

**LAND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 6, 2004, 4:00 P.M.  
ACTON TOWN HALL**

**Present:** Dave Cochrane, Bob Guba, Maura Herlihy, Gigi Hopkins, Peggy Liversidge, Nan Millett, Cyril Murphy, Ann Shubert, Jim Snyder-Grant (chair), Tom Tidman

\* Quarry land swap update: There was a lengthy discussion of the proposed Town Forest land swap between sculptor Yin Peet and the Town. In addition to points made at last month's meeting, it was noted that, although the proposed agreement gives the Town the right of first refusal if the Peets later decide to sell the land, the price would probably be too high if the house and studio have already been built. Also, although the agreement has some conservation protection for the Peet land, it is in the form of a deed restriction, which would expire after 50 years, rather than a permanent conservation restriction. The land to be swapped to the Town would be zoned ARC (agricultural, recreation, conservation) and would require another two-thirds vote at Town Meeting to develop, but it could be used for recreation purposes.

As at last month's meeting, it was agreed that the main concern is the precedent this deal would set for redesignating ARC-zoned conservation land for other uses. Dave agreed to write a letter to the editor stressing this point and said he would e-mail it to the Committee before submitting it so that others can have the opportunity to sign it. Maura spoke of her concern about habitat fragmentation specifically as it affects bird populations, which she is monitoring in the Town Forest as part of a Cornell "Citizen Science" program, and she was encouraged to write a separate letter from this perspective.

The special Town Meeting to consider the land swap is scheduled for Monday, Oct. 18. The Planning Board is holding a public hearing on Tuesday, Oct. 12, and an informational meeting will be held at the library on Wednesday, Oct. 13.

\* Acton chamber: No objections were raised to the sequence of steps that Linda has outlined for the project. Jim stated that Philip has said he would be willing to help Linda with writing the CPC proposal. Linda would like the project to include a history of the area, and Jim's inquiry about this yielded the names of two local historians who may be useful resources: Bill Klauer and Ann Forbes.

\* ConsCom and boundary encroachment letters: Jim had planned to attend the September ConsCom meeting to request action on outstanding boundary encroachment letters, but his time on the agenda has been rescheduled until the Oct. 20 meeting. [Note: Following our meeting Jim was told that his time on the ConsCom agenda has been moved once again, to November, but he did speak with some of the Conservation Commissioners and Andy Magee has agreed to take over writing the letters.]

\* Guidebook reprinting: Before reprinting the guidebook, a few maps (Arboretum, Wetherbee; any others?) will need to be updated, along with the wording changes associated with these. Jim will try to contact Rich about the map updates, and Linda and Peggy can make the associated wording changes. If there are any further changes that any steward thinks should be made in his or her property description, let Linda or Peggy know.

\* Arboretum blazing: Jim reported that he and Arboretum volunteer Joan Cirillo have tagged the Arboretum trails and are now ready to begin blazing. They plan to do this on Monday, Oct. 11. In addition to Jim and Joan, Cathy Hatfield will join the crew and others are welcome. Gigi said she would come. The Friends of the Acton Arboretum will pay for the supplies.

\* New canoe landing on the Assabet: Tom reported that, through a local businessman and developer who hopes to put in a car dealership, the Town has acquired a canoe landing along the Assabet and a small parking lot. It is located on Route 62 near Powdermill Plaza, where the river crosses under the road, and is just downstream from a stretch of the river where Tom and Linda hope we may at some point be able to develop a riverside path. Some work is needed from the parking lot to the river, a sign will be needed, and ongoing maintenance will be required. It was agreed that we will arrange a time to check out the site sometime after Tom returns from his upcoming vacation.

\* Junior high community service day: On September 22, one student crew piled brush in the Nagog Hill meadow and two other crews, using backpack carriers, hauled wood chips at Grassy Pond and Pratt's Brook; in addition, Nan led a group that weeded daylily beds by the library. Bob, Ann, and Nan all reported the kids were good workers.

\* Further work at Nagog Hill: The brush-pile work at Nagog was not finished on the service day, so Bob, Laurie, and Allen Warner (the teacher who helped organize the service day) completed the job the following week. The piles are now ready to be burned sometime during the winter. Bob suggested that a future job in the meadow area would be to uncover the stone wall dividing conservation property from Jimmy Young's property along Nagog Hill Road.

Bob would also like to get some aggregate from the Town Highway Department to fill in the drop at the entrance to the Nagog Hill parking lot; Tom indicated this should be possible.

\* Beavers at Guggins: Jim and Bob continue to monitor the beavers at Guggins. They have acquired a third control device to install in the middle culvert, and Jim has periodically been removing debris from all three culverts with a long-handled, four-pronged hook.

Also at Guggins, Jim has mowed the meadow paths from Central Street and the New View community access with his neighborhood's mower.

\* Wetherbee: Gigi requested that Bob mow down autumn olive and buckthorn seedlings (both invasives) in the crabapple meadow. She has also once again cut down the Japanese knotweed at the old house site.

\* Next meeting: The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 3.