

Land Stewardship Committee Meeting Minutes
February 1, 2006, 4:00 P.M.
Acton Town Hall

Present: Jim Snyder-Grant (chair), Dave Cochrane, Bob Guba, Maura Herlihy, Gigi Hopkins, Peggy Liversidge, Linda McElroy, Joan Cirillo, Nan Millett, Rich Rhode, Phil Keyes, Cyril Murphy, Ann Shubert (minute taker), Tom Tidman

Meeting Minutes: The January minutes were approved with no changes.

Parcel Needs and News: The canoe launch has a problem with knotweed. Bob stated that a person would have to weed whack the knotweed weekly to keep it under control. After some discussion Rich Rhodes volunteered to retrieve a tarp spotted at Camp Acton and bring it to the site. Linda and Jim will help to lay it down.

Tom and Bob are placing boulders in front of the kiosk at Wetherbee in order to protect the kiosk from further vandalism.

Geocaching: There was a discussion of geocaching on Acton conservation lands. Bettina Abe, a geocacher, said that there has been geocaching on Acton conservation lands for a number of years. At present, there are a few caches at Great Hill, one at Nagog near Egg Rock, one at Nashoba Brook, and one near the quarry at Wills Hole. There is a website, geocaching.com, which tells the area where a cache is located. One locates the cache with the help of a gps. The caches are sometimes near an existing trail, other times the cache may be a way from the trail. There is no secret as to who placed a geocache as that person can be traced back via the internet. Linda pointed out that the Conservation Commission rules and regulations state that no organized games are to be conducted on conservation lands without the permission of a town official. These rules were set up long before the Land Stewardship Committee was formed. Gigi googled the SVT/TTOR/MDC&R's Putnam Conservation Institute, Leominster, Nov. 3, 2005 discussion on geocaching. She will contact some of the people who led the workshop. Philip will contact Maggie Brown, Blue Hills Reservation Superintendent Ranger regarding geocaching. Maura is concerned that if people go off the trails they might disturb ground nesting birds, such as thrushes. Jim set up some guidelines and a form that could be used for geocaching should it be decided that geocaching might be allowed on conservation lands. Philip suggested that possibly a 2 year policy be set up to see how it goes. If in that time it doesn't go well, it would not be allowed. Cathy Hatfield suggested that members of the Land Stewardship Committee go out and try to find geocaches in order to get the idea of what is involved. Jim will proceed to the next level on drafting possible rules and regulations for allowance of the game on conservation lands.

Project Priorities: Jim will accumulate priorities after talking with stewards regarding what they want done and/or what they want to be involved in. Linda said that when the committee started it was decided to have a big project each year and to vary the part of town/parcel where that big project would be. The stone chamber will probably be this

year's big project. It unofficially looks like funding is coming in for that project. Linda met with an archaeologist who will be excellent for the job. Linda has a plan in place for the execution of the project. Laurie will do some research and a professional person will be used for deed research. Rich Lynch (President of NEARA) will be on site some of the time. Some members of our committee and other possible volunteers will do some brushing out and other site preparation, and Gigi and Ann will take photos as the work progresses. Tom will provide a few town salaried people for earth moving and bringing in walling stones.

Both the long boardwalk at the Acton Arboretum and the one at Grassy Pond are in need of redoing/repair. The Land Stewardship Committee is not responsible for any projects at the Acton Arboretum. It will try to help out on projects there as needed and as time permits. Bob Guba, along with some committee members, is in the process of rebuilding/repairing the Grassy Pond boardwalk. That project is a priority as money and time permit.

MFRC: A town Forum will be held tomorrow evening at the town hall for reviewing possible uses of the Morrison Farm property. Linda will give a 2 minute presentation on the possibility of using the property for a community organic farm. Gigi has made some excellent handouts for the occasion.

Speaker Workshops: Jim mentioned that it is time to think of another workshop. Linda suggested that some aspect of the history or archaeology of this town, such as stone piles, chamber, etc. be the subject of such a talk. She said that some speakers from NEARA might be good. It was decided to invite Peter Waksman, an authority on stone piles, to speak. Linda will contact him and see if he would be available to speak in early April. Forest Management might be a good topic for another workshop.

Guidebook: Nan said that a large landowner in Acton was given a guidebook. In the book he read about the Acton Conservation Trust. This information prompted him to contact and work with the organization.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 1 at 4:00 P.M.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 P.M.