

HARVARD CONSERVATION COMMISSION - Land Stewardship Subcommittee

MINUTES OF MEETING

December 8, 2020

Present: Wendy Sisson, Jim Adelson, Rob Traver, Adam Meier, Peter von Conta, John Lee, Pam Durrant, Brian McClain

Wendy Sisson called the meeting to order at 7:20 PM as a virtual meeting (recorded)

Minutes from the 10/27/20 meeting, as drafted by Jim Adelson, were approved

Haskell/Stewardship of Agricultural Land

- LSS hasn't had much involvement with agricultural land
- Lincoln Conservation Commission has documents for managing town ag land that could be useful
- Adam and Rob may be interested in getting involved in agricultural issues

Chainsaw List

- Peter proposed sending along some simple questions of their interest in continuing
- Peter to contact Phil Knoettner for input
- Jim Adelson asked that people put entries for cleared trails in the log

Discussed broader citizen reporting via Nextdoor Harvard; Alltrails was also mentioned for this purpose, but Jim Adelson didn't think it was suitable from his use of Alltrails

Perhaps at a future meeting we could talk about the trail apps we use, and the kinds of information that could be utilized and captured

There is a potential need to get involved in trail development proposed by Chris Ryan and HCT

- We would have to identify what is needed/desired
- We would also look into MassTrails funding objectives
- There is interest in connecting trails; Pam suggested that there could be approaches not requiring grants; HCT is looking at places where linkages are desired
- Where could recommendations for trails be shared or discussed?
 - o HCT site?
 - o Review Marc Sevigny's OpenStreetMap entries on www.harvard-trails.com
 - o Bromfield trail crew
- Did a pull of Japanese barberry on Clapp-Scorgie
- Had another effort planned, but called off for a snowstorm

Eagle Scout Projects

- Brian has had a couple of exchanges with Christian Lancelot on Bare Hill Sanctuary's crossing into Bolton, with a potential 180' of boardwalk; there are still some questions on the design, with one used at Black Pond as a model; may not be able to work on it when the ground is frozen
- We felt we should have a suggested design we could give; Wendy has info, and Peter will try to create a drawing for it

- For the kiosk, there's been no recent communication from Matt Zobbi; Peter thought Matt had a pretty good idea from our input

Deer Management

- 30 people were invited to hunt, though only 6 were actively hunting
- A survey was conducted to find the reasons
 - o Access is difficult
 - o There are too many hunters
 - o They were looking for more land, and bigger parcels
 - o The weather hasn't been cold enough
 - o The deer rut doesn't start until Thanksgiving
- Several people thought that hunters wouldn't want to be assigned, though Pam and Wendy had recommended that
- No deer had actually been taken under the program, we believed
- Jason Cole was resigning from the group, and needed to be replaced
- For additional lands
 - o We talked about Tripp, though there was uncertainty about the amount of hiking that takes place on the property; we thought that there could be enough hunting area off-trail
 - o SVT assigns hunters on their properties, including Smith land in Littleton; we thought possibly Vesenska, though not Black Pond
 - o Possibly Gillette
 - o Possibly Shaker Spring House

Wendy did some buckthorn removal, but tick bites were a problem, perhaps that would be better now; Brian indicated that he was willing to help but with ground freezing will need to wait until spring.

Chestnut Grove update

- The public comment period for an unregulated AFIS USDA permit got a record number of comments -- ~43,000, with 77% positive, 23% negative
- Have found in some cases that trees are not 100% American

Quiet, Healthy Yard Program

- Making yards more friendly to people, native plants and animals
- Use of quieter, less polluting electric equipment
- Wellesley has a program, Concord has materials
- We could potentially have a list of tips for interested homeowners
- We might also have some points for commercial operators and municipal lands

Conservation coffees are held monthly on Zoom, led by Theresa Garti; next meeting January 5th, and Brian said he'd send a note about it

We talked about electric chainsaws – some people have had good experience

Resettling the bridge on Clapp-Scorgie – Rob to look to get some help, because the bridge is heavy; it also needs a new rock for support

End of trail sign (for Old Mill)

- Wendy will order the sign

- Jim Adelson will contact Vicky LoChiatto, who expressed interest in helping maintain the trail (email sent 12/10, but no response)

The next meeting will be January 26th

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 PM