

Acton
Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 21, 2017, Town Hall, Room 9, 7 P.M.

Attendance

Regular (voting) members present: Bob Farra (Vice Chair), Paula Goodwin, Bob Guba, Joe Holmes, Jim Snyder-Grant, Laurie Ullmann, Joe Will (Minutes)

Associate (nonvoting) members present: none

Nonmembers:

Bettina Abe (Acton Natural Resources Assistant), Janet Adachi (Acton Board of Selectmen LSC liaison), Susan Dalton (Mill Corner Condominium Association Board of Governors President), Jezanna Gruber (176 Central Street observer)

Bob F called the meeting to order at 7:06 P.M. Bob brought cookies.

Review and approval of January minutes

With a fix of one typographical error, approval was moved and voted unanimously.

Mill Corner and dogs update

The Mill Corner (MC) private property abuts Great Hill on the southeast side. There is a trail used by dog walkers connecting Great Hill's Little Playing Field with the Discovery Museum red trail. Most of the "connecting" trail lies on MC property. MC residents have had problems with visitors and their unleashed dogs, and Susan is asking if the LSC can help solve the problem. The MC had put up signs "Mill Corner Property, Please Leash Your Dogs" at each end of the trail. The sign at the Discovery Museum end was ripped off and discarded into the woods. Unleashed visiting dogs have attacked MC dogs, and have created uncomfortable situations with MC children. Ensuing discussion included the possibilities of fencing and rerouting the trail, but focused on signage. The Town can put up two signs, one at the Little Playing Field at the base of the MC property, and the other adjacent to the Discovery Museum red trail at its current junction with the MC trail. The LSC can block off the portion of the MC trail that leads from the red trail to the MC property. MC would be responsible for any signage on MC property.

Proposed trail on "Greater Bulette" — Joe H

Joe H passed out a page with front-and-back maps of possible trails on the combined Bulette-Anderson parcels. Joe explained the maps and invited others to walk the proposed trails that he blazed using color ribbons. His maps show boardwalk locations. He used yellow ribbons for boardwalks. Some of the trails are on the online OpenStreetMap. Some feel that movement on this shouldn't be too fast as there should be more land coming to the town from an adjacent planned conservation residential community (PCRC).

Maps update

Conservation Land (CL) boundaries and trails are now correct. We are still fussing with styles, i.e., how things look.

Conservation Land: Naming Guidelines update

Joe H distributed an updated draft of Guidelines that incorporated ideas from the previous LSC meeting. Discussion points:

- There should be a “rollout plan,” that should include getting Conservation Commission approval, a listing of where the Guidelines will be posted, how to get the names used, signage, and map labeling (OpenStreetMap and the Town maps).
- Google Maps has all the names wrong. The LSC should update Google Maps.
- We don’t know what will happen (re the name) with the Caouette-Simeone CL. The LSC has already recommended that the Anderson land become part of Bulette/Town Forest. It makes sense for 176 Central Street parcel to be part of Heath Hen Meadow.

It was moved, seconded and voted unanimously to approve the Guidelines with notation that Joe add a Section 4 that specifies all the places where the Guidelines will be rolled out, e.g., Google Maps, Open Street Map, other online maps, printable maps, Town website, Open Space and Recreation Plan, trailhead signs, Town GIS (Graphic Information System); all the places where the Guidelines are to be applied once the Conservation Commission agrees to the Guidelines.

- “Conservation Land” that is part of a name will be stripped away on maps.
- Joe will deliver the Guidelines to the Conservation Commission.
- There was also discussion on the use of apostrophes in CL names. It was pointed out that the State does not allow apostrophes in names of its lands. A motion that the Guidelines allow no apostrophes was not seconded.

176 Central Street/Mt. Hope/Heath Hen Meadow (signs on Cemetery land, poster shelters, map boxes, kiosks) — Paula

Paula and Jezanna had created a trails map showing blaze colors. Placement of the other elements was also discussed. Paula will prepare a single map to take to the Conservation Commission that will show suggested locations for the various elements

Other parcel information

- Heath Hen Meadow:

Should the LSC re-establish the trail from where the map box is at the bridge to Overlook Drive? Bob G says that we abandoned that trail and took down its sign. Jim says we should close that trail. Joe H says that a town map (<https://actonma.mapgeo.io/properties/G2-183?latlng=42.462183%2C-71.474071&selected=G2-183&zoom=17>) shows there is cemetery land on the south side of HHM Brook.

- Wills Hole/Town Forest

Bob G wonders why, on Quarry Road, we have the first red trail shown. He points out that our CL access trails enter CL at access points for the public. For example, the second red trail is across from NARA parking and the third red trail has its own parking at the entrance to the Pedestrian Walkway. There is no provision for public access at the first red trail. No parking is allowed on Quarry Road. Bob says that we have guidelines for where we make our access trails, and there should be parking at the entrances. It was pointed out that there is no public parking at the Sachem Way entrance to Wills Hole, nor is there public parking at the Great Hill entrance on Piper Road across from Oakwood. Tom Tidman would like parking at this site, but presently only three parking lots are in the works: One is at the Newtown Road entrance to Grassy Pond and the other two are for entrances to the new trail beside the Assabet River.

- General

– There was discussion of poster shelters. It is desirable to be able to somehow post the laminated maps

in the shelters so they cannot be removed.

– Some expressed concern over stewards not reporting monthly on their parcels, noting that many non-reporters also don't come to the monthly meetings. Does the LSC want monthly reports? Jim noted that non-reporting is an “early warning system” that someone may be vacating the job. Bettina will send out a note on delinquent reports.

– There will be a walk on March 4 related to connections of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail to other trails in Acton and Concord.

LSC Website

a. Brainstorming WildAware stories

Paula shared topics of upcoming stories: voles and shrews, bird migration, fishing. Ideas on plant stories would be welcome. There has been one on invasives. Perhaps there could be one on first-flowering plants on CLs.

b. Workdate calendar

It's difficult to think about workdates in the middle of winter, but this is the time to do it, e.g., for high school projects.

March 21 agenda

- The future of the Bay Circuit Trail in Acton; completion of the Acton gap, Scoutland and the Valentine easement.
- Using photos of young people (e.g., scouts, students) who have participated on workdays.

Evaluate meeting.

Omitted.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 P.M.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, March 21, at 7 P.M., in Room 9.