

HARVARD CONSERVATION COMMISSION - Land Stewardship Subcommittee

MINUTES OF MEETING

January 26, 2021

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

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

Minutes from the 12/08/20 meeting, as drafted by Jim Adelson, were approved

Shaker Spring House

- Wendy had gone there 1/25/21 with Margaret Kusner who is writing an article for the Press
- Shakers piped water from the spring there to their village, where they would bottle and sell it; chose this location because this spring still ran when drought conditions dried up spring water in the village itself

Peter von Conta's report

- The Trail Status Log continues to be a good tool
- Teresa Garti is a steward for Prospect Hill
- Teresa and her husband did chainsaw work on Prospect Hill and on Clapp-Scorgie
- There are still some items in the log that haven't been taken care of
 - o Black Pond ridge and another blowdown on the property
 - o Bridge at Clapp Cove on Clapp-Scorgie – this should probably be marked with caution tape
- Peter is still working on reblazing Clapp-Scorgie, with work remaining to be done

Chainsaw Crew

- We considered reducing old list in size, but backed away
- Peter ran into Peter Foley, HCT Stewardship Committee, and they were talking about additional apps that would make it easier to report locations of downed trees
- There have been some large tree falls due to storms recently

Agricultural Land

- Adam and Wendy have been talking about creating a baseline picture of town-owned agricultural land
- Potential oral history of farmers' experience– what's been planted, challenges, etc.
- Evolving role for LSS dealing with agricultural land
- Two potential phases
 - o Inventory, including fees paid
 - o Management plans, including soil samples
- Rob is part of the Ag Advisory committee for the town
 - o Rob to let Ag Advisory committee know about Adam's work
 - o The Ag Advisory committee works at trying to build understanding between ag and non-ag people; also working as part of the municipal vulnerability effort
- Wendy clarified that our focus is only on town-owned conservation land, not all ag properties in town
- Rob reports we may be able to get some help from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), for work on Haskell land

Info on newer invasive insect pests – to cover in a future meeting

Mass Trails Grant

- Give \$5K - \$300K grants, every year, to be used within a year
- Regional/ inter-town trail connections a priority
- You get extra points if communities of need are able to get access
- Our projects probably don't warrant applying, and then doing the administrative work to document what got done
- LSS trailwork is low cost -- major expenses are materials for bridges and boardwalks
- HCT has put in a request for enhanced digital services (website, links to maps), tools for larger trail crews and a storage shed

Park & Rec

- Brian asked that Wendy circulate the Park & Rec CPC request for funding feasibility studies on lands near the Town Beach and behind McCurdy Track
- Park & Rec is looking for new athletic field/recreation sites with parking, proposed land swaps
 - o Stone land?
 - o I asked about Dolan-Mason off Slough Road; Pam thought this was probably too small, and also was HCT land, not Harvard town property

On-going work by HCT to acquire certain land parcels from National Grid, just west of 495

- Links with Tripp Land, Perini Land, and Gillette Land
- Wendy to set up a walk on the portion near Gillette, once the Purchase & Sale Agreement has been signed, to see whether we feel it's suitable for trails

Bromfield Trail Crew

- Pulled Japanese barberry on Clapp-Scorgie
- Did work on Shaker Spring House trail
- Two college students who had helped the Bromfield crew replaced and repaired boardwalks on Shaker Spring House

Eagle Scout Projects

- For Bare Hill Wildlife Sanctuary boardwalk work by Christian Lancellotti, lumber has been retrieved, but still working on getting the design documented
- Brian had pictures of the Black Pond boardwalk, which Peter will make into a drawing
- For kiosk that Matt Zabi is working on, Peter is trying to get an idea from him of when it will be done
- New projects
 - o Bridge building/repair with the snowmobile club
 - o Tripp Land project – Pam and Wendy to walk, perhaps with the scout, to discuss

Additional Conservation Land Sign – looking for possibilities of where to put it; Tripp Land?

Deer Management

- 1 deer shot, the last day, on Damon-Stephenson property
- 30 hunters were invited for this year; perhaps 6 active
- Other possible properties that we thought might be considered for future
 - o Gillette – there are a lot of deer there, no trails currently

- Tom Cotton suggested Williams, but Wendy didn't think so – wooded portion limited and heavily used by walkers
- Wendy thought possibly Vesenska, although not Black Pond
- Old Mill, perhaps?

End of trail signage

- Wendy now has the signs
- Fuller-Dudley Woods – need to install end of trail sign

The next meeting will be February 23rd

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM