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Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 22, 2014, Town Hall, Room 126, 7 P.M.

Attendance

Regular (voting) members present: Bettina Abe, Dave Cochrane, Bob Guba, Jim Snyder-Grant (Chair)

Associate (nonvoting) members present: Bob Farra, Andy Gatesman, Joe Will (Minutes)

Jim called the meeting to order at 7:04 P.M.

Given that there was not a quorum of regular members, Jim noted that, per the Town of Acton Committee Handbook, the associate members present were to be counted toward the quorum and would be entitled to vote at this meeting.

Review and approval of December 18 minutes

This is delayed until the February meeting due to late circulation of the minutes draft to the LSC. One correction noted is that the sign removed from the Camp Acton gate read, "For authorized vehicle use only."

Review 2014 meeting schedule (7 pm on Tu and W evenings)

Jim has scheduled 2014 meetings for fourth Tuesday and Wednesday evenings on alternating months. He has not yet scheduled a November or December meeting because of holiday conflicts.

- Why shift some meetings to Tuesdays? Bruce can't make Wednesday evening meetings but could attend Tuesday meetings. It turns out, however, that even more people can't make Tuesday than can't make Wednesday.
- It was noted that for this topic we should be talking with the people who aren't at this meeting.
- Phil cannot make evening meetings. However, Jim did communicate w/Phil for this meeting and will have an idea exchange with him before any evening meeting.

Action: Jim will ask the absent regular members why they weren't here and we'll keep the meeting schedule open. We will talk again on this as soon as Jim gets more feedback.

Guggins plaque proposal

Jim shared seven variations. Straw poll liked:

Acton Boy Scout Troop 284
2013

Discussion ensued as to whether plaque should include "Built by".

Straw poll liked (5 to 2):

Built by
Acton Boy Scout Troop 284
2013

Bettina moved the above wording. Motion was seconded and voted unanimously.

Points made during discussion of above:

- The bridge was built by some members of the troop, not the whole troop. Bruce, who is Assistant Scoutmaster, did most of the work and was assisted by about four scouts. Bruce does not want his name

called out.

- If there is a significant donation of cash or materials to a project, we put names on plaques.
- On omitting “Built by”: Is “Built by” understood? Some say yes, some say no “Built by” could be interpreted as “Dedicated to” or “Paid by”.
- On including “Built by,” “Built by” educates; but also adds extra words.
- On cost: Bettina is researching now because of having to make signs related to Hybid Farm. A 4” by 6” sign for Hybid by Bay State Trophy Company is \$40, but has lots of words. Mary’s Brook plaque (on the inside of the top rail of the Arboretum’s fern boardwalk) is 3” by 5”, has few characters, and cost about \$20. It’s plastic, but looks like brass.
- For Guggins Brook plaque, Bettina and “engraver” will determine layout and typeface.
- Bettina will ask for “one-way” screws for the Guggins Brook plaque.

Facebook page?

- We already have one, but haven’t publicized it yet. It’s time to decide if we want to go ahead with it. Phil has been working on this and will be the main owner.
- You need only Facebook “Acton Trails” and you get the page.
- Bob has contributed to it but is not a fan of Facebook. Jim, Bettina, and several others are willing to contribute. Some others do not “do” Facebook.
- It will be set up so the public can contribute content. A contributor can post text, photo, both, or neither, under their own name. Official ‘contributors’ can add content under the name of ‘Acton Trails’.
- It’s community building. Lots of people live and breathe Facebook. This could even help us get volunteers . . . imagine, a flashmob of volunteers!

Bettina moved “We create an “Acton Trails” Facebook page.” It was seconded and voted unanimously.

- Phil will start encouraging people to “like” the page.
- Jim and Bettina are available to help people post things on the page.

Decision: Yes, let’s go ahead with the page.

