

**LAND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 14, 2005, 4:00 P.M.  
ACTON TOWN HALL**

Present: Joan Cirillo, Dave Cochrane, Bob Guba, Maura Herlihy, Gigi Hopkins, Philip Keyes, Peggy Liversidge, Nan Millett, Cyril Murphy, Jim Snyder-Grant, Paul Wasserboehr

Minutes approval: The minutes of the May 31 meeting were approved.

Review of 2005 work at Great Hill: Jim has spoken with Paul about project needs at Great Hill, and he will update the database accordingly.

Grassy Pond and Bulette boardwalk improvements: Bob reported that work on the Grassy Pond boardwalk is progressing well, with 80 feet installed at the Newtown Rd. end. However, probes in the next section have gone down more than 20 feet, so he has decided to use black corrugated plastic pipe, laid horizontally on the surface, as the supporting structure in this section instead of the vertical pipes used so far. Jim stated that we presently have \$2,000 in our 2005-06 budget (ending 6/06) and asked what Bob needs for supplies. Bob said that he already has the materials for the next 30 feet, so he requested funds for an additional 30 feet. For this he estimated that he needs around \$380; Jim suggested we approve use of up to \$500, and approval was given. Bob hopes to install this additional 60-foot section this fall, for a total of 140 feet this season.

Continuing with the question of what projects need money, Bob stated that he would like to proceed next with constructing the short segments of boardwalk on the list at Bulette (three separate areas, approximately 40 ft., 12 ft., and 6 ft. long). He has some of the lumber but estimated that he needs approximately \$275 more for materials for the job; Jim suggested \$300 and this was approved.

New parcel needs: In response to Jim's request for input about new needs, the following were suggested: (a) *Nagog Hill:* Joan mentioned a number of maintenance issues she hopes can be addressed: 1) She would like the loop trail rerouting to proceed now that the golf course is open. She is particularly concerned about a frequently wet area that is fairly close to the pond. Bob indicated that he has a potential new route in mind but cautioned that it will cross through even more wet terrain than the current one. Philip said that spring would probably be the best time to make the final route determination. Joan would like the process to move along more quickly but, if this isn't possible, wondered if some logs or extra stepping stones can be put in the current problem spot. 2) She reported that a fallen tree hanging over the trail needs to be removed. 3) The blue trails need to be reblazed, with attention to improving the distribution of the blazes. Cyril said he plans to do this this fall (along with some trails at Spring Hill). He will notify Joan when he plans to go out. 4) Joan would like the loop trail boardwalk to the north of the meadow to be extended a bit at either end. Bob indicated that this is not something he considers a very high priority in light of other work he is doing. Joan feels that as part of the loop trail this section should be in better condition, but if new construction isn't possible at this time, she hopes at least that some corduroying or stepping stones can be added. 5) The walking path needs to be mowed through both Nagog Hill fields; Bob said he is willing to do this. (b) *Nashoba Brook:* Gigi is looking for another location for a bluebird house, and she wondered if the small meadow just beyond the Davis Rd. parking lot could be enlarged slightly to make this possible. Bob stated that there are raspberry bushes there that some people would like to preserve. Jim said he would be willing to check out the situation and see if he can do some brushing out around the edges while protecting the raspberries.

Informal trails: (a) *Great Hill:* Paul noted that there is now a fairly steep informal trail that leads from the southeastern portion of the loop trail up to the red trail near the summit. It seems to be getting an increasing amount of use and has become fairly well defined. He also stated that a trail in this location would be useful. In response to Bob's concern about erosion due to the

incline, Paul and Philip agreed to look at the possibility of improving the trail with some switchbacks. (b) *Private land abutting Morrison Farm*: Gigi reported that the developer of the large house between the Morrison Farm land and the Post Office has posted signs against use of the informal trails over that land. (c) *Guggins*: Jim mentioned the meadow trail that a resident of the New View community has mowed along the edge of the meadow, joining the Central St. access trail from the left side at the point where it enters the woods. This will be on the agenda for further discussion for the next meeting.

Boundary infringement issue at Guggins: Bob brought up his concern that a New View compost pile at the boundary of the New View property with Guggins is partly on town conservation land. Jim said that this issue should be handled like other encroachment issues, except that he should not be involved personally because of the conflict of interest of being a part of the New View condominium. Jim will show Bob the land boundary marker they couldn't find before, so that Bob can proceed with writing up a form for Tom's office.

