

Meeting Minutes – Upton Land Stewardship Committee

January 9, 2014

Nipmuc Media Center: 7:40 pm

Members Present: Scott Heim, Mary Overholt, Mike Penko, Marcella Stasa, Cathy Taylor, Bill Taylor

Others Present: Bob and Michelle Potheau

1. Whitney CA Parking Area
 - a) Safety of Rope Barrier: BP talked with horse “expert”...a rope barrier would be very dangerous. A guardrail would also be dangerous as would be stones, if too low.
 - b) BP: there have been problem with recreational users over the last month (people approaching house, blocking driveway, and dumping trash). He was expecting to be protected by a fence and will install is own, if necessary.
 - c). BP: concerned about design of the information kiosk.
 - d) Alternatives: all agreed ropes not appropriate and no longer an alternative; car stops? fencing? BP against shortening length of existing boulder delineated lot and spacing out the boulders.
 - e) MP: if boulders must be removed, the Potheau's share some responsibility for this expense because they had originally agreed to installation of a boulder barrier. BT disagrees. BT – we need to move on.
 - f) BP has some different recollections of the October 12 meeting when use of boulders was agreed upon. Member of the LSC recall some of his statements, but not others. It was likely partially a communications failure.
 - g) Alternatives to consider: Bumpers (car stops), wire fence 4 or 5 ft high with or without top rail; more widely spaced boulders (MP’s alternative proposed in December). MS and BP to consult with horse people on safety of the alternatives.
2. Heritage Park: Scout is proposing a kiosk (which is covered by the RT grant). Scout should coordinate with LSC; there should be a standard Kiosk design for all locations.
3. Eagle Scout Project Checklist: MS will send it to some scouts who have been through the process.
4. Snow Conservation Area Violation: MP and friend encountered person on property with truck who was cutting firewood. MP asked him to leave the wood. The man is an abutter and he said he had permission from Snow’s. MO to talk with Snow’s. MP also noted ORV damage to one of the Snow Conservation Area vernal pools.
5. Land Stewardship Handbook: Appendices assignments: Maps and Goss Pond description (MP); Safety (SH); Invasive plant fact sheets (CT), First aid (BT).
6. 2013 Annual Report: MS circulated draft for review and comment. MS authorized to submit report, with discretion to incorporate any additional comments/corrections received.
7. Meeting adjourned at 9:42

Note: A posted December 20, 2013 LSC meeting to discuss the Whitney parking area was not held.

Meeting Minutes – Upton Land Stewardship Committee

February 6, 2014

Nipmuc High School: 7:40

Members Present: Mary Overholt, Mike Penko, Marcella Stasa, Bill Taylor, Cathy Taylor

Others Present: Tom and Dan Coley

1. Tom Coley (Scout Troop 132): Discussion about possible Eagle Scout project at the Stefans Farm Community Garden:
 - a. Tom presented some ideas for improvements to the garden. These included construction of 5 new beds, compost bins, soil/manure storage areas, and mulched walkways,
 - b. Various other ideas discussed, including construction of a second elevated (ca. 4 ft. high) raised bed; stands to elevate rain barrels off ground, installation of traffic safety mirrors, barn swallow nesting structure, senior citizen transportation program. MP not in favor of mulch and compost bins that would block pathways.
 - c. Tom will raise funds for whatever project is ultimately proposed.
 - d. MS to provide to provide Tom with LSC Eagle Scout project guidance.
2. Whitney CA Parking Area
 - a. CT looked at the parking area and thinks area is fine as it is.
 - b. No new information about approval of Kiosks locations from Trails Grant
 - c. MP handed out an alternatives analysis which compared the effectiveness, safety, cost, maintenance, and aesthetics of several alternatives. MS found a 4 - 5 ft. fence with top rail is best for horses.
 - d. There was a discussion about fence alternatives. CT to get a cost estimate from a person she knows.
 - e. If rocks need to be removed from site, Upton DPW has offered to help.
3. Heritage Park Kiosk Design: The park kiosk was included in the trails grant. LSC and the Historical Commission need to agree on a design.
4. Peppercorn Hill Conservation Area: New Eagle Scout project by Ashley Hobert. LSC discussed priority projects: possibilities include a boardwalk and trail relocation project at north end of the trail system (near the bog), replacement of a ca. 1990 vintage boardwalk, kiosks, and signs.
5. Stewardship Handbook: no activity
6. Eagle Scout Project guidance: feedback still needed.
7. Stefans Farm – Orchard Street Access: Alternatives discussed. Based on site visit with town engineer, a heavy duty stream crossing required to access property via Orchard Street would cost 40 – 80K. Given this, the alternative was tabled. LSC will not ask CPA for funding at this time. Gaining access through the Foye property discussed. Motion to

contract Josh Foye seconded and approved. Also, a low cost boardwalk could be constructed to cross the stream for foot/equestrian traffic.