Other publicity and education ideas

Brainstorming (on how to promote us):

- In past we had one or two public events a year to get people to learn about us.
- There is a Littleton talk on New England Stone structures.
- We’ve had a speaker on beavers and meetings on deer management.
- We used to have public-interest meetings at least once a year.
- Other groups are having talks now; there are so many events now and that’s different from the past.
- For anything we would do, Phil will do publicity. We’ll need someone interested in doing other work.
- Andy: What about guided walks? Lots of families don’t know about Acton’s trail resources. What would make it work for a bunch of families to walk together? Need something like a bird walk; maybe explore egg rocks with Tom Tidman.
- Jim: Perhaps Andy could pick a day in the fall and figure out a walk.
- AMC chapters have family groups. We could form a family outing group and schedule regular events.
- Jim: We’ll get back to this. Andy (and others) should think of things that could be done. All you would need are 3-4 families.
- Bettina: For another way to do this, the Acton Recreation program goes to every house. The Rec Dept. could put in whatever program we would want to make. It could have people register, or just show up. It could be jointly sponsored by the LSC and the Rec Dept.
- There is an “I hiked Acton Trails” patch. There is also a Scout award for hiking every yellow trail.

- On the Acton Website, we're hard to find as a "fun" group. Bettina will ask the Rec Dept. to have something on its Website about Acton's trails.
- When the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail is reality, we could use map, information, and education panels along the Rail Trail.
- There could be a class on "How to Not Get Lost in Acton's Woods."

Action: Andy will get back to LSC with dates for a possible Fall Family Walk that we can publicize.

Mapping update

- How come the updated Wills Hole map isn't on the Website? The map currently is in a few people's email boxes. Jim will send Bob the map for him to approve. Joe will look at it again and send comments to Bob.
- You've seen Gmap4 that Bob sent out. It's a scrollable map that you can zoom in on. You can find it via the Acton Trails home page, right hand side. Jim is working on the next version that he will demonstrate at a future meeting. Bob wondered about the wording style used to name the trails, and Jim and Bob commented on the tricky technical editing necessary for Gmap4.

Parcel updates

• Spring Hill

Philip's report notes the need for a short boardwalk on the Spring Hill/Robbins Mill connector trail. There are a couple Scouts interested. One lives on Canterbury Hill Road. They will look at this in the springtime, along with all the other boardwalks that will be needed at Robbins Mill.

• Wills Hole/Town Forest

Joe suggests that there be a sign visible to folks on the NARA walking path that would direct them to the WH/TF wooded paths.

• Heath Hen Meadow

There is a tree down on the yellow trail, about 30 ft in from Billings Street.

On a recent deep freeze, Bob walked to the Captain Sargent Farm conservation land in Stow via the winter trail. He had to walk on top of a beaver dam. There is a walk sponsored by the Acton Conservation Trust on Feb 8 on land owned by ACT in South Acton. The ACT has sent out an e-nnouncement about the walk.

Bob has been thinking about GPS-ing the trails in Mount Hope Cemetery that are shown on our HHM map.

• Guggins Brook

New trails that connect to Wright Hill and Gregory Lane are beginning to be used. The Homeowners Associations have sent letters to the Town that they are happy with the proposed conservation easements. This Thursday, Acton's Open Space Committee (Andy Magee) is presenting the proposed Wright Hill land purchase to the Community Preservation Committee.

• Bulette Land/TF

Andy had asked Tom Tidman to provide some wood chips. This past Friday Andy found 3 dump-truck loads (18 cubic yards) near the B/TF entrance. Hopefully the town had no problem with Andy using his diesel tractors to spread the chips on Saturday and Sunday. The wood chip experiment seems to have worked on stopping erosion on the main part of the entrance road all the way down the hill. Now water stays on the trail; it doesn't run off to the side. In some places, the wood chips are placed to direct the walker ("turnpiking" is the term): We build up the left side for the walker; water can have the right side. Andy might ask Tom for another truckload to possibly patch in some areas. Andy would send Tom a note on this.

Evaluate this meeting

Evening meeting is definitely okay for those who could make it.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 P.M.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, February 25, at 7 P.M., in Room 121.

Items that serve as background for today's meeting are here: <http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-6069>. They are titled as follows:

0 - Agenda as posted

1 - LSC minutes 2013 12 18 draft

2.1 - current room reservations for 2014

2.2 - Email re: room reservations

3 - Guggins Plaque

4 - proposed Facebook page

7 - Parcel reports