

**LAND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 2, 2005, 4:00 P.M.
ACTON TOWN HALL**

Present: Bob Guba, Maura Herlihy, Peggy Liversidge, Linda McElroy, Nan Millett, Cyril Murphy, Rich Rhode, Ann Shubert, Jim Snyder-Grant (chair), Tom Tidman; guests: Liz Markiewicz, chair of the Boxborough Land Stewardship Committee (and Cyril's daughter); Joan Cirillo, ACT board member

* Continuation of project planning: We continued looking over the LSCom Tasks document, trying to determine the status of items on the list and decide what we should concentrate on in the coming months. The following were the most important discussions; other items will be updated on the tasks document and the discussion of items will continue next month:

* *Grassy Pond:* Due to increasing concern about the safety of the Newtown Rd. boardwalk, Bob thinks we should start rebuilding it this summer. However, he emphasized that the project will be more expensive than most of our boardwalks since it will require pipes, dock clamps, and augers in addition to the new type of pressure-treated lumber (ACQ lumber, which is copper-impregnated). He also noted that due to the rising water levels caused by the beavers, this new boardwalk will need to be higher than the old one (about a foot above possible high-water level). Bob suggested that we should decide how much money we want to allocate to this project this year and then determine the length of the segment can be accomplished once he has a firm per-foot figure.

* *Guggins:* Jim has investigated his idea of using lengthwise planking to provide a fairly quick solution to Guggins' muddy stretches, as in New Hampshire and along the Appalachian Trail. Unfortunately, he has found that it might not be as good a solution as he had hoped because of the way the boards have been found to crown near the middle and slope toward the sides and because the narrow widths are not so appropriate for the range of uses and users in Acton. It was also mentioned that it might be difficult for skiers to negotiate. Bob noted that he has 32 feet of planking that was to have been used to construct four 8-ft. segments without sills. An additional 32 feet, which was to have been provided by the Girl Scout who intended to do the project, will need to be purchased (at around \$10/foot) if we want to proceed with the idea of building eight of these.

* *Heath Hen:* After walking the Overlook Trail, Jim and Dave suggest that we not try to improve the stony, wet section along the stone wall immediately behind the houses. Instead, they think we should use the narrow trail corridor (10 feet wide) from Prescott Street for materials access and build the observation platform at the first view of the wetlands (i.e., where the trail crosses the stone wall and curves left). They also suggest that we plan this year and make a CPA proposal. Bob said he thinks that the design that will be required will be more than he can do himself. Linda clarified that, although she has recommended that the platform be elevated, she thinks it only has to be high enough to raise it above the surrounding reeds. It was agreed that Jim, Dave, Rich, and Bill Shubert (who Ann said is interested in the project) would get together to discuss the idea.

* Nagog Hill brush-pile burning: Bob has arranged for the town to burn the debris piles in the meadow.

* Volunteer suggestion, especially for Camp Acton: Nan noted that Susan Mitchell-Hardt lives in the neighborhood of Camp Acton and frequently goes there with her neighbors; Nan suggested this group might be a good source of volunteers there.

* Morrison Farm: As noted in Linda's e-mail concerning the first Morrison Farm Reuse Committee meeting (dated 1/21), those attending (Linda, Gigi, Ann, and Peggy) found that there is potentially more receptivity to the community farm idea by the committee members than had been expected. In addition, it was clarified that all ideas are on the table, including the possibility that playing fields are not an inevitable outcome and that a consultant, for whom money is set aside if needed, does not have to be hired. Linda passed out a bulleted list of points that represent the draft outline of the presentation of the community farm idea to the committee. The committee's second meeting, at which the East Acton Village, cemetery department, and recreation interests are scheduled to make presentations, is tomorrow, and Linda expects that our presentation may be scheduled for the meeting after that. Jim mentioned that he has just finished reading the book about the community farm in Weston (which covers broader aspects of the community farm idea as well), and he recommends it to others; it is *Reclaiming the Commons* by Brian Donahue and is available at the Acton library.

* Whitcomb land update: Linda stated that this is still on hold. Peter Whitcomb, who is the head of the family trust that

is trying to decide what to do with their land on the Acton-Stow border, wants to walk it with a nephew to consider the possibility of building a few houses on the one potentially buildable lot. Mr. Whitcomb is in poor health, however, and has not been able to do this over the winter. Jim reported that, although we might consider requesting CPA money for the purchase, the ACT is ready to offer fair market value if the family indicates their willingness to sell.

* ConsCom/boundary encroachment: Jim reported that he attended a ConsCom meeting last night and that he intends to go about every other month. Encroachment issues were discussed, and it was agreed that a letter will be sent to the owner of the shed on Capt. Handley Rd. that straddles the property boundary, although Bob suggested that the building inspector might be the one who should pursue encroachments like this. Jim also said that no response has been received from some to whom letters were sent in November, so these will need follow-up. Bob reported that on Berry Lane he has taken removed the cables at the rear of #4 and taken down the no-dumping signs.

* Beacon articles: Jim reported that although he submitted Paul's Wills Hole article to the *Beacon* several weeks ago, it still has not been printed. Jim will contact the paper to try to find out why. He also said that Paul is ready to resume writing articles on a fairly regular basis and is now working on the Heath Hen article.

* Other outreach: (1) Jim reported that Gigi has met Katie Holden, acting director of the Concord Natural Resources Dept., who has indicated the department's interest in our activities and publications. Tom and Gigi have scheduled a meeting with her next week. (2) Linda reported that she will be making a PowerPoint presentation on Feb. 24 in Harwich to a group called Cape Pathways, a subgroup of the Cape Cod Commission (where her daughter Heather works) using several of Bob's slides plus a few from the website. This same presentation could be used elsewhere in the future. (3) Nan reported that she will be speaking about composting and bluebird recovery in Ipswich on March 3.

* Bay Circuit Trail meeting: Jim stated briefly that a meeting about the Bay Circuit Trail is scheduled for Feb. 17, and he hopes someone will be willing to represent LSCOM.

* Next meeting: **The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 8, at 7:30 p.m. (note the different day and time).**