8. Meeting adjourned at 10 pm.

Approved:

Meeting Minutes – Upton Land Stewardship Committee

March 6, 2014

Nipmuc High School: 7:35

Members Present: Scott Heim, Mary Overholt, Mike Penko, Marcella Stasa, Bill Taylor, Cathy Taylor

Others Present: Mark LeClarie JR and Mark LeClarie SR

1. Whitney CA Parking Area: CT contacted fencing vendor for cost estimate.
2. Stefans Farm Community Garden: A new coordinator is needed (former coordinator has resigned from the LSC). MO volunteered to help; MS will advertize for new gardeners;
3. Mark LeClarie (Eagle Scout Project at Heritage Park): Mark is building a kiosk at the park and there was a long discussion about the design. The LSC RT Grant application included Heritage Park, so coordination between the Mark, LSC, and Historical Commission is needed. Mark intends to match the material used for an already constructed on-site shed (“crazy wood”). LSC may want to use a different kiosk design elsewhere in town. Mark also proposes to use wooden shingles instead of asphalt, wooden pegs instead of nails, and a peaked roof. SHPO review/approval of kiosk location is required if RT Grant funds are used. A site visit at the park was tentatively scheduled for April 24th at 7 pm.
4. Peppercorn Hill Conservation Area Stewardship Plan: MS working on draft.
5. Stewardship Handbook: MS will a send draft to the WBCA stewards.
6. Warren Brook Conservation Area Forest Stewardship Plan: MS applied for a MA DCR forest stewardship grant. The plan will include the WBCSA and abutting town properties, totaling about 330 acres. LSC may wish to enhance the standard DCR plan by mapping stone walls, identify legacy trees, etc.
7. Stefans Farm – Orchard Street Access: location for Eagle Scout boardwalk project.
8. It would be helpful to create spreadsheets to track to-do lists and completed work for each conservation area. MP to submit new format for review at next meeting.
9. February 2014 minutes approved as corrected.
10. Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Approved:

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Meeting Minutes – Upton Land Stewardship Committee

April 3, 2014

Nipmuc High School: 7:35

Members Present: Mary Overholt, Mike Penko, Marcella Stasa, Bill Taylor

1. March 6, 2014 minutes approved.
2. Whitney CA Parking Area: Rocks delineating the parking area have been removed and trucked to Stefans. LSC is not sure who moved the rocks. DPW or Potheau's? Alternatives to the stones discussed. Motion to use cut granite to delineate parking area, if funds are available in current FY budget, with 6 x 6 pressure treated wood as an alternative. Seconded and approved. MS to arrange a meeting to discuss LSC solution with owner, Conservation Commission, and BOS/TM, should they want to participate.
3. Stewardship Handbook: MS sent draft copy to Cindy Maher, the WBCA steward.
4. Forest Stewardship Plans: Defer to next FY. DCR made no forest stewardship grant awards in March. An April award would not provide enough time to finish the plan this FY (i.e. by July 1).
5. Peppercorn Hill: MS working with Eagle Scout on a boardwalk project. Coordination with NHESP needed.
6. Stefans: Need to contact Josh Foye about access and what he knows about the well near Warren Brook. BT to contact water department about cost of a hook-up. Need to contact construction contractors for Recreation Trail Grant work.
7. Work dates: April 12th, and the second Saturday and third Sunday of each month, 9 -12, during the summer.
8. Warren St. Parcel: Defer scheduling a site visit until next month.
9. Property Checklist – WBCA checklist provided as an example.
10. Vernal pools – VP's at Howarth Glen, Stefans, and Warren Brook need to be certified.
11. Meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Approved:

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Meeting Minutes – Upton Land Stewardship Committee

