

**LAND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
**MARCH 1, 2006, 4:00 P.M.**  
**ACTON TOWN HALL**

**Present:** Joan Cirillo, Bob Guba, Gigi Hopkins, Philip Keyes, Peggy Liversidge (minute-taker), Linda McElroy, Nan Millett, Rich Rhode, Ann Shubert, Jim Snyder-Grant (chair), Tom Tidman

Minutes approval: The minutes of the February 1 meeting were approved.

Arboretum clarification: Referring to the February minutes' wording that LSCCom "is not responsible for any projects at the Acton Arboretum," Jim said that he and Tom have recently discussed the LSCCom-Arboretum relationship and are in agreement that this committee should take more direct responsibility for the non-landscaped, woods portion of the Arboretum property. This would entail designating a steward for that portion and taking care of its maintenance needs. Jim currently thinks that this steward would be a person who walks the parcel regularly and who would agree to stay in touch with Bob about maintenance needs and help with the work, but that he or she would probably not be asked to attend monthly meetings. Jim has a few ideas about suitable candidates. The Friends of the Acton Arboretum would continue to maintain the landscaped area, although they might also request our help there, and we could call on them for advice, labor, and funds in the area we would oversee.

Signs: Bob reported that Tom's crew has made the signs we have requested, including one for the canoe launch site, a replacement sign for Wills Hole (reported missing in January), and lots of arrows. Bob has installed the Wills Hole sign. Gigi made a second request for a new sign for the Community Garden (which is on conservation land), and Tom will see that it gets on the list.

Four-wheelers at Great Hill?: Jim reported that he received a call from a resident who, while walking at Great Hill, encountered a woman doing some pruning. When asked what she was doing, the woman said she was "making things better for four-wheelers." It was suggested that Jim call back the reporting resident to see if he could get a description of the person who was doing the pruning, and Jim agreed to do that. He will also let Paul know of the incident.

Robbins Mill development update: Jim said that he has spoken to someone connected with this development to see when it would be possible to walk around the land that has been set aside as conservation land (130+ acres bordering Nashoba Brook, Spring Hill, and Camp Acton). He was told that we could do so at any time. We looked at the blueprints that Jim brought to the meeting, and it was pointed out that there is a lot of water on this land that will make trail layout difficult. Two fixed points that will need to be tied into the system are a parking lot near the intersection of Carlisle Rd. and Rt. 27 and a recreation area. Connections will also need to be made to one or more of the loop trails in Nashoba Brook, Spring Hill, and Camp Acton as well as to the contiguous Carlisle conservation land parcel (which we will have to locate). Linda noted that there are more stone piles in this area, and we should find out where they are and decide whether or not we can, or want to, tie any of them in with the trail system.

Jim also reported that the person who is building a house on Rt. 27 at Carlisle Rd. has agreed to build an observation platform on Robbins Mill Pond, so we will need to design it and decide where we want it placed.

Whitcomb land update: Jim reported that the ACT has closed on this land (which represents their first property acquisition) and that they would like to facilitate the connection between Heath Hen Meadow and Stow's Captain Sargent Land. Linda said she could give them information about the owner of another small, contiguous parcel that lies between the Whitcomb land and the boundary with Stow. Tom said that he is pleased that ACT has completed this transaction since some landowners who don't want to deal with the town government when they're considering selling land might be willing to deal with a private conservation trust.

Conservation land tract between Central St. and Prospect St.: Jim said that he has recently found out about another small piece of conservation land, accessible from Central St. (at Martin Street), the end of Tuttle Rd., and the end of Tupelo Rd. (both off Prospect St.), and he plans to walk it soon. He guessed that it might be around 20 acres.

2006 project priorities: There was some discussion of this year's project priorities (see Jim's 2006 work outline document, which he e-mailed on 2/28), starting with boardwalk projects. Bob reiterated that he would like to keep his focus on the new Grassy Pond boardwalk construction and said he thinks that the Arboretum bog boardwalk does not need to be replaced yet, although some leveling and ongoing board replacement would be helpful. Tom said he would prefer that a new boardwalk be built at some point, because the present one is old, is heavily used, and was not particularly well constructed in the first place. Bob said that if we do replace it, he thinks we could use corrugated plastic pipes for the sills as he has done at Grassy Pond.

Along the low/wet stretches at Guggins, Jim said that this season he would like to again work on corduroying rather than put in more boardwalk segments.

At Nagog Hill, Joan said she likes the idea of placing flat rocks as transitional steps to the meadow end of the boardwalk near the meadow, as suggested in Jim's 2/28 document, but she would still like to have the other extended around 15'. Bob mentioned that it might make sense to replace portions of the existing boardwalk because some of the boards are broken. The trail re-route near the golf course was also mentioned; Philip, Joan, and Bob will get together to finalize the route.

Also a priority this year are the three projects at Nashoba Brook: the chamber project, the beaver-deceiver installation, and trail work along the western side of the brook.

Stone chamber: Linda reported that she has received word from Susan Mitchell-Hardt that the CPC has agreed to fund the chamber project at the \$20,000 amount that was originally requested. Tom's crew has brushed out around the chamber.

Morrison Farm: Linda reported that the farm idea continues to be well received by the Morrison Farm Reuse Committee and she expects it will be part of the recommendation eventually presented to the town. She said that our first-phase plan calls for the house to be used for office space and for a caretaker's living space, the barn to be renovated for classes and community events, the outbuilding to be upgraded and used for a small number of animals (chickens, rabbits, a pair of goats and/or sheep), and the farmed area to be located in the paddock area to the right of the barn, which is around 110' x 120'. She also said that it appears that one recreation field will be part of the committee's recommendation, because of the support that that interest group gave for the farm's purchase, but there is some hope that an acceptable space will eventually be found in some location other than the farm (such as the Wetherbee field, which Gigi said had been considered in the '80s). Also, it appears that disk golf, a dog park, and a nursery school idea will probably not be recommended. Linda said that she wants to be sure that our proposal continues to represent the interests of the full LSCOM. Philip responded that his only concern is that we work in a positive way with the recreation contingent.

Speaker for next lecture: Linda reported that she has not had time to contact Peter Waksman yet, but she also thought it might be a good idea to reconsider our timing of the event. Instead of early April, as was suggested last month, she wonders if mid- to late April would be better. That change was agreed to.

Linda speaking in Grafton: Linda said that she was contacted by a member of the Grafton Conservation Trust and after speaking with him agreed to attend their meeting next week to talk about experiences with the start-up of this committee.

Geocaching: Jim has written up a draft cache approval form and guidelines that he will discuss with ConsCom if stewards approve. During the discussion, it was agreed (with one no vote from Linda) that we are willing to give this activity a try but that no specific time should be set for the trial period and that we should proceed cautiously with the permitting.

Next meeting: The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 5, at 4:00.