

Land Stewardship Committee Meeting Minutes
July 20, 2011, 4:00 PM
Acton Town Hall

Regular (voting) members present: Bettina Abe, Dave Cochrane, Philip Keyes, Peggy Liversidge, Ann Shubert (minute taker), Jim Snyder-Grant (chair),

Associate (nonvoting) members present: Tom Arnold, Bob Guba, Bruce Rachman

Nonmembers present: Tom Tidman (Natural Resources Director and LSCom's Town staff liaison), Janet Adachi (Board of Selectman liaison), Terry Maitland (Conservation Commission), Linda McElroy (head of Trails Through Time)

Meeting minutes: After changes made by Jim regarding Quail Ridge, the June minutes were approved.

Quail Ridge: Jim went to the Planning Board meeting and showed them the trail easement plans. He will attend the Conservation Committee meeting tonight. Pulte Homes will be building three units close to the easement. There will be a 6-foot privacy fence in front of these units. Possibly the gate could be moved closer to the Concord Water District land. Roland Bartl will draft the proposal in order to get ready for the August meeting. The 20-foot-wide access is marked and the trail is also set out. Possibly the three units close to the easement could be eliminated. Pulte Homes said they would fully adhere to the previous promises for the easement and would fund the boardwalk. Mike Gowing (Board of Selectmen) instructed Jim not to talk directly with Pulte Homes or to Quail Ridge at this time.

Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary: Sometime between now and September it is hoped that there will be people to fill these positions.

Forest management: Terry Maitland has been in contact with state officials regarding a forestry management plan for the Wetherbee land. Tom T. said they are looking to diversify the forests. Presently there is a monoculture—the trees are all about the same age, mostly oak and pines, making a high canopy with not much in between. There is no understory for birds. The aim is to provide better habitat especially for birds. Chuck Caron, a forestry/wetlands scientist, did a preliminary forestry plan. A \$1,500 grant is available for this project. The State would like public outreach to be a part of the plan. There may be a trip to Westminster where Chuck lives and where such a plan is in existence. The DCR would be the overarching management agency. The plan would take into consideration taking out invasives, protecting wildlife, and opening up the woods more. Ultimately the job would be contracted out. Linda is not against forestry management. However, she and others have reservations about starting with Wetherbee: Wetherbee has a vernal pool which was certified after Gigi Hopkins (former LSCom member) did the paperwork; there are also some fragile Indian features which Gigi discovered, and Jim said there is a later colonial foundation on the property. The project should be self-generating in that sale of the wood could pay for other aspects of the job. The thought is that the Nagog Conservation land might be a better place to start such a study.

LSCom dinner: The LSCom dinner, which will include volunteers as well as Committee members, will be held on September 17. Tom A. is in charge of the dinner. He will provide burgers and beer/drinks, and the rest will be a potluck affair. It is hoped that the dinner will encourage volunteers. Bettina said she has had good luck with high school kids she has worked with at the Arboretum. It takes a lot of time and is important to be able to relate to the students. The Volunteer Fair at the end of May and the AB Senior Community Day are possible places to find willing volunteers. It might be good to make a job-friendly list showing tools needed, precautions, and so forth. Bettina will send the list of Eagle

Scouts to Tom A.

Great Hill blazing: Peggy finished blazing the yellow loop trail and now needs to move on to the red and blue trails. It was decided that all the trails on the hill will have blue blazes and that decisions about the shape(s) of blazes can be left to the blazers.

Bench: Bob agrees with the latest request regarding a bench for the Simeone property. They want a stone bench, and it will last forever with no maintenance. However, the Simeone property is out of our jurisdiction.

Bench policy: Feedback about the draft bench policy should be sent to Joan Cirillo.

Committee goals: In response to a Board of Selectmen request that Town committees identify concrete goals for the next year, Jim has set three goals: (1) Identify and recruit six new or current noncommittee volunteers who will do trail work at least twice a year. (2) Complete a committee charter and a legal insurance protection strategy for volunteers. (3) Complete the Quail Ridge trail.

Camp Acton: Bruce Rachman said that it would be good to move the Pope Road gate 50 feet up the entrance road so that there is a place for parking for daytime users and, beyond the gate, a parking place for overnight visitors. There could be a box/envelope at the gate that would hold the permits for overnight visitors. This would make it easier for the police to keep tabs on the property.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30. There will be no August meeting. The next meeting will be at 4:00 PM on Wednesday, September 21.

Documents distributed or handed out to the Committee that are relevant or serve as background to the agenda can be found at <http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-4381>. These documents are titled:

- 00 - Agenda July 20, 2011
- 01 - LSCom minutes 2011 06 15.doc
- 02.1 - Email about electing officers
- 02.2 - Acton Committee Handbook (see page 9)
- 04 - Quail Ridge Boardwalk design
- 05.1 - Wetherbee Forest Management Plan
- 05.2 - Emails re forest mgmt plan (Jim S-G and Joan C)
- 05.3 - Link to June ConsCom minutes on forest management, benches, and Wheeler structure removal
- 07.1 - Bench policies - Survey1
- 07.2 - Bench policies – Survey2
- 07.3 - Bench Policy for LSCom - 7-18-11 DRAFT.pdf
- 07.4 - emails re: benches and bench policy
- 08 - LSC Goals 2011-2012
- 09 - emails re: camp acton access and parking
- 10 - Parcel updates