

Acton
Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 21, 2023, 7 P.M., Hybrid

Attendees (in bold)

Regular (voting) members: **Jon Campbell, Dale Chayes, Zanna Gruber** (Vice-Chair), **Aaron Moore** (Chair), **Bruce Rachman, John Watlington, Joe Will** (Minutes), **Tom Wolf**

Associate (nonvoting) members: **Ken Appel**, Josh Haines, Rebecca Harvey, Everett Kenerson, Gary Kilpatrick, Mel Lima, Bob Mackin, Adam Nolde, Hilary Reid, Jim Salem, Bill Smith, Jason Temple, Steve Trimble, Todd Tsakiris

Others: **Bettina Abe** (Acton Conservation), **Mike Gendron** (Acton Conservation Agent), **Jody Harris** (Acton Conservation Trust (ACT)), **John Norton** (Acton resident), **Bob Walton** (Acton resident)

Aaron opened the meeting at 7 p.m. John Norton is attending as a candidate for Acton Select Board in the April election. (Clerk's note: John withdrew his candidacy in time to not be on the ballot.)

Review and approval of February 21 minutes

February minutes not ready; tabled until April meeting.

Concerns from the public

None

Invasive plants 2023, Part 2

Tonight: garlic mustard, a plant that will be sprouting over the next month and that we are trying to get rid of actively in several places around Acton. John presented this slide:

Taking: John Watlington

Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)

A non-woody plant, with a two year maturity: it doesn't produce seed until its second year.

Spreads by seed, and regrows from root fragments

Repeated pulling of second year plants (shown) required.

Remove pulled plants --- **do not compost**

See <https://bit.ly/2QiPFU6> for Jim's list of Garlic Mustard in Acton Conservation lands

Check: Garlic smell, S-shaped root stem

April



Garlic mustard looks vastly different in its first year of growth, taking two years to mature. John attacks the plant in its second year, trying to keep it from reseeding. Jim Snyder-Grant has been attacking this plant for a decade, and suggests raking aside the leaves and going after the first-year plant as well. The plant changes the soil chemistry and take over the undergrowth under trees. You can attack garlic mustard by manual pulling, making sure to get the entire S-shaped root system. Failing to get the "S" will allow the plant to regrow later in the same year and be "really big" in the following year. Do not leave picked garlic mustard to compost in place because even out of the ground — even in a trash bag — the plant will continue to live

and try to go to seed. Get the pulled plants into trash bags, label the bags, and somehow get the town to pick up the bags. Jim Snyder-Grant maintains a list of garlic mustard sites on conservation lands in town. Stewards can learn from the list where garlic mustard is on their parcels and can notify Jim of any new sites. Normally it takes about seven years to eliminate a patch, but working a patch gets much easier after three years. Checks on the plant: When you crush the leaves, it smells like garlic; also, the root stem is S-shaped, but only on plants that haven't been picked before.

Questions:

Is it edible? Yes, try stir-fry.

Can we get Jim's list? John will email it to the stewards and Jody.

Camp Acton culvert; Jenks culvert (also, Community Preservation Act (CPA) update)

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) voted to fully fund the regrading of the Camp Acton entrance road, the replacement of its culvert, and the replacement of the Jenks culvert. Bettina is still awaiting word re the BRIC grant she applied for that would reduce the CPA funds needed for Jenks by 75%. Two years of the four-year Conservation Restriction (CR) Monitoring proposal were also funded. Not funded were the third and fourth years, as well as the purchase of a new meadow mower. \$775K was approved by the CPC for the Open Space set-aside, an increase over the \$600K requested. The increase reflects some significant open space-purchase opportunities that are close at hand. All CPA funding must be approved at the Annual Town Meeting (TM) that begins May 1. (Clerk's note: The Select Board has suggested that TM could run for three nights, but hopes that \$ business, including CPA funding, could be concluded the first night.)

Other Parcel issues

Morrison Farm

- John has twice found discarded food in the paddock near the stewards' shed, as if someone is trying to empty their freezer and feed the coyotes. He suggests posting some sort of "Do not dump" sign. Bettina will follow up on this.
- John has the short reroute of a portion of the red trail from the northwest corner of the soccer field to the Farm meadow ready for blazing. There are flags that mark the reroute. Jody will see that it gets done. As soon as that happens, John will close off the part of the current trail that's being abandoned.

