

**LAND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 3, 2004, 4:00 P.M.
ACTON TOWN HALL**

Present: Dave Cochrane, Bob Guba, Gigi Hopkins, Philip Keyes, Peggy Liversidge, Linda McElroy, Nan Millett, Cyril Murphy, Rich Rhode, Ann Shubert, Jim Snyder-Grant (chair)

* Next lecture: Philip, reporting that he hasn't pursued the idea of inviting David Sibley, opened the discussion to other ideas for presenters or topics. Gigi (following up on her e-mail dated 2/23) suggested a nature photographer and board member of the Mass. Bluebird Association, Gail Hansche, who can tailor slideshow presentations to a variety of wildlife-related topics, especially with an avian focus. It was agreed that Gigi would try to arrange this for mid-May (Wednesday, 5/12, proposed, with 5/5 as second choice); Philip agreed to do the p.r.

* Chamber stabilization project idea: Linda reported that the NEARA board is receptive to the idea of restoring the chamber at Nashoba Brook. She has spoken with one board member, Sue Carlson, who is an architect specializing in restoration architecture, about surveying the chamber and making recommendations about restoration work; she is interested but will not be able to do the work before May or June. If that timing doesn't suit us, Sue can recommend another restoration architect to do the survey. Linda also reported that her NEARA contacts include someone who is a dry-mason, if the survey shows that significant rebuilding needs to be undertaken. Noting that both the architect and the mason would charge for their services, Linda suggested that the mason's costs might be covered by CPA funds. It was agreed that, despite a variety of unresolved questions about the project, we should at least proceed with the survey; Linda agreed to speak with Tom about this process and about the funds to cover the architect's work. She also said that she hopes we can make restoration of the trail along the established conservation corridor to and from the Northbriar subdivision a priority.

Questions and issues raised but left unresolved included whether the work should involve any digging to see if anything of archaeological significance can be discovered; when and how ConsCom should be involved; the possibility that we might get embroiled in problems that exist between NEARA and the one of the state's two archaeologists; and the problems of public safety and vandalism and how they relate to how we publicize the chamber. NEARA's position on the latter issue is that, since the chamber's existence and location are public knowledge, we should at some point erect an informational plaque indicating what the chamber represents and that it should be treated with care.

* Project list: Jim distributed copies of the project list, which is now in database form, and suggested that we review several parcels at a time over the course of the next few meetings. Starting at the beginning of the six-page document, we reviewed the projects that have been suggested for Camp Acton, Grassy Pond, and Guggins, all of whose stewards were present; Bulette and Great Hill were skipped because their stewards were not at the meeting. Priority designations (five stars being highest priority) and target dates were assigned wherever these were missing; other miscellaneous information was filled in as well. (See just below re two projects.)

* Girl Scout project at Guggins: During discussion of the project list, Jim reported that this project is moving forward. Laurie has agreed to be the supervisor.

* Newtown Rd. parking lot at Grassy Pond: Also during the project-list discussion, Ann indicated that she would like to move forward with improvement of the Newtown Rd. parking lot. She will contact the Highway Department and speak with Dave Lee.

* Concern about trees on far side of Grassy Pond: Noting the new building that is happening on the far side of Grassy Pond as well as the January e-mail to LSCCom from a resident who was inquiring about building and clearing around the pond, Ann stated her concern that someone might do some clearing along the pond's edge (where the vegetation includes tamaracks). She is wondering if we could take some preventative action to be sure that all abutters are aware of the wetland regulations that apply to this zone. It was agreed that ConsCom should be the enforcers and that Ann will contact Matt Liebman, or perhaps Andy Magee, to see if letters might be written and sent.

* Eagle Scout project at Pratts Brook: Bob reported that he and Laurie met with Mark Travers to discuss Mark's boardwalk project, including assembly techniques. The plan now calls for a 48-foot boardwalk over the wettest section of the yellow trail between the end of the Parker St. access trail and the stone ford over Pratts Brook.

* Trail clean-up: It was reported that Philip removed some blowdowns from Spring Hill. In addition, Gigi reported a

blowdown that needs to be cleared near the Wheeler Lane entrance to Nashoba Brook.

* Wooden arrow signs: Jim noted that both he and Linda ordered and received a supply of wooden arrows, variously painted yellow, blue, and red, to put up at specific places along the Guggins and Pratts Brook trails. After receiving a brief, verbal tutorial at the meeting on how to install them, Jim is now ready to do so at Guggins.

* Possible sophomore industrial arts room projects: Following up on the high school's inquiry about projects for their new industrial arts room, Gigi has an e-mail in to the instructor. She hopes to arrange to visit the shop and discuss several construction ideas that have been suggested by stewards (see Gigi's e-mail dated 2/23 and subsequent exchange). These include bluebird boxes, more boardwalk segments of the kind that are planned for the Girl Scout project at Guggins, and benches (a non-e-mail proposal by Dave).

* Volunteers list: Jim noted that we need to post an event to the volunteers e-mail list to give the volunteers an opportunity to get involved. After looking at the list for projects marked both high priority (i.e., with four or five stars) and suitable for volunteers, it was agreed that Jim would send out an e-mail to alert people about two projects that we will need volunteers for once the weather improves: wood chips at Grassy Pond and tent site clean-up at Camp Acton.

* Intertown update: Linda reported that she had a useful meeting with Bruce Trefrey of Stow. He is an Associate ConsCom member and the steward in charge of organizing regular maintenance and upgrade of the Stow properties. Linda found him receptive to the idea of intertown trail connections and learned that Stow has a system of certifying their volunteers.

* East Acton Village Planning Committee report: Jim wondered if anyone has read, or would be willing to read, this document (e-mailed to LSCom members on 2/27) and report back to the committee about it. Ann volunteered to do so.

* Next meeting: The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 7.