

**Land Stewardship Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**January 18, 2012, 4:00 PM**  
**Acton Town Hall**

Regular (voting) members present: Bettina Abe, Joan Cirillo, Peggy Liversidge (minute-taker), Nan Towle Millett, Ann Shubert, Jim Snyder-Grant (chair)

Associate (nonvoting) members present: Rick Cushman, Bruce Rachman, Heidi Sikina

Nonmembers present: Tom Tidman (Director of Natural Resources and LSCom's Town staff liaison)

December meeting minutes: The December meeting minutes were approved.

Forest management plan walk on Brewster Conant's land: Bettina offered several dates in February for a possible walk on Brewster Conant's land with two state foresters to discuss Conant's forest management plan. The date chosen was Tuesday, February 7, at 2 PM (meet in the driveway at 562 Main Street). Bettina plans to arrange another such walk on the Anderson land (across Arlington Street from the Episcopal Church, where Arlington Street meets Newtown Road), with the aim of arranging this one on a weekend.

Chainsaw training: A recent chainsaw training session, led by a representative of the Town's insurance company, was held in the Public Safety Building with around 40 participants. Nine were Acton Town employees or volunteers, including Jim, Bruce, Dave Cochrane, and Josh Haines from LSCom, and the rest were from nearby towns with the same insurer. The session included three hours of classroom time that covered how chainsaws work, safety features, sharpening, how to make cuts, and how the approach to blowdowns should differ from (and is more difficult than) standing trees; there was also a demonstration on a split tree in the Arboretum. Jim stated that it was an excellent presentation. Bruce offered to make the booklet that was given to participants available as a PDF. Bettina said that the Town plans to order some chaps.

Camp Acton gate: Bruce raised the question of the outer gate, near the Pope Road entrance, which has been the subject of discussion in the past. He noted that it is currently unlocked and open, but because there is an "authorized vehicles only" sign by it, walkers at Camp Acton who want to follow the rules park on the road outside the gate rather than either parking on Pope Road (because that is unsafe) or proceeding along to the parking lot. This potentially blocks those who legitimately need to proceed further on the access road (police, firemen, campers with permits) but doesn't stop those who don't respond to the sign prohibiting entrance. He suggested either removing the current sign and leaving the gate open, moving the gate, or removing it so that it is clear that anyone can use the parking lot. These changes might be combined with a sign stating that overnight campers with permits have priority if space in the parking lot is limited. He also suggested exploring the possibility of using the Tenneco pipeline easement, located beyond the existing gate, for additional parking. It was stated that this area might accommodate 6-8 cars and that some gravel might be needed to make it usable when it is wet. Tom stated that we would have to find out whether Tenneco will permit this use of the easement, and Joan offered to try to find the easement language. Tom also said that we would need to get ConsCom approval for using the easement for parking, for moving or removing the gate, and for removing or changing the sign on the gate, if we decide to proceed with any of these options.

During this discussion Bruce also mentioned his observation that the main concern of police and firemen at Camp Acton is the possibility of fire caused by teenagers who are there without permission. Joan noted that the fine of \$50 per violation stipulated in LSCom regulations is lower than fines in most

towns and suggested we consider this issue, along with the question of enforcement.

Parcel projects/ideas: Guggins: Referring to his email stating that he is considering the possibility of dropping his plan of doing rock and mud work to repair the trail crossing at the most-upstream culvert and instead putting a bridge in, Jim said he wants to check with Bob Guba before discussing this with the Committee.

Grassy Pond: Ann said that there is a place on the north side of the loop trail (between the pond and the intersection with the bisecting blue trail) where two parallel logs have been placed across the rocky stream crossing, and she suggested adding decking to provide a more stable crossing. There are other wet areas that could be improved with boardwalk segments, including at the pond end of the long boardwalk. These could be a possible Eagle Scout project.

Nagog Pond: Heidi said she has been wondering about adding a new trail on the east side of the property that would connect the unblazed extension of the loop trail that leads toward Brewster Conant's land to the golf course. This would offer another access route between the golf course and conservation land for cross-country skiers, for instance. Jim suggested that she do a preliminary flagging of a possible route.

Spring Hill: Bruce wondered about relocating at least some parts of the main loop trail, which are very stony and difficult to walk on. Jim said he should talk to Philip Keyes to see what he thinks of the idea.

Eagle Scout project at Guggins: Jim stated that Walter Malchodi has finished his Eagle Scout project, building a 52-foot boardwalk on the blue loop in the northern part of Guggins.

First consideration of name for Robbins Mill land: Two general approaches to this question were suggested: (1) splitting the new Robbins Mill land into two parts that would be allocated to the abutting Nashoba Brook and Spring Hill lands, leaving us with the current three names (NB/SH/CA); and (2) having four separate parcel names (adding Robbins Mill to the existing three) but also giving a single "umbrella" name to the enlarged area (perhaps one that reflects some common attribute, e.g., historical or geological, of the land). Jim will contact the people in Carlisle to see if they might have suggestions for a possible name.

Bruce stated that he would like to walk around the Robbins Mill parcel, which he has never done. He and Jim will set up a time and let others know in case anyone else would like to join them.

Attaching "You Are Here" signs: In response to Philip Keyes' emailed inquiry about how to attach these signs (nails or bolts?), including whether they should be attached to trees or posts, Bettina said that, on the one she has put up so far, she attached the sign to a tree using spiral nails through the small predrilled holes, leaving a small amount of space between the board and the tree to allow for tree growth. But lag bolts and attachment to posts were also mentioned, and it was agreed that Bob Guba should be consulted.

Bettina said that 15 of these signs were ordered at around \$20 apiece. Twelve have been given to Philip to put up at Spring Hill and Bettina will use two or three more at Great Hill.

Follow-up re encroachment at Town Forest: Jim reported that the dumping onto Town Forest land by a Capt. Handley Road resident has been removed.

Next meeting: The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 15, at 4:00 P.M.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15.

Documents that serve as background for these discussions can be found at <http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-4657>. These are titled:

0 - LSCom Agenda 2012 1 18.doc

1 - LSCom minutes 2011 12 21.doc

5 - Mashup of Robbins Mill land and Conservation Land maps

6 - Parcel reports