

Land Stewardship Committee Meeting
April 11, 2023
Via teleconference - 7:00 PM

Meeting Minutes

Present: Judy Asarkof, Tom Brownrigg, Dwight DeMay, Julie Durrell, Debby Geltner, Warren Lyman, and Rhonda Michaud. Conservation Administrator Sylvia Willard was present.

This meeting was conducted by Zoom teleconference due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with all participants at home. The meeting was opened at 7:05 PM by Chair Lyman.

Guests: Adam Chojnacki, Marlies Henderson, Claudia Talland, and Shane Usher

The March 14, 2023, minutes were approved as amended.

1. Marlies Henderson, Outdoors Advocate, re parking near Greenough barn

Henderson is a Billerica resident and leads outdoor walks through Billerica's Recreation Department. She heard from Willard that there is a plan to remove the Greenough barn and is interested in being able to retain a parking area after it is removed. She has been leading winter walks from Greenough to Foss Farm, and Steve Tobin has unlocked the Greenough gate (on CCF Land) so people can park there. The groups often have 20-30 people.

Willard said that the Notice of Intent (NOI) to remove the barn does not address the issue of parking, and that this would require a separate NOI. The barn is near wetlands and is also near habitat for a state-listed species (Blanding's Turtle). The barn is also a historic building, and the Historical Society has asked that some parts of the barn be preserved or salvaged such as the slate tiles on the roof. A large patch of Japanese Knotweed near the barn will be removed under a separate Notice of Intent.

Lyman asked for comments regarding this request. Talland said that one of the recreational activities allowed at Greenough is the use of canoes and kayaks, and the parking area might facilitate this activity. Usher was concerned about the possibility of oil run-off from vehicles at the site. Geltner said construction debris left after removal of the barn could be a problem for vehicle tires. She was also concerned about the cost of maintenance for a parking area and the fact that the area had undesirable activities requiring periodic visits by Carlisle Police.

Lyman said that a parking area could be either formal or informal. A formal area would require greater site preparation, signage, and funding. Henderson said that Billerica might be interested in cost sharing. Talland suggested getting input from abutters in both Carlisle and Billerica. Henderson said that she has contacts with Billerica abutters. Lyman will summarize the discussion and provide it to LSC members before the next meeting.

2. Prospective members Shane Usher and Claudia Talland, and potential member Adam Chojnacki

Willard said that the Select Board will probably approve the appointments of Claudia Talland and Shane Usher at their meeting on April 11. After their appointments are approved, Talland and Usher will need to be sworn in by the Town Clerk.

Adam Chojnacki expressed his interest in joining LSC. He and his family moved to Carlisle in 2015. He is interested in nature and various outdoor activities. LSC members introduced themselves and stated why they joined LSC. After the introductions, Michaud made a motion to recommend Chojnacki's membership to ConsCom. DeMay seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

2. Towle Field

a. Suggested signs describing field management

Asarkof said work is in progress and will resume after preparations for Earth Day.

b. Kiosk signs

Michaud will send the signs to Willard for lamination.

c. Adding native plants, and grant request

Asarkof said that the grant she submitted was not awarded and she followed up with a request for more information. The grant organization said her proposal was very good, but there were many more proposals than could be funded and the organization will send out another request for proposals in June.

Asarkof asked Willard her opinion about planting native plants at Towle field. Willard said that the Girl Scouts should be encouraged to participate, both in the planting and for occasional watering of the plants. Asarkof said Walter Kittredge is very busy and she has not been able to contact him regarding plans for Towle Field.

3. Foss Farm – Protection of Sandplain-Grassland Habitat

Asarkof requested that discussion be postponed until the next meeting.

4. Cranberry Bog Working Group (revised 4/17/23)

Lyman attended the meeting on April 10, but had not written his notes. He asked Willard to speak about the NOI for bog restoration. Willard said a draft narrative is written and will allow for alteration of a wetland for purposes of restoring wildlife habitat. When completed and agreed to by the Conservation Commission a letter regarding the NOI will first be submitted to the

State's Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) for publication in the Environmental Monitor, letting the public know where they can view the document. She said that document has not been submitted to ConsCom, but a ConsCom member prepared a new map of the Cranberry Bog showing the wetland resource areas, their acreages, and acreages of the fields; this document was shown at the LSC meeting. Willard said that if the NOI is approved the bog fields would likely be mowed in the late fall.

Regarding Cranberry Bog Dam #1, Willard said that there is a warrant article for CPA funds to repair the dam that will be voted at the Town Meeting on May 8; the meeting might continue another night. There was a motion to support the use of Community Preservation Act funds for dam repair. The motion was seconded, and all voted in favor. Willard said that it would be helpful if LSC voiced support for the warrant article at Town Meeting.

5. Plans for Invasive Plants on Major Conservation Lands

Asarkof requested that discussion be postponed until the next meeting.

6. Stewardship Program Checklists

Talland selected Greenough Land and Davis Corridor for monitoring. Lyman asked Usher to think about his choices, and will send the current list to Adam Chojnacki. Current assignments might be changed later.

7. Earth Day Program 4/22/23: "Route to Sustainability"

Lyman said that there are currently two posters and one hand-out. Durrell said that there is no power available for exhibits on the Town Common, but she has a marine battery that can run up to four hours, and she will use this for her lap-top computer. She was able to obtain an oversize poster at Staples. Regarding hand-outs, Lyman said it would be better to keep the number small and encourage people to use QR codes.

8. Richard Annese: extension of a road in Billerica

Willard said that Mr. Annese's proposal to extend a road in Billerica to his property in Carlisle is before the Planning Board. Other issues include the possibility of a trail from the road into Greenough Land and monumentation. Willard will follow up on a possible site visit.

9. LSC's May meeting

Willard said that there are two meeting rooms at Town Hall that can accommodate hybrid (in-person + Zoom) meetings. However, she has not been trained as to how to use the equipment. Lyman asked members whether they would be comfortable with an in-person meeting, and no one objected to this. Willard noted that the Conservation Restriction Advisory Committee

(CRAC) has been meeting in-person for several months, and all members wear masks, although this is optional. The next meeting was originally scheduled for May 9 but was changed to May 16 to avoid a possible conflict with a second night for Town Meeting.

Next Meetings:

May 16 @ 7 PM

June 13, 2023 @ 7 PM

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9 PM.

Submitted by Tom Brownrigg

Minutes approved: 5/16/23