Assabet River Blue & Green Trail and Canoe Launch

- Tom has a Boy Scout, William Barker, who is interested in doing some work on the B&G Trail. Bettina will connect William with Ken and they can move forward on this.

Nagog Hill

- Dale will meet Bill Smith on Thursday to adjust the blazing on the short trail reroute near the main entrance.

Camp Acton

- Per Bruce, the campsites need new signs. This is added to Jody's list. Bruce suggests that the signs show a word or words as well as the site number (e.g., Campsite 7, or vertically Camp/7/Site).

Spring Hill

- The recent trail reroute is not yet blazed. Jody and Bettina are meeting at the site this Thursday. Weather permitting, Jody will blaze. (One cannot blaze in the winter or in rainy conditions.)

Other Updates

– LSC membership

Joe distributed the LSC roster as up to date as he can make it with a request that stewards send any corrections to him. The LSC currently has one Associate-Member vacancy and one Regular-Member

vacancy. Bettina asserts that she will be joining the LSC after she retires from Town employment, something that now will likely happen at the end of August. In the meantime, the Town is interviewing applicants for a full-time position with main responsibility being coordinating with the land stewards. There was discussion as to what might be stewardship responsibilities for the 549 Main Street property if it is acquired by the Acton Water District with a CR on it held by the Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT). The parcel would have parking, no-dogs and stay-on-the-trails policies, and significant signage, but it is too early to tell yet whether the LSC will have a role. Purchase of the parcel still must be approved at Town Meeting. Bettina also gave a brief overview of trail plans for Caouette-Simeone CL and Stonefield Farm.

Steve Trimble and Adam Nolde have been approved for LSC membership. Steve will steward Great Hill.

Welcome also to Ken, now sworn in. Ken will steward the Assabet River Blue & Green Trail, as he has been informally doing for some time; as well as helping with projects on other parcels. Ken's activities led to a brief discussion on piping to be used for the Assabet River observation platform, the Heath Hen Meadow bridge, and the Arboretum bogwalk.

– Morrison Farm CR

The Acton Select Board decided against presenting this to Town Meeting, so the CR proponents will be working on some finer points in order to present this for approval next year.

– Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP)

Mike reported on a meeting a couple weeks ago with the SVT to learn about its new land prioritization tool. It's quite impressive, including everything Acton has considered and much more. Acton is leaning towards using it to rank Acton parcels for the OSRP.

– Bridges, Boardwalks, Maps, Mowing, Chain sawing, Website

We're still waiting for Bruce's chainsaw pants. Bruce is working on some possible Eagle Scout projects that could include bog bridges and boardwalks. Per Mike, Corey York is looking for a list of small projects that the DPW could help with. Immediate thoughts: The lip of the road at the entrance to the Great Hill parking lot on Main Street and to the Jenks parking lot; at Morrison Farm, the shed behind the LSC shed as well as the deteriorating equipment shed close to the Community Gardens; at the Arboretum, surface markings on the parking lot. Send other possible small tasks to Mike and Bettina.

Tom wondered about the trimmers and stale gasoline in the LSC shed at Morrison Farm. A discussion ensued about the trimmers, including identifying what is still working, what could be done with the two containers of fuel, and the field mower. Looking ahead, Bettina and Mike will take the "dead" trimmers to Shawn O'Malley for disposal. As for the fuel, they could have Shawn remove the gas each November.

Next month's (04/18/23) agenda

Eagle Scout projects, including kiosks on Arlington Street and Genevieve Lane for the expanded Bulette parcel, and improvements to the trash receptacles at the entrance to the Arboretum. Is the availability of Zoom expiring at the end of March? Per Mike, the Massachusetts Legislature has approved extending the availability of Zoom, and the Governor is expected to sign on shortly. (Clerk's note: On March 29, the Governor signed the bill that extends Open Meeting provisions until March 31, 2025.)

Evaluate meeting

Thumbs up for 40 min meeting!

Adjournment

At 7:40 pm.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, April 18, at 7 p.m.