr. Palmer, who supervises maintenance on the golf course, and he allowed access to the site via the golf cart path which vastly facilitated the work. The LSC should thank him for that.

Another maintenance issue: Dale cleared a tree from the long boardwalk a while back, but the boardwalk surface needs some work. It is not a safety issue and Dale will tend to it when weather is more amenable.

There are some other boardwalks that need attention. Also, the trail at the muddy hole where one enters the big meadow behind Hybrid Farm should be rerouted to be beside the stone wall. It doesn't need to go to the opposite side of the wall as, for several feet — from the organic mud pile to the wall — the ground slopes up.

That big meadow was mowed in the Fall. It is not in bad shape, but there is still work to be done along walls at the edges of the meadow and places where there used to be Hybrid fences. Also, some wire fencing still needs to be removed.

Re orienteering, Jon and Dale talked with Tom Tidman about the orienteering course that Jon and Dale are considering for Nagog Hill/Grassy Pond. Dale will take it to the Conservation Commission. (Clerk's note: It's on the Cons Comm 02/16 agenda.)

– Other

At Great Hill, does the LSC feel that anything needs to be done about the water cistern close to the recently-acquired Magoon parcel? The to-be-developed red trail from the Piper Lane parking passes close to it. The cistern opening on top is currently capped with a chunk of concrete. Should the LSC put up a sign, or do something even more aggressive? The discussion was tabled until the February meeting. In the meantime, John will e-mail the LSC a map showing the location of the cistern.

Updates

– Trail blazing

John noted that the trail on “Winter Island” in Heath Hen Meadow has been nicely blazed. Susan provided information about a walk sponsored by the ACT on the island and adjoining parcels this coming Sunday. See the ACT website for more information.

– Website

No update.

– Maps

Joe observed that the aerial view of Great Hill shows the Discovery Museum prior to the construction of its new parking area. Bruce pointed out that OpenStreetMap will update the map when it gets a free satellite feed.

Since the December meeting, Jon, Bettina, and Bob M walked what Bulette/Town Forest will become when two additional parcels are attached. Jon noted that the map will need some minor updates from what Joe Holmes had done. Also, there are some missing boundary stone walls to note. After checking a few more things, Jon expects to update the map information in the next month via OpenStreetMap. John noted that there are a couple skating ponds deep in the woods.

Next month's (February 15) agenda

– To put on the LSC radar, Susan pointed out that the ACT, the Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT), and Acton's Agricultural Commission would like someone (citing Bruce) from the LSC to participate in a feasibility study of a trail linking the Assabet River Rail Trail to the “beginning” of Stonefield Farm. It would link the 21 acres designated as conservation land to the volunteer operation at the farm. Bettina and Kristin O'Brien of the SVT have laid out a possible trail. Bruce would be quite pleased to join the walk and report to the LSC.

- Update on Acton’s Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) and where it impacts land stewards.
- Notify Joe, John, and Bettina Abe with any other items.

Adjournment

7:30 pm

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, February 15, at 7 p.m.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

- Draft Meeting Minutes of December 21, 2021; Draft Meeting Minutes of November 16, 2021 were not available for this meeting.