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Land Stewardship Committee Meeting Minutes
January 23, 2013
Acton Town Hall

TOWN CLERK, ACTON

Regular (voting) members present: Bettina Abe, Philip Keyes, Peggy Liversidge, Nan Towle Millett, Ann Shubert (minute taker), Jim Snyder-Grant, Laurie Ullmann

Associate (nonvoting) member present: Bob Guba

Nonmember present: Joe Will (Quaboag Road resident)

Meeting minutes: The December minutes were approved.

Guggins Brook tree cleanup: Some of the downed trees at Guggins Brook fell on Ed Russell's land. After receiving a quote for the cleanup from Axe Brothers, Tom Tidman and Charlie (from Axe Brothers) talked about ways to reduce the cost to the Town. The upshot was that Tom agreed to allow Axe Brothers to remove and sell some additional downed trees, thereby reducing the cost to the Town. Jim was concerned that this might set a bad precedent for the town in terms of either logging policy or allowing business use of conservation land. All the rest of the Committee members present did not share that concern. Many expressed approval that the town had been able to find a way to reduce the cost and thought the precedent was limited and OK. It was pointed out that some of these old and large downed trees will remain on the Guggins property for the interest of those hiking on the land.

Meadow management plans: A consultant, Brett Trowbridge of Oxbow Associates, was hired by the Town to develop meadow management plans for the meadows at Jenks, Grassy Pond, Heath Hen Meadow (two plans), and Stoneymeade. Bob asked who would do the work suggested in the plans. Nan said that maybe one plan at a time could be worked on. Jenks is the most complicated of the plans. Jim thought that perhaps Tom Tidman and Josh Haines could walk the Jenks area and tag plants that should be removed. All the areas need the removal of aggressive, non-native plants. Stoneymeade was the only area where Mr. Trowbridge mentioned planting plants.

Regarding the Grassy Pond meadow, Ann said that she was concerned as Grassy Pond meadow used to have a lot of milkweed plants and has virtually none now. In the Sierra Club magazine she read that the planting of genetically modified soybeans in the Midwest has destroyed hundreds of acres of milkweed. Ann also noted that a nearby farm's meadow has also lost its milkweed plants. Bettina forwarded this information to Mr. Trowbridge.

Mapping group update: Bob, Jim, and Bruce Rachman and the three nonmember volunteers, Karen Mackin, Andrew Bodge, and Jason Carter, are continuing to work on map-related issues – attempting to move our trail data to publicly accessible mapping sources such as Google maps and Nokia maps, and so forth (see December minutes).

Print-on-demand spiral binding option for guidebooks: Jim said that Lulu.com is the only place that does print-on-demand books with spiral bindings. For a 50-page book it is \$.40/page, or \$20 a copy plus shipping. It was acknowledged that this is much more expensive than our current price, and may not be a realistic option. The advantages of print-on-demand are that the guidebook could be continually updated should things change in a particular property(s) description, and books could be ordered only as needed. The spiral binding makes the book easy to use and extends the life of the book. Recently Lyn Horsky has arranged for printing of the old edition of the guidebook for a cost of \$11.40/book with 100 books ordered at a time. Jim will talk with her to see if she has had any

experience with print-on-demand. Jason Carter from the mapping group is exploring ways to get an app for the book. Bettina would like to make an audio tour for the Arboretum property.

Great Hill access from Mass Avenue: Jim talked about trying to get an easement behind the Victor School (380 Mass. Ave.) and the neighboring building (360 Mass. Ave.). The two buildings own the land together. The owner of 380 is in favor of the easement but believes the other building owner would not want it. Jim is now pursuing an easement that would last as long as the current owner occupies the building. Because of the location of the trail, this would not require the consent of the other owner. The easement would give pedestrians official access to Great Hill from Kelly's Corner. Bob said pedestrians have walked behind these buildings for a long time and the owners do not seem to mind so why not leave it as is. Jim would like to publicize the trail and it could then be put on the map. Some agreement is needed in order to do that.

Parcel updates: *Arboretum:* Bob found five blowdowns in the Arboretum, some that had been down for a while. Bettina said that Sid Levin is supposed to take care of blowdowns there. She will contact him.

Nagog: The new access trail from Hazelnut Road had two pines down in the area near the loop trail. One of the trees had a blaze on it, so a new blaze is needed on a nearby tree.

Nashoba Brook: The gate at Davis Road is missing.

Spring Hill: Philip said that someone shot a "You Are Here" sign with a pellet gun. He needs a new plastic sheet to replace the damaged one. The cost is \$16. Philip has some "You Are Here" map holders in his basement if any of the other stewards would like to have one in their area.

Meeting evaluation: Philip found the meeting to be very enjoyable due to a light agenda and so forth.

Next meeting: The next meeting will be held at 4 PM on Wednesday, February 20.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10.

Documents that serve as background for these discussions can be found at <http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-5151>. They are titled:

- 0 – LSC Agenda 1/23
- 1– draft minutes for December 19 2012 LSC meeting
- 2 – tree work at Guggins (email)
- 3.1 – Meadow Management Plan – Grassy Pond – Draft
- 3.2 – Meadow Management Plan – Heath Hen Meadow – DRAFT
- 3.3 – Meadow Management Plan – Jenks
- 3.4 – Meadow Management Plan – Stoneymeade – DRAFT
- 7 – Parcel Updates