May 1, 2014

Nipmuc High School: 7:42

Members Present: Scott Heim, Mike Penko, Marcella Stasa, Bill Taylor

1. April 3, 2014 minutes approved.
2. LSC Chairperson: MS will continue to be chair and oversee major ongoing projects, including two scout projects, Peppercorn Stewardship Plan, LSC Handbook, and the two recreational trail grants. To even the workload going forward, LSC members will assume responsibility for specific tasks and properties. See attached table for current assignments. Property POC's are to maintain property checklists.
3. Added 1st Monday to workday schedule (6 pm).
4. Goss Pond: Needs include loop trail, wetland crossing (boardwalk), and trail sign/kiosk.
5. SH may know of a potential new member (2 are needed).
6. Trimble XT GPS available for rent from MLT (\$30/day)
7. Peppercorn Hill: New Scout boardwalk project - need for new NOI discussed. There may still be one or more open NOI's at Peppercorn. KL has given permission to access project site through Rockwood Meadows.
8. Meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Approved:

Meeting Minutes – Upton Land Stewardship Committee

June 5, 2014

Nipmuc High School: 7:42

Members Present: Mary Overholt, Mike Penko, Marcella Stasa, Bill Taylor

1. May 1, 2014 minutes approved.
2. Whitney Parking Area: BT, Alan, and Selby met with Bob Potheau. Use of 4" high granite car stoppers to delineate parking area is ok with Potheau. LSC discussed whether or not ends of parking lot should be delineated with granite car stoppers. Committee agreed to ask ConCom for a decision. Motion to purchase the necessary stoppers seconded and approved.
3. Community Garden: Sharon Krupski has volunteered to be the garden manager.
4. Howarth Glen: Mr. Howarth has offered to mow the field this fall. For \$300. Motion to approve this expenditure seconded and approved.
5. Stefans: MS to investigate hiring of contractors to cut back woody vegetation along field edges. Any work would not be done until late this fall to protect box turtles.
6. Peppercorn Hill Sign: MP to get estimate from Sunshine Sign.
7. Meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Approved:

Meeting Minutes – Upton Land Stewardship Committee

July 3, 2014

Nipmuc High School: 7:30

Members Present: Mike Penko, Marcella Stasa, Bill Taylor, Cathy Taylor

1. Whitney Parking Area: Six granite car stoppers delivered and installed to delineate parking. LSC discussed whether or not eliminate 6th space because it was too close to eastern end of the parking easement. End of parking lot should be delineated with granite car stoppers. Motion to reduce number of spaces from 6 to 5, seconded and approved.
2. Stefans: MS and MP met with Greg Trussel (landscaper). Greg would charge \$1000 day for basic field mowing. Greg would charge \$1,250 day to clear vegetation along edge of fields. The vegetation would be chipped in place (except for larger saplings). Motion to fund one-day edge clearing test effort this fall seconded and approved. Any work would not be done until after November 1 to protect Eastern box turtle. LSC will cut the larger trees.
3. Stefans Wetland Mitigation Area: Motion to hire Greg Trussel for one day effort to excavate and grade mitigation area this summer for \$1600. Seconded and approved.
4. Peppercorn Hill Sign: Waiting for artwork from Sunshine Sign
5. Recreational Trails (Signage) Grant: Contract signed. Check if signs and kiosks are exempt from Sign Bylaw. First Kiosk to be constructed at Whitney parking area. Need to develop content for kiosk display (property history, maps, wildlife info; land use regulations)
6. Peppercorn Hill Conservation Area: Hopkinton has acquired open space adjacent to Upton's land in Hopkinton.
7. Five Forks Farm (Whitney CA West Parcel): Discussion about need for barrier fence along the FFF electric fence. Motion to support barrier fence seconded and approved, but ConCom should make the decision. The fence would cost several thousand dollars.
8. Whitney Conservation Area (West Parcel): Discussion about whether or not to keep the small field open. Site visit needed before making a decision.
9. Goss Pond: MP to prepare RFD for boardwalk and will begin work on a Land Stewardship Plan.
10. Warren Street Open Space: CT volunteered to be the LSC point person for that parcel.
11. Meeting adjourned at ?? pm.

Approved:

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Meeting Minutes – Upton Land Stewardship Committee

August 7, 2014

Nipmuc High School: 7:33

Members Present: Mary Overholt, Mike Penko, Marcella Stasa, Bill Taylor, Cathy Taylor

