

Land Stewardship Committee Meeting
April 19, 2022
Via teleconference - 7:00 PM

Meeting Minutes

Present: Judy Asarkof, Tom Brownrigg, Debbie Geltner, Dwight DeMay, Warren Lyman, Rhonda Michaud, and Nick Ognibene. Conservation Administrator Sylvia Willard was absent.

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.

The March 15, 2022, minutes were approved as amended.

New Business

1. Notes from 4-4-22 Cranberry Bog Working Group (CBWG) meeting.

Lyman attended the meeting and had previously sent LSC members his notes. Lyman said that there has been very little progress on a restoration and management plan for nearly a year, when a consultant wrote a brief report with recommendations. Asarkof suggested that LSC could become more involved with the CBWG. Lyman said that the CPC had approved funding for a Notice of Intent for the repair of Cranberry Bog Dam #1, to be presented at Town Meeting on April 25.

2. Towle Field Mowing Protocol

Prior to the meeting Lyman sent members a revised mowing proposal for Towle Field. This proposal differs from the original in that the field would be divided into three sections, and each section would be mowed once every three years instead of every two years. A three-year mowing cycle was recommended by the Xerces Society, Mass Audubon, and Sudbury Valley Trustees. The edges of all fields would be mowed every year to discourage the encroachment of invasive plants. Asarkof contacted three field mowers and obtained cost estimates, which Lyman tabulated. If the three-year mowing protocol were adopted, it would result in a considerable cost savings over the current twice-yearly mowing cost. Lyman thanked Asarkof for obtaining cost estimates, and for her offer to mow the trails at Towle Field.

Brownrigg asked if the areas that were brush-hogged in 2019 should be considered field edges, and discussion followed. Geltner said that field edges should be areas currently in grass or perennials. Another question was the width of the proposed yearly edge mowing. Lyman asked Brownrigg to submit edits to the proposal, which Lyman wants to submit to ConsCom in time for their next meeting. Both DeMay and Ognibene agreed that the revised proposal be sent to ConsCom as soon as possible.

3. Habitat Pollinator Project

Lyman said that LSC still lacks a focus on activities or projects it might undertake. He suggested reading the *Carlisle Mosquito* “EcoZone” columns for ideas. He will make a list of pollinator meadows in Lincoln and other nearby towns that LSC could visit this summer. Geltner noted that SuAsCo Cisma (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area) is now including work with native pollinators and will send information. Asarkof mentioned that the Carlisle Garden Club will have a native plant sale, including plants from Walter Kittredge. She also mentioned that Kittredge might be interested in leading a walk at Towle Field to learn about native plants.

4. Review of Benfield Baseline Assessment

Lyman said that the document is nearly finished, and he would like to submit the report to ConsCom. He asked for any additional comments from people who had not responded earlier.

5. Towle Stone Wall Clearing: Report on April 2 & 9 work parties

Lyman said that Marc Wey and associates have cleared the stone wall bordering Westford St. all the way to the end near the parking lot. An extension of the clearing east of the mower entrance had been also approved by ConsCom.

6. Benfield Land bluebird nest box maintenance (and possible relocation of some boxes)

There are now 11 (and possibly 12) bluebird nest boxes in the vicinity of the new septic system. Brownrigg thinks that some of these should be relocated, but no decision has been made. Old nests from the previous year should be cleaned out prior to the nesting season. Lyman said that Benfield Farms housing has a maintenance contractor which might be able to do this and will contact Willard.

7. Purchase of new signs and related materials

Lyman said that only one firm responded to a request to manufacture new signs, and the estimated cost, plus posts and hardware, was approximately \$5000; this will be funded through an ARPA grant. He asked Geltner if she and Lyman could schedule a final negotiating session with the sign company, and Geltner agreed. The question of whether to include the purchase several handicapped parking signs was raised, but no decision was made.

8. Preparation for April Town Meeting on 4/25/22

Prior to the meeting Willard asked for LSC’s support to request CPA funds in order to repair Cranberry Bog Dam #1. Michaud read the motion, and all voted in favor. At the time of the LSC meeting, no LSC members were planning to attend Town Meeting.

9. Response to questions on dog waste

On April 10, Library Trustee Christine Stevens sent an email to Willard regarding dog waste on conservation lands. A Carlisle Social Studies teacher has asked his students to identify a problem of interest to the town and propose a solution. Stevens's daughter Charlotte is concerned about dog waste on conservation lands and would like to install dog waste bags at trailheads.

After discussion, Asarkof suggested that Ms. Stevens contact Judy Hodges, a former Board of Health assistant, who is interested in controlling dog waste. Asarkof thought that Hodges might be a good mentor to Charlotte.

10. Other: Wild Indigo removed at Foss Farm

Asarkof said that someone removed the dormant Wild Indigo plants and seed pods from Foss Farm. She had hoped that these plants would reseed elsewhere. Wild Indigo is not rare but is uncommon and prefers dry sandy soils.

Old Business

Lyman said that a joint meeting with ConsCom is still on hold, because ConsCom is very busy. He reminded people to walk on "orphaned" conservation lands and adjust signs that might be too close to trees.

Asarkof said that trails at Towle Field need mowing and she will talk with Steve Tobin (Trails Committee) about this.

Next Meetings:

May 17, 2022 @ 7 PM

June 14, 2022 @ 7 PM

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Submitted by Tom Brownrigg

Minutes approved: 5/17/22