

Land Stewardship Committee Meeting Minutes

July 16, 2008, 4:00 PM

New View Common House

Present: Bettina Abe, Joan Cirillo, Bob Guba, Peggy Liversidge (minute-taker), Rich Rhode, Ann Shubert, Jim Snyder-Grant (chair)
Guests: Alison Gallagher; Justin Snair, Acton Board of Health

Introduction of potential new committee member: Alison Gallagher attended today's meeting to learn more about LSCom, with an eye toward possibly seeking a position on the committee.

Tick education/outreach: Justin Snair, of the Acton Board of Health, attended the meeting to introduce us to the town's new initiative to educate residents about ticks and Lyme Disease. Acton residents have a higher than average incidence of Lyme Disease compared with other towns/cities in the state, he reported. He brought along two laminated posters, showing ticks in their several life stages and giving tick-checking instructions, and said he hopes to be able to post these on all of our kiosks. This was agreed to, and Justin offered to do the posting. Bob suggested that the tick-checking suggestions be put on a smaller card or brochure that conservation land users could take with them, and Justin agreed to work on this. Rich said he will post the information on the website.

Garlic mustard: Jim reported that he has done his last pulling of garlic mustard at the end of Wheeler Lane for this year. There will continue to be work to do next year, and perhaps for several more, but he got all of the visible plants this year.

Stone chamber: Jim reported that a vandalism incident occurred at the stone chamber, in which a small group of teenage girls marked up the inside walls with chalk. Fortunately, the damage was reversible, and the family of one of the girls has already cleaned up the marks. All the girls involved have been spoken with, and Tom and the police department are considering what would be a suitable community service project.

Jim also reported that the plaque for the stone chamber is ready.

Hats: Bettina reported that the hats were received at the Natural Resources office, but one of the colors in the logo was wrong, so they have been sent back to be fixed.

Weed wrench: Jim reported that the weed wrench that we agreed to purchase at the May meeting has not yet been acquired: there is some extra paperwork involved because the company is not on the town's list of approved vendors.

Guggins work day: Jim is having a work day at Guggins this Saturday, the 19th. Wood chips will be spread on the Rt. 111 access trail and some yellow-blue double arrows will be put up at some trail junctions. Besides Jim, those planning to help are Bettina, Joan, Peggy, and one person from the volunteer list.

Field mower and meadow mowing: Bob reported that the town has a field mower, but it is large and he finds it difficult to use. Tom would like someone else to try it out before he considers getting a new one. Alison said that she would be willing to try it. It was also suggested that we might ask Jimmy Young again about mowing the meadow behind his house since the high cost of fuel is one reason he has decided not to do the mowing this year (this is in addition to the fact that his brushhog was broken when Bob spoke to him

earlier). Bob will speak to him again and make sure he knows that he can get diesel from the town for mowing conservation lands.

Bob also stated that he would like our meadow areas to be mowed more regularly (Jenks, for instance, hasn't been mowed for the past two years), and he has gotten a commitment from Tom that his workers will mow this year between Labor Day and the time that the leaves fall (after which they are too busy with raking).

Presently Bob is working on the Nagog Hill meadow behind Jimmy Young's and on the Heath Hen Meadow fields. Woody growth along the walls is a problem, but, with some help from Dave, he has been making progress clearing the wall between the two fields at HHM. Jim and Alison offered to work with him tomorrow.

After Bob mentioned that he thinks it would be a good idea to mow the Heath Hen Meadow fields around once a month for a few years to get it under good control, Jim suggested that we hire a meadow management consultant to clarify when we should and shouldn't be mowing to accommodate various life cycles (birds, butterflies, etc.). Alison also suggested that we might consider using herds of sheep to do some of our "mowing."

Conservation land rules and regulations: Jim noted that there are three slightly different versions of conservation land rules and regulations in circulation, and he would like us to take a look at them and come up with a single version that could be passed on to the Conservation Commission, and then perhaps to the Town Manager, for approval. In 1994 the Conservation Commission voted on a list of rules and regs., but there are two slightly different versions in the two editions of the guidebook. Joan indicated that she is interested in helping with this.

Parcel reports: *Canoe launch:* Bob reported that the Eagle Scout's (Andrew Ossman's) project to build steps down to the launch area is moving ahead, but slowly. Andrew still needs to submit the plans for his work. *Pratt's Brook:* Bob reported that there were two blowdowns that were too big for him to remove, so he has passed this along to Tom.

Next meeting: Jim will be out of town on our next scheduled meeting date, August 20, so there may be no August meeting. Stay tuned for emails about this.