1. North Street Parcels: Management of town owned parcels 4-12 and 5-4 discussed. Motion to recommend Conservation Commission ask BOS for permission to manage these parcels. 2nd and approved.
2. Rockwood Meadows: Discussion about easement deed and CR. The Conservation Commissions is coordinating this with the LDG and the Planning Board.
3. Peppercorn: The sign has been delivered and paid for. BT to investigate cost of granite posts.
4. Kiosk Design: BT has been researching design. Prefers metal roof. There will likely be different sizes/designs based on need and location. A prototype will be deployed at Stefans (Whitney CA kiosk will be No. 2). Motion to hire professional carpenter to help design and build prototype. 2nd and approved.
5. Emerald Ash Borer: Discussion about actions to take in advance of expected EAB infestation in Upton. 1) photo document large trees; monitor and treat selected trees with pesticides (e.g. the trail along Whitney West - SWF pasture). MP to research issue further.
6. Whitney CA: Motion to purchase a sign for parking lot “Whitey Conservation Area Public Parking (Dawn to Dusk) for up to \$150. 2nd and approved.
7. Stefans: MS Talked with Rick R. about mowing this fall after GT works to clear back woody vegetation along field edges. CT to investigate seeding fields with wildflower seed purchased from Project Native.
8. Stefans: MP suggested LSC investigate creating a dog park, using the west side field nearest to Mechanic St. Using east side field near the Community Garden is a possibility, but it may be more valuable wood turtle habitat than the west side field.
9. Howarth Glen Schoolhouse No. 6. MP suggested getting quotes to remove trees growing within the structure. Motion to get quotes and approach CPA committee for funding 2nd and approved.
10. Meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Approved:

Meeting Minutes – Upton Land Stewardship Committee

September 6, 2014

Nipmuc High School: 7:30

Members Present: Mary Overholt, Mike Penko, Marcella Stasa, Bill Taylor, Cathy Taylor

Visitor: Rhonda Pilla

1. LSC minutes for June, July, and August meetings approved with minor corrections.
2. Community Garden: RP is interested in managing the garden. Various issues discussed including use of food waste as compost by some gardeners and lack of water.
3. Howarth Glen: School House 6 Foundation - Members of the LSC met with the CPC. CPC suggesting adding an interpretive display and trail access to the project.
4. Howarth Glen: MS to call Mr. Howarth about mowing the field (mowing to be done after Nov. 1 to protect turtles).
5. Howarth Glen: Oral History - potential meeting with Mr. Howarth (tentative date Oct 18).
6. Stefans: Native wildflowers - CT to research and cost out possible seeding test plot.
7. Whitney Conservation Area: Cost of sign for parking area from Sunshine Sign was \$1300. MP to investigate other options.
8. Goss Pond: Boardwalk RFD prepared.
9. North Street Parcels: Chris S. sent letter to town manger asking that LSC be allowed to manage the parcels. Topic not yet on a BOS meeting agenda.
10. Peppercorn Hill: New Eagle Scout project (boardwalk) on agenda for 8 September BOS meeting.
11. Work dates: September 13 and September 21.
12. Kiosk Design: MS planning to talk with Steve Johnson.
13. Stefans: Replication area - MP to supervise construction by Greg Trussel sometime in October.
14. Goss Pond: MP planning water quality study in September if access to pond can be arranged.
15. Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Approved:

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Meeting Minutes – Upton Land Stewardship Committee

October 2, 2014

Nipmuc High School: 7:35

Members Present: Mary Overholt, Mike Penko, Marcella Stasa, Bill Taylor

1. LSC minutes for September meeting approved with minor corrections.
2. Community Garden: MS to meet with RP to review end of season garden closeout. Whether or not to charge gardeners a plot fee in 2015 discussed. The consensus was to continue to have a voluntary fee and voluntary work hours. MP requested LSC ask DPW to remove boulders from the parking area.
3. Upcoming Work Dates: October 11 and October 19.
4. Peppercorn Conservation Area: New sign - committee decided to use PT wood posts rather than granite posts.
5. Whitney Conservation Area – Signage and Parking Area. WT and AM to talk with Potheau about signage to be installed. LSC decided on carved wood signage (3 ft wide), with the signage to be installed close to wall. The number of parking spaces was discussed. MP suggested reducing number from 6 to 4 to provide a buffer between public parking and Potheau's assorted vehicles and equipment (recent [Oct 2] pictures of parking area reviewed). Site visit scheduled for Saturday 11, with members attending authorized to remove 1 or 2 of the six granite car stoppers.
6. Sweetwilliam Farm: MS to draft letter from ConCom to send to Five Forks Farm regarding mowing of the pasture. Draft to be provided to SVT.
7. Howarth Oral History Interview: To be conducted on October 15 or 21.
8. Howarth Glen: Schoolhouse 6 project. CPC hearing in November. LSC to ask Historic Commission for letter of support.
9. Kiosk: Steve Johnson is willing to work on the prototype (he will be asked to attend next meeting).
10. Goss Pond Boardwalk: November work day? MP to schedule it.
11. North Street Parcels: BOS meeting scheduled for November 7.
12. Community Garden: Eagle Scout project (additional raised beds and compost bins) expected to be completed in November.
13. Committee Organization: MP questioned if the property POC concept was working and suggested we assign managers to individual projects rather than properties. MS to make a list of active projects.
14. Howarth Glen: Warren Brook crossing and need for fall protection: BT has done additional research and the LSC should install fall protection in areas where the drop is greater than 4 ft. BT to be POC on the retrofit.
15. Meeting adjourned at 9:17 pm.

