

**LAND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
JUNE 2, 2004, 4:00 P.M.  
ACTON TOWN HALL**

Present: Bob Guba, Maura Herlihy, Gigi Hopkins, Philip Keyes, Peggy Liversidge, Linda McElroy, Cyril Murphy, Ann Shubert, Jim Snyder-Grant (chair), Tom Tidman

- \* New steward for Pratt's Brook: It was agreed that Charlie Carlson will be invited to join the committee as the new steward of Pratt's Brook.
- \* Bluebird lecture: Gigi was thanked for her work arranging this lecture, which 57 people attended.
- \* Vernal pool certification: Gigi reported that certification information has been gathered for vernal pools at Grassy Pond (with Ann's help), the Arboretum, the Morrison land, Wetherbee, and below the main Post Office. The obligate species identified was the wood frog at all sites except Wetherbee, where it was fairy shrimp.
- \* Acton chamber access trail and signage: Bob and Philip have confirmed that there is an official 15-foot-wide conservation corridor from the Milldam Road cul-de-sac that leads to an overgrown trail and from there to the Nashoba Brook yellow trail, passing close to the chamber; it would be possible to brush out the trail along this corridor to create an official access trail. They also found, however, that the homeowners on either side of the easement have reservations about opening up the access there. Bob and Philip also noted that there is a frequently used but unofficial access to the yellow trail from the Sawmill Road cul-de-sac and that this trail also passes close to the chamber. Linda stated that her primary concern is to try to ensure that whatever access is used, the chamber not be disturbed. Because of the Milldam abutters' objections, it was decided not to brush out the official corridor at this time. It was also decided to replace the existing sign at the chamber (which reads "Danger Keep Out") with a metal sign reading "Sensitive archaeological site – please stay off." We will ask the Town to make this new sign.
- \* Upcoming projects: This summer Bob plans to build a 20-foot boardwalk on the Central Street access trail to Guggins and realign the access trail at the Parker Street entrance to Pratt's Brook, which will also involve building a bit of boardwalk and moving the kiosk, which was mistakenly located over the boundary on the neighboring property. If there is time, he will do more work on the Grassy Pond boardwalk. Bob and Philip also plan to cut a short connecting trail into the Arboretum from the end of the access corridor from Concord Road to the trail through the meadow (shown as a blue trail on the map), which in turn connects with the Bog Loop near the Wood Lane entrance, but Bob wants to wait on the rerouting of the yellow rail at Nagog Hill until the golf course becomes a reality.

Linda suggested that we do some brushing out around the Nashoba Brook chamber in the late summer or early fall in preparation for the work that may be done there next summer.

Cyril will be working on blazing at Heath Hen, Camp Acton, Bulette, and Wetherbee; he will arrange to have someone work with him. Gigi requested that no blazes be painted on rocks.

\* Funding for upcoming projects and equipment: Tom stated that there is some FY2004 money available and that it appears we will have \$2,500 in the FY2005 budget. Jim will work with Bob and Cyril to compile a list of tools, paint, and other materials so that we can use whatever remains of the 2004 funds before June 30.

\* Encroachments/boundary issues: Two ConsCom letters have been sent out, concerning a shed on Captain Handley Road (Town Forest) and a swing set and hammock on Concord Place (Arboretum); a response has been received about the first and Tom thinks that problem will be resolved. Letters are still needed about two encroachments on Berry Lane (Wetherbee), a lawn encroachment into the access corridor and our misplaced kiosk at the Parker Street entrance to Pratt's Brook, and the Jenks parking lot boundary. Documentation on all of these issues is on file at Tom's office, and Tom said he will speak with Matt Liebman about the letters.

Relative to the Jenks parking lot problem, Bob feels that the right-side boundary of the lot needs to be defined more clearly, but the homeowners have indicated that they don't like the idea of using boulders. Linda suggested

using shrubs instead, and Tom said that he is able to get free nursery stock from Kennedy's in early summer, when they are getting rid of unsold items. If they have something suitable, we could suggest this to the homeowner. We might also use a similar approach to defining the boundary at the Robbins Road entrance to Heath Hen Meadow.

Two problems have been resolved recently without letters being sent: Bob has spoken with the resident responsible for a dumping problem at Jenks and the debris has been removed; Bob also put up a boundary marker there. Philip reported that the Jay Lane parking lot (Spring Hill) dumping problem also seems to have been resolved.

\* Work days: Bob advertised a work day at the Audubon Lane "senior park" through the e-mail network. Besides Jim and Andy, one family (the Crofton-Macdonalds) responded, but they unfortunately arrived late and most of the work—spreading loam and filling in holes—had already been done. (Gigi noted that she had done some weed-whacking around the park benches when she was checking bluebird boxes, and Linda offered to do some weeding of the flower beds when she meets Charlie Carlson at Pratt's Brook tomorrow.)

Jim added the reminder that any steward can initiate an e-mail request to the volunteer list.

\* Morrison Farm: Nan (who was not present) requested that Jim mention that a committee is being formed to create a master plan for the Morrison Farm and that the Board of Selectman needs to hear from people who don't want to see this land turned into soccer fields. Gigi noted that the advocates for recreational use of the land are well organized and other voices need to be heard; she also stated that space for additional playing fields is available alongside those already located along School Street (across Route 2 from Wetherbee). Linda suggested having a representative from LSCom and/or ConsCom on the master plan committee and said she would be willing to do this. Jim said he would send a note to the Board of Selectmen to advocate for this.

\* Next meeting: The July "meeting" will be a potluck at Nan's house—47 Alcott Road—on Thursday, July 15, starting at around 5 PM. (Note that this is a change from the date chosen at the meeting, July 7, which did not work for Nan.) A similar get-together was tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, August 4, at the Half Moon Hill Common House; Jim will confirm or cancel this later.