Signs: (a) *Re dogs*: Gigi stated that she has not proceeded with the trial posting of her cartoon as proposed at the May meeting (to place these in one or two conservation areas to see what the response is) because she doesn't feel there is a clear enough consensus about it. Dave restated his feeling that a more serious-appearing sign, consisting completely or primarily of a verbal statement about dog control, would be more suitable. Joan stated her concern that the sign language be as close as possible to the language of the town's bylaw about dog control. In addition, Jim suggested that the first, and for now the only, sign be put at the Arboretum, instead of on an LSC parcel, and he encouraged Gigi to work directly with Tom about this. (b) *Re stone piles*: Gigi reported that she will work on this sign once she finds a suitable piece of wood, preferably pine. It will be a small sign with an arrow and a small icon of a stone pile but no words. (c) *At Great Hill's fire station entrance*: Paul reported that a car has smashed the sign at the fire house parking lot pointing to the small playing field and it will need to be replaced. Bob said that this sign is Tom's province since it is not on conservation land and told Paul to notify Tom.

Junior high work day: As last year, there will be a junior high work day this year, organized by science teacher Alan Warner for Monday, October 3 (rain date: Friday, Oct. 7). Around 100 students, organized into approximately 10 groups of 10 students, will be available for tasks in both Acton and Boxboro, and Jim asked what tasks need to be done. The perennial favorite, wood chips at Grassy Pond, was mentioned. In addition, Bob said he needs help at Grassy Pond hauling the dismantled wood from the old boardwalk to the Newtown Rd. parking lot, where it can be picked up by a town crew. Paul said there is an area near the Route 27 parking lot at Great Hill where wood chips would be helpful. For all tasks involving hauling, the students will have access to around 12 backpacks of Bob's design that Alan Warner built.

Presentation re community farm: The talk by Lynda Simkins about the Natick Community Organic Farm is scheduled for Tuesday evening, October 25, and Philip offered to help get the publicity out. Gigi noted that the Morrison Farm subcommittee's deliberations are proceeding very slowly and that although the farm proposal has been presented to the subcommittee, no discussion has taken place yet about the various options. As a result, those from LSCom who have been promoting the farm idea before the subcommittee (Ann, Dave, Gigi, Linda, and Peggy) have been uncertain how to proceed with getting out the word about the October talk in terms of its connection with a possible use of Morrison Farm. Linda has an e-mail in to Walter Foster, who is chairing the MF subcommittee, about this question, and this will affect how we advertise the event.

Next Beacon article: Paul indicated that he is ready to begin working on *Beacon* articles again and after a brief discussion said that he will do his next one on the Grassy Pond boardwalk. He also reported that, due to a computer malfunction, he lost all of his extensive notes on an article he was working on about Heath Hen Meadow. He may at some point work on that article again, but he doesn't know when.

Website issues: (a) *Google Earth*: It was noted that Rich is considering how and whether to put

aerial views of our conservation lands on our website. An interested user of our website sent a file to us that allows the maps of our conservation lands to be overlaid on the Mass. GIS aerial photographs, as hosted by Google Earth. *(b) LSCom projects slide show:* It was suggested that this slide show, which Bob put together, also be put on the website at some point. Jim will bring his laptop to the next meeting in order for everyone to have a chance to see it.

CPA proposal meeting: Dave was prepared to attend a recent CPA meeting to “back up” Tom when he made a presentation about the chamber at Nashoba Brook, but Tom indicated that he didn’t need assistance or support. As a result, Dave did not attend the meeting.

Next meeting: Jim noted that next month’s meeting is scheduled for October 4, a Tuesday evening, but most of those present (11 of 17 stewards) indicated a definite preference for the usual Wednesday afternoon time. Based on this, Jim said he will try to schedule our usual room for Wednesday, October 5, at 4:00. He will e-mail the final determination about the date and time. He may also inquire by e-mail whether there is a volunteer who is willing to take Peggy’s place as minute-taker at the October meeting (no one present at today’s meeting did so), although Peggy said she can be the minute-taker if necessary at either the Tuesday or Wednesday time.