

Acton
Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 19, 2017, Town Hall, Room 9, 7 P.M.

Attendance

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

Associate (nonvoting) members present: None

Others: Bettina Abe (Acton Natural Resources Assistant), Janet Adachi (Acton Board of Selectmen LSC liaison), Joan Gardner (Acton Board of Selectmen), Susan Mitchell-Hardt (Acton Conservation Trust (ACT) President), Ursa Abe (Acton resident), Bob White (Chair, Concord Trails Committee)

Bruce called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M.

Acton-Concord trail proximities

Bob W was moved to the top of the agenda. He shared a map of Concord's Annursnac Conservation Land (CL) that abuts Acton. He described Concord's now-completed trails shown on the map to possibly generate LSC interest in connecting trails in Acton with trails in Concord. In particular, he noted the main trail from Concord's Commerford Road to Strawberry Hill Road. He noted two linkage possibilities with Concord trails 1) from the end of Acton's Magnolia Drive (just west of Commerford — where there had been a trail in the past) and 2) with trails in Acton's Stoneymeade CL. A discussion ensued, summarized by Bruce: We (the LSC) are going to try to identify locations where we can connect with the Commerford Road development and/or with Stoneymeade. (A curiosity Bob W pointed out on the map was Baptist Brook that eventually flows into Nashoba Brook in Acton. He has done exhaustive research trying to find the basis for the brook's name, but with no success.)

Review and approval of August minutes

In the "Robbins Mill/Scoutland" paragraph, the word "draft" is inserted before " 'license agreement' ". Approval of the minutes with the above revision was moved and voted unanimously.

Non-agenda item

Happy Birthday Bob Guba on your 90th, with cake, candle, gifts, and song!

RJ Grey Community Service Day, Monday, 10/16

If anyone has a project, let Allen Warner know, with an estimate of how many students could participate. Or, send a request to the LSC and it will send along the request to Allen.

Wright Hill trail, sign, parking, . . . , update

There is still no location for the Central Street kiosk. Jim Salem has tried a number of holes for a Wright Hill CL sign but finds gravel and big rocks in the way. He understands the suggestion for putting a sign on a tree, but he's concerned that that would put the sign so far back that it's not easily visible. There is a large tree close to Central Street, but whether it is on Town property is not clear. If necessary, the Town could be asked to help with the sign. Re the Wright Hill trail: Phil Keyes helped review the final placement. Last Saturday, Jim Snyder-Grant and neighbors built the trail. As soon as Jim Salem is available, the LSC will get Peggy Liversidge, or enthusiastic neighbors, involved with blazing it.

Great Hill rogue bench update

The biggest problem with the bench is that there is a public process (of which the installers were likely unaware) that should have been followed. Whoever installed it didn't take into consideration maintenance or any other issues (e.g., overgrowth in the summer) that could relate to the bench. Also, they dumped their slurry in nearby vegetation. The person cited in the bench plaque was a Concord resident.

Also at Great Hill:

No sign yet of the signs that were removed from the entrance to the Mill Corner property. No idea yet of who sprayed orange paint on trail rocks and roots, nor why this was done.

Arboretum bog cleanup update

Joe H has been doing an "amazing job" clearing out remnants of the old bog boardwalk. At his scheduled bog cleanup workday, he and Bob Hill hauled out half the logs. He has yet to haul out the telephone poles used in the walkway. He wants to use the poles at the Canoe Launch.

Guggins Brook, moving Central St easement update

Jim briefly reviewed the relocation desired for the red trail entrance to Guggins Brook CL from Central Street. Jim has discussed the easement change with condo members and they agree it would be a fine idea. The Town has to also agree to the change, but who the Town contact would be is not known. Jim believes that this could be something the LSC could vote on and then the Conservation Commission or Board of Selectmen would also vote on it. Bob G suggests that it could be more complicated than that legally. Jim will do whatever Town Counsel says is necessary.

That the LSC recommend the change in this trail (as described by Jim) was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously.

Nashoba Brook bridge update

Bob G has made 4 trestles and will bring them to anyone willing to do the rest of the building. Bruce and Bob will discuss "offline" how to get this done.

Robbins Mill/Scoutland update

Red-trail blazing is done, including a red blaze on each side of the Scoutland stone wall. At the old road to Concord (across the bridge at Wheeler Lane), there might be a "Robbins Mill Pond" sign w/arrow. (Sign might also indicate "Carlisle Road" in the same direction.) An Eagle Scout will build a "Robbins Mill Conservation Land" (not "Conservation Area") kiosk at the Carlisle Road parking. The trail will be marked as part of the Bay Circuit Trail. This will include a sign at the Carlisle Road parking. That it's Robbins Mill CL and not Nashoba Brook CL is a surprise to some. Tom Tidman is making a map. Joe H has put trails on the online map, and is almost through clearing the multiple fallen trees that have been a significant singular obstruction on the trail. Tom has picked the spot for the kiosk but this will be reviewed one more time, keeping in mind how the parking is plowed in the winter. Bettina is still "bugging" Bill Klauer, Scoutland Trustee, about the trail across Scoutland.

G. Heath Hen North Steward update

Jezanna Gruber has submitted her application.

Other parcels update

- Wetherbee: Acton's lease to the State specifies that the Town has a 30-ft access trail from Wetherbee Road to the Wetherbee parcel. However, as one goes toward the Wetherbee parcel, the wood line slowly moves over. Bob G has cleared the trail up to the pine tree. Should the LSC continue clearing up to the stone-wall property line? This is a meadow mowing issue. Every 10 years, you have to push back the edge of the woods. and a once-every-10-years mowing should be scheduled on the meadow mowing spreadsheet.
- Nagog Hill: Is clearing of the stone wall done? Yes, but there is still some pickup to be done. Also, there are two big burn piles there. Bettina can arrange for burning to occur sometime this winter. Bob G is working along another stone wall that is nearly perpendicular to the cleared wall. He is clearing the space so that when the Town mows, rocks will be visible to help avoid damage to the machine.
- Nashoba Brook: Laurie thinks there should be access from the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) to the pencil factory site. Right now, there is access near the potato cave. At one time, the pencil factory causeway was a real access, but it would cost \$ to rebuild. The cement slab should be removed and a nice wall built on each side of the brook. Designing it (it's over 20 ft and historical) would have to be done by a real engineering firm. Check out the nice BFRT bridge just south of the pencil factory.
- Why does the spearmint not get mowed at the end of Wheeler Lane? The abutting homeowner has asked that not all the spearmint be removed.
- New parcel: Bettina presented a possible land-purchase opportunity, 161 Newtown Road, that may be available to the town. She distributed a map showing how this purchase and a small easement across private land would provide a corridor linking the Bulette, Anderson, Grassy Pond, and Nagog Hill CLs. There would be no new parking at the new purchase, but new parking would likely be developed on the Anderson parcel. Approval of the purchase could be on the Agenda of the Special Town Meeting in December and proponents should be working on generating good public support for the purchase. The Acton Conservation Trust folks will start “talking it up” and the LSC should be spreading good PR.

Meadow mowing update

At Nagog Hill, do the abutters to the newly-clear stone wall know that they are responsible for mowing the field on their side of the wall? Yes, but only once a year. It was noted that doing this once a year with a typical lawnmower would be tough, so the Town should be prepared to mow the land if needed. Fall meadow mowing has been separated into September and October projects for Shawn O'Malley. Land stewards who have meadows in their parcels should make sure the meadows are in the meadow-mowing spreadsheet.

Beaver battle(s) update

The new system is in at Guggins Brook, but hasn't yet been tested. The beavers seem to be putting stuff into expected places. Otherwise, the issue is being given a rest.

Map(s) update

Joe H will show anyone interested updates he has made to some of the maps.

Wildaware

- Next story is about snakes.
- Possible story on why the heron rookery south of Route 2 in Boxborough seems abandoned (due to beaver flooding)
- Possible story on bike paths and the habitats they go through.

Non-agenda notice

The Senior Center has opened on Sudbury Road and will include offices of all Town social services. The Acton Recreation Department is moving into the former Senior Center at Audubon Hill. Engineering is moving into the red house next to Town Hall. No Town offices remain at Nagog Park.

October agenda

Jim will be ready to talk about the Wright Hill/Guggins Brook easements.

Bob G will be buying a new mower.

Evaluate meeting

No evaluation.

The meeting adjourned at 8:38 P.M.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, October 17, at 7 P.M., in Room 9.