Approved:

Meeting Minutes – Upton Land Stewardship Committee

November 13, 2014

Town Hall (Ground Floor Conference Room): 7:40

Members Present: Scott Heim, Mary Overholt, Mike Penko, Marcella Stasa, Cathy Taylor, Bill Taylor

Visitor: Steve Johnson

1. Kiosk Design: Discussion with Steve Johnson regarding a prototype design for a kiosk to be constructed at Stefans next year. Issues discussed include height, type of roof, one side or two sided, size, use of Plexiglas, etc. BT has design lead.
2. Senior Check Off Program – Discussion about using seniors as trail wardens.
3. Rockwood Meadows: MP made presentation to Hopkinton ConCom (MS and BT also attended). Hopkinton to consider issues and discuss with their Planning Board.
4. Stefans: Construction of mitigation area is underway. Greg Trussel is doing the work with MP providing oversight. GT will also mow field edges (1 day trial). Using Greg to remove boulders from old cart path authorized by unanimous vote.
5. Schoolhouse 6 Tree Removal: The project was voted down by CPC last night. Removing trees is consistent with DCR best practices for historic sites. On-site meeting with Jeff Thompson (tree warden) planned. LSC will consider seeking out alternative funding and consider removing many of the smaller trees ourselves
6. AmeriCorps Volunteers: Discussion of potential projects for an SVT/AmeriCorps volunteer in Upton. It was decided to the volunteer to look into opportunities to better connect trail systems in Upton to those in Grafton, Westborough, and Hopkinton.
7. Trails Grant – Interpretive Panels - BT to develop list of proposed panels.
8. Goss Pond Boardwalk: MP will ask for help as needed.
9. Eagle Scout projects completed at the Community Garden and Peppercorn.
10. Naming North Street parcels: No update.
11. Work Dates: Thompson Property (November 16 (9-11 am).
12. Whitney Parking Area: On site meeting scheduled for November 16 to consider signage and number of spacers.
13. Pratt Hill: Dough Harris would like the LSC to keep an eye on the tribe's Pratt Hill Property. Plans underway to apply for a grant to map Pratt Hill (the Ecotarium will partner with the tribe). Motion to send letter of support for the grant seconded and approved. MS to draft and send letter.
14. Annual Report: MS to draft and send out a draft for review.
15. Oral History: MS is typing up oral history interview with Mr. and Mrs. Howarth. Mr. H knew about the mica quarry off North Street. It was located some distance west of the stone quarry but may have been filled.
16. Minutes from October 2 meeting approved.
17. Meeting adjourned at 10:12 pm.

Approved:

Meeting Minutes – Upton Land Stewardship Committee

December 4, 2014

Town Hall, Code Enforcement Office: 7:45

Members Present: Scott Heim, Mary Overholt, Mike Penko, Marcella Stasa, Bill Taylor

Visitors: Brianna, Jeff, and Emily Croteau; Jesse Koyen (SVT, Americorps)

1. Peppercorn Hill CA: Brianna C. presented a ppt proposal for a kiosk at the Peppercorn Hill Conservation Area (exact location TBD). It would be a girl scout project, constructed in the summer of 2015.
2. Discussion with Jesse K. about new project to improve trail connections between Upton and Westborough, Hopkinton, and Grafton. MP to provide Upton GIS data (trails and parcels) to Jesse.
3. Discussion about whether or not to apply for a Toyota grant...probably not a good fit for our needs.
4. Stefans: Motion made to authorize MS to order materials for trail improvements at Stefans to spend down the Recreational Trails Grant funds. Funds must be expended by end of the calendar year. Seconded and approved.
5. Annual Report: MS will send our final draft of 2014 annual report for review prior to the January 8 meeting.
6. Meeting adjourned at 9:18 pm.

Approved:

