

Land Stewardship Committee Meeting
May 16, 2023
7:00 PM

Meeting Minutes

Present: Judy Asarkof, Tom Brownrigg, Dwight DeMay, Julie Durrell, Warren Lyman, Rhonda Michaud, Claudia Talland, and Shane Usher. Debbie Geltner was absent. Conservation Administrator Sylvia Willard was present.

The meeting was held at Gleason Public Library, the committee's first in-person meeting since February 2020.

Guests: Adam Chojnacki, Dan Cooke, Marlies Henderson, and Trek Rieff.

The April 11, 2023, minutes were approved as amended.

1. New LSC member status: Adam Chojnacki

Lyman said that ConsCom had approved the appointment of Adam Chojnacki, but the appointment still needs approval by the Select Board. For this reason, Chojnacki was not able to vote on any motion, but could express his opinions.

2. Additional Greenough parking, requested by Marlies Henderson

Prior to the meeting Lyman sent members a report titled "Additional Parking for the Greenough Land? LSC Considerations and Recommendations". The memo lists three options: (1) No New Parking; (2) Occasional Use by Special Permit; and (3) Year-around Access to a New Parking Lot. Lyman read comments from Geltner, who sent comments before the meeting. Geltner thought that a decision regarding parking near the barn should be postponed until after the barn had been removed. Of the options, she preferred Option 2. Lyman then asked for comments from other members.

All members expressed support for Option 2 but expressed various concerns about parking. Asarkof was concerned about handicap access for the trail leading over Greenough dam. Willard noted that OPDMD (Other-powered Mobility Devices) can traverse difficult terrain. Usher favored minimal access and was concerned about protecting natural resources. He asked if the barn contains asbestos. Willard said that a cottage formerly located near the barn contained asbestos but not the barn; the barn has been evaluated for hazardous materials. Durrell was concerned about possible harm to nesting birds and turtles but was otherwise in favor of Option 2. Willard noted that the area around Greenough Pond is rare species habitat. Michaud thought it important to have advance notice of parking; Willard said that permission would be needed from both Carlisle Conservation Foundation (CCF) and ConsCom. Lyman noted that currently the trips led by Henderson are in winter, so that possible damage to vegetation and wildlife is minimal.

Henderson then addressed the committee, followed by Billerica resident Trek Rieff. Henderson said that her primary goal is to preserve parking capacity. She said that CCF supports current access, with member Steve Tobin opening the gate for their walks. She thought that allowing more parking near the barn would relieve overcrowding at the two existing Greenough lots. Henderson agreed with the suggestion to wait until after the barn is removed before making a final decision.

Trek Rieff lives at 56 Riveredge Rd., Billerica, close to the gate. He said that most of the walkers are from the immediate neighborhood. In the past few years, he has noticed more cars parking at the end of Riveredge Rd., and some of these have Carlisle transfer station stickers. He is concerned that some of these cars could block the gate and prevent entry of the Carlisle Fire Department vehicles. He is also concerned about the safety of small animals (e.g., rabbits and turtles) hidden in tall grass that might be impacted by vehicles parking there.

After discussion, Michaud made a motion to postpone discussion of additional parking until after the barn has been removed, since physical conditions would then be better known. DeMay seconded the motion, and all voted in favor. Talland thought that there should be a sign at the gate saying (in essence): Do not block the gate for access by emergency vehicles. Dan Cooke, a CCF member, will communicate this request to CCF chair Kelly Guarino. Cooke is also the Town's representative to the River Stewardship Council, which supports additional parking near the barn.

3. Towle Field – no discussion

4. Foss Farm – Protection of Sandplain-Grassland Habitat

There was no discussion of a proposal to protect habitat. However, Asarkof has been visiting Foss Farm recently and speaking with visitors. She sent an email prior to the meeting with visitors' comments, with a focus on kiosk material. Possible kiosk items discussed included maps showing trails to adjacent conservation lands, unusual plants or animals that might be observed, and encouraging use of iNaturalist. Asarkof, Durrell, Michaud and Usher volunteered to work on kiosk material. Asarkof noted that this would help bring some uniformity to the look of various kiosks. Brownrigg noted that the kiosk once had a plastic cover that is missing and should be replaced, otherwise printed materials will need to be laminated.

