

**LAND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 3, 2003, 4:00 P.M.
ACTON TOWN HALL**

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

* Dinner to honor Linda: It was agreed that the dinner will be at the Bamboo Restaurant (Chinese) on Rt. 110 in Littleton immediately following next month's meeting on January 14. Stewards may bring along family members if they wish. Everyone should let Jim know within about two weeks whether they will be attending and if so, how many.

* New list of steward duties: The following list was compiled as the starting point for an update of a similar list that was written several years ago; Jim will do a bit more work on it before it is finalized. It was stressed that not all items on the list have to be accomplished by the steward alone, but the steward should be responsible for seeing that identified needs are taken care of. There was general agreement, however, that stewards should walk their parcels at least once a month. Bob, after checking to be sure that his e-mail reminders after bad weather events are useful, indicated that he would like to hear back from everyone, whether to report work done, help needed, or that there was nothing to be done.

To be done in the course of walking the parcel (once a month minimum)

- * remove or report blowdowns
- * remove trash (in parking lots, on trails, at campsites)
- * refill map boxes
- * watch for encroachment/dumping along boundaries

To be done once or twice a year, as conditions warrant

- * brush out trails or do selective pruning

More general needs to keep an eye on

- * reblazing
- * repairs to structures (kiosks, signs, boardwalks, bridges, platforms)

Identifying special project needs

- * new construction (boardwalks, bridges, platforms)
- * vernal pools for certification
- * invasives ID and removal
- * native plant protection
- * timber and meadow management

* Project funding: Tom confirmed that there is only a small amount of money currently available for committee use, but it was agreed that Bob could obtain a signed P.O. for \$24 to pay for having two small plaques made, one for the Wheeler Lane bridge and the other for the Grassy Pond observation platform. They will be similar to the one now on the Heath Hen-Mt. Hope Cemetery bridge, with the committee name and the year of construction.

Philip suggested that we again apply for grants and suggested the state's recreational trails program, with which he is familiar, as a good possibility. He said that the application deadline is generally mid-January but that application forms, usually available before now, are late this year. In the meantime, however, he suggests that we decide as soon as possible on one or more projects (they can be "bundled") and a budget (the minimum is \$2,000 but he suggests aiming for around \$5,000). It was suggested that we look now at the projects list discussed at the June 2003 meeting. Jim, Linda, and Bob agreed to look this over; Philip agreed to help with writing the grant.

Tom also noted that the ACT might be a funding source.

* Guidebook sales revolving fund: Tom confirmed that all money obtained from guidebook sales is going into a revolving fund for use on the next printing and that Andrea should have an account of the amount in the fund.

* Eagle Scout project at Pratt's Brook: Tom said the Eagle Scout is definitely interested in doing the boardwalk project under discussion at the past few meetings. It was confirmed that the Scout should get in touch with Laurie, who will

supervise the project, and that Bob will review the plans.

* Questions about open meeting law: Following Andy Magee's caution about e-mail exchanges concerning issues, it is clear that we need to know more about the open meeting law and how it affects us, especially about the e-mail question. It was noted in this context that all e-mail communications that go through the town's LSCOM e-mail list are kept on file electronically. Also noted: Andrea needs to be aware of our meeting schedule (she is) and our meetings should be posted downstairs (we're not sure whether this is being done). Linda added that the names of new committee members are supposed to be submitted to ConsCom but that we haven't done this regularly for the last few years. Jim will speak with Andrea and Andy Magee to see what he can find out.

* Stow connection: Tom stated that Peter Whitcomb has been sick so there is no progress to report here, but he also noted that Mr. Whitcomb is interested in proceeding with a land transfer.

* Possibility of CPA funding for acquiring land parcels: It was suggested that we keep an eye on parcels in town that might be available for purchase using CPA funds. Gigi expressed interest in checking with David Abt about this, and Jim and Nan said they will inquire about it at the next ACT meeting since ACT has a good database of land parcels.

* December 6 holiday mini-fair at library: Laurie has volunteered to sell guidebooks at this three-hour fair; Dave arranged for us to share a table with the Acton Historical Society. [Because of the weather on December 6, however, we did not participate in this event.]

* Notes about LSCOM projects for town's Annual Report: The following projects completed in 2003 were noted for Jim to use in a paragraph he will draft for Tom's use in this year's Annual Report: guidebook publication; regular *Beacon* articles; kiosks built and installed; repair of dam over pencil factory sluiceway; Wetherbee trail system; Norway maple invasives project; beaver lecture; vernal pool certifications; Wills Hole panels and frames; website fully operational; trail volunteer subscriber list; reblazing begun.

* Quarry property update: Tom displayed a map showing the land swap being proposed by the landowners who want to build a sculpture studio. He noted that the land the town would receive, on the far side of the quarry toward the middle of the large loop formed by the yellow trail, is fairly wet.

* Labeling of map masters: Master maps are now labeled with the Natural Resources phone number and the website.

* Next meeting: The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 14.