

LAND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 13, 2006, 4:00 P.M.
ACTON TOWN HALL

Present: Joan Cirillo, Bob Guba, Maura Herlihy, Gigi Hopkins, Philip Keyes, Peggy Liversidge (minute-taker), Linda McElroy, Nan Millett, Jim Snyder-Grant (chair), Tom Tidman
Guest: Allen Warner

Stone chamber: (1) *Caretaker:* Linda recommended that we have a site caretaker for the stone chamber and said she has someone who is interested in volunteering. Linda Schymik, who lives on Sawmill Road, helped with the project and is now willing to take on this role, which would entail keeping an eye on the site and communicating with Bob about any maintenance needs or with the police if there are any acts of vandalism or disturbances such as beer parties. Linda clarified that this role is distinct from that of steward/committee member. Those present agreed to establish the role and to follow Linda's recommendation of Linda Schymik. Jim will contact her.

(2) *Site restoration:* Tom will be providing fill and loam, machinery, and a crew to grade the site, remove debris, and seed it so that there will be plant cover over the winter; other planting, such as ferns and blueberries, will be done in the spring.

(3) *Still to be done:* Trail and signage issues need to be discussed at later meetings, and the educational panels will be a project for the coming months. Linda stated that there is no time limit from the CPC for getting the panels done and that there should be adequate money available.

Grassy Pond boardwalk: Bob reported that, of the 332 feet of non-pressure-treated boardwalk being replaced in the course of this multi-year project, 260 feet have been completed to date; he plans to do 30 more feet this fall, leaving 42 feet to be done next year. He has now spent \$1,001 of the \$2,500 in the 2007 (current year's) budget, including everything needed for the 30 feet.

Trails grant for Robbins Mill Pond path to viewing platform: Philip has begun working on the Recreational Trails Program Grant for the path from the Robbins Mill Pond parking lot to the viewing platform site at the pond's edge. The money being requested (approximately \$3,000-\$4,000) will be to cover the cost of construction materials (geotextile trail stabilization materials, crushed granite, and stonedust) to provide a smooth, stable, and well-drained surface in an area that is hummocky and prone to wetness. He is highlighting the trail's accessibility and usability by residents of the Robbins Brook senior housing complex as well as by users of the Bay Circuit Trail and the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. Philip said that he can work on the grant until September 22; if it isn't completed by that time, someone else will need to finish and submit it by the October 2 deadline. Jim agreed to do this if needed. Jim also said he will take a look at the OSRP to help word the section about how the grant request relates to the Town's master plan. Bob agreed to provide a topo map of the site. Last, Philip said that he needs to submit letters from at least one elected official (as well as from Tom); he said he plans to ask Pam Resor but wondered if there were other suggestions. Andy Magee was suggested, and Philip may request a second letter from him.

There was a brief discussion of whether any other requests should be added to the grant. The one suggestion was other trail work and boardwalks on the Robbins Mill land, but because we don't formally own the land yet and because Bob hasn't spoken yet with the Scouts about crossing their land, this idea was dropped.

Ideas for CPA funding: Linda presented an idea for a long-term (5-10 years?) project at Nashoba Brook and Spring Hill that would involve clearing, restoration, and informational displays at the several sites from different eras and cultures that are clustered in this fairly small area. In addition to the stone chamber, Linda is proposing additional work at the pencil factory site, including display of rusted mill machinery and restoration of the bridge; work at the Wheeler Lane farmstead, where the length of parallel, curving stone

walls and the building foundation could be cleared; and additional clearing of and educational displays about the rock piles, which she hopes could be done in cooperation with local Native Americans. She stated that both NEARA and the Historical Commission are interested in this idea and suggested that we submit a CPA proposal this fall for getting started on the pencil factory site. The rest of the group, however, felt that more time was needed and voted not to do anything for the next CPA cycle.

Joan briefly offered a second idea, stating that she would like to see more educational/interpretive materials along the trails at some point and thinks that this could be done with CPA money.

Junior high workday: Junior high teacher Allen Warner attended the meeting to try to find work projects for some of the 128 students who will be participating in a junior high workday on the morning of Wed., September 27; they will be divided into approximately 10-member crews, each with an adult (parent or teacher) supervisor. Joan and Bob requested help at Nagog Hill with wood chips (along the red access trail by Hy-Bid Farm and at both ends of the upper boardwalk) and with rock moving (to provide stepping stones at the ends of the upper boardwalk). Bob also wondered whether Charlie would like to have more chips put down at Pratt's Brook. Jim requested a small crew to cut bittersweet near the bridge at the Wheeler Lane entrance to Nashoba Brook, and Nan requested help with weeding around the library.

Allen also suggested that, starting in the 2007 school year, we might be able to set up a program for high school students, working with a mentor, to do projects on conservation lands. (The state has mandated that high schools increase the hours of study for students to 990 hours; ABRHS is looking for community service projects for students as one means of accomplishing this goal.)

November presentation re chamber: As mentioned via e-mail, Linda has been invited by the Friends of Pine Hawk, a local group interested in archaeology, to speak about the stone chamber on November 2 at the library. She reported that part of the presentation will be video interviews with one elderly town resident and with others associated with the chamber project about what they know about the chamber or their impressions about the site from the recent work on it. Nan has volunteered to do the interviewing but someone is still needed to operate the video camera.

Unauthorized trail use at Great Hill: Bob reported that the three abandoned trails leading to the water tower are still being used by a few walkers. He has put up signs at the base of these trails, where they branch off from the yellow loop trail, to discourage their use and to supplement the Water District's "No Trespassing/Public Water Supply" sign.

Bob's request for monthly parcel check-in: Bob requested once again that all stewards e-mail him at least once a month prior to the meeting about the status of their parcels.

Next meeting: The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 4, at 4:00.