5. Cranberry Bog Working Group (CBWG)

Lyman attended the CBWG meeting on May 15 and read his notes of the main topics. He said that Willard has nearly completed her "magnum opus", a proposal to maintain the bog as natural habitat. There was considerable discussion regarding how to manage water levels, and who would be responsible. No action was taken, but discussion will resume at the next meeting. Regarding plans for Cranberry Bog Dam #1, possible errors have been found in the design submitted by the engineering firm. These will need to be reviewed, which will cause delays. (Funding for dam repair was approved at the May 8 Town Meeting.) Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, bi-yearly Carlisle/Chelmsford cranberry bog meetings were held, although these were suspended during the pandemic. These meetings might be resumed. A Chelmsford resident

expressed frustration that the CBWG meeting discussed documents that were not available to the public. The Chelmsford ConsCom gives URL links to documents being discussed. Lyman suggested that Carlisle could do this also.

Asarkof said that on a recent visit to the sandy bog, she found a population of Sundew, and identified the species using iNaturalist.

6. Plans for Invasive Plants on Major Conservation Lands – no discussion

7. Stewardship Program Checklists- no discussion

7. Russell Land: review of draft Baseline Assessment

Lyman said that very few members had sent comments on the Russell Land Baseline Assessment. He requested that they send comments by May 26, after which time he will send a second draft for discussion at the June meeting.

Parking is a problem for Russell Land, since there is no formal parking lot available to the public. Lyman asked Willard if some additional parking places might be located near a cistern off Russell St. Willard said that he should contact Chief Sorrows about this matter. Additional nest boxes have been installed on Russell Land, but the person responsible is not known.

9. Richard Annese – road extension in Billerica near Greenough Land, and site visit?

Willard said that she recently visited the Annese property with Rhonda Michaud, ConsCom member George Shepard, and Mr. Annese. Annese would like to remove several dead pine trees and an oak tree on his border with Greenough Land. There are also trees with barbed wire that he would like removed, although these trees are still alive. Michaud thought it might be possible to remove most of the barbed wire without removing the trees. Willard thought that the demarcation of the border with Greenough was adequate but would like to mark the border with small circular signs identifying conservation land. Annese was agreeable to these suggestions.

10. LSC possible participation in Old Home Day, June 24 & 25

Lyman thought that at least two “champions” were needed to prepare for possible participation in Old Home Day if LSC members were interested. No one expressed an interest. There was discussion of whether the effort justified the amount of work, and what the benefits might be. Lyman suggested that LSC not participate this year but think about doing so next year.

11. Bog House – Inspection of current use?

Lyman said that the Municipal Facilities Committee is responsible for maintenance of the Bog House, but ConsCom decides how the building is used. Prior to Covid-19 pandemic, there was

an annual inspection of the Bog House, followed by a report. The occupants were given 48 hours advance notice, and the inspection consisted of a 1-hour tour. Willard said that the windows needed to be scraped down and painted, and the shades replaced. She spoke with Town Administrator Ryan McLane and he said that “Covid money” (?) could be used for repairs. Asarkof and new member Adam Chojnacki volunteered to assist with an inspection.

12. LSC elections of chair(s) and secretary in June meeting

Lyman asked people to think about new appointments, and projects that might need funding for approval at the fall Town Meeting.

Document discussed at the meeting:

- W. Lyman, “Additional Parking for the Greenough Land? LSC Considerations and Recommendations, April 2023.

Next Meetings:

June 13, 2023 @ 7 PM at Town Hall

July 11, 2023 (tentative date)

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Submitted by Tom Brownrigg

Minutes approved: 6/13/23