

Land Stewardship Subcommittee Meeting Minutes for March 28, 2023

1. The Meeting was called to order at 8:30 am by Ann Welsh.

Members Attending:, Marty Gorham, Gale Carey, Sally Tobias, Ann Welsh, Sally Needell, Lee Alexander, Ted Howard (for Mike Everngam), Mike Drooker (on Zoom), John Nachilly (on Zoom)

Absent: Larry Brickner-Wood, John Carroll, and Mike Everngam. **Also attending:** Sara Callaghan, Todd Selig, Rich Reine, and Rachel Gasowski

2. The Agenda was approved with one abstention.

3. The minutes of the February 28, 2023 meeting with corrections were approved with one abstention.

Ann requested a volunteer to take on the recording of meeting minutes. Marty Gorham agreed to be the new secretary.

4. Bee City, USA Presentation - Lee Alexander, Agriculture Commission

Lee Alexander gave a presentation on Durham's Bee City USA Initiative of the Agriculture Commission. Durham was the first town in New England to be certified by Bee City USA. Bee City is part of the Agriculture Commission's Bee-Friendly Program. He would like to expand the committee overseeing the program to include members from other committees and commissions such as the Land Stewardship Subcommittee and the Conservation Commission.

He outlined existing initiatives that include:

- Maintaining agricultural activities in the community
- The Food Friendly Yard program
- Durham Farm Day (now including Lee and Madbury)
- Bee-friendly bookmarks at the library
- Re-Think Your Lawn
- Dandelions are Bee-utiful, Dandelion Contest
- No Mow May
- Pest Management Practices Education

The Xerces Society has taken over the Bee City Program, and during that time it has expanded. Bee City USA has community requirements that are reported annually. These requirements to maintain certification have grown. Establishing a Working Group or Task Force of members of multiple committees might make it possible to share in the initiatives and in the recording and reporting of activities.

Motion: The Land Stewardship Subcommittee moves to find representation from their organization to the Bee City Working Group.

The motion was approved unanimously.

5. Land Stewardship Coordinator Updates-Sara Callaghan

Wagon Hill Farm: Three UNH students from a course on Resolving Environmental Conflicts and their professor described the course, and explained where they acquired information about issues at Wagon Hill Farm. They shared their stakeholder analysis-an outline of the issues and the stakeholders based on their research. They then asked for input from the LSS. Suggestions were made including resources they might use;

- History of the acquisition of the WHF property

- Early Master Plan for its use
- 2009 Property Plan developed by Ellen Snyder
- Additional signage that now exists
- Survey Monkey questionnaire results and comments for WHF

The issues of overuse on the WHF site were also shared with the students

Sara Callaghan gave a presentation on plans for new signage and closing trails over environmentally sensitive areas at Wagon Hill Farm.

Oyster River Forest: Sara described the flooding that is taking place across the trail to the UNH property due to a beaver dam. The existing bridge no longer spans the 60-70 foot flooded length of trail. To meet easement terms for water quality, a new bridge, culvert, or means of crossing the wet area is needed.

Pike Property: The Property Maintenance Plan has been updated and has been approved by the Army Corps of Engineers and NCRS. More study of the vernal pools needs to be conducted this spring. **On April 11th**, Sara will offer a vernal pool walk for LSS members to assess the vitality of the vernal pools.

Doe Farm: An application is in for buckthorn removal/management with the Rockingham County Conservation District. Sara worked with the Doe Farm Trustees to manage that work and formulate a plan for Doe Farm.

Longmarsh: Volunteers brushed out the yellow trail and removed invasives from some of the adjoining land. This work is done in the winter to avoid ticks.

Volunteer Recruitment: Sara has received 16 responses from her request to 54 people. She is hoping to group volunteers into teams for each property. She asked for help with data entry information from volunteers into a database.

Stevens Woods-Kenny Rotner Bridge: Sara is making plans for placement of a bench on the Stevens Woods side of the bridge and landscaping plans for the town side of the bridge.

6. Stewardship Working Group Updates-Gale Carey

The Longmarsh Preserve questionnaire findings were shared and explained. Sara Callaghan also shared photos of the many locations along the trails where bridgework is needed. John Nachilly suggested that the bridge projects could be an opportunity for collaboration with UNH Civil Engineering, and create a small bridge project for students, and that the UNH sawmill might be a resource for materials.

7. Earth Day-Ann Welsh

Ann would like the Land Stewardship Subcommittee to participate in Durham's Earth Day (April 22nd) event. She suggested that the LSC could encourage the use of native plantings. She is looking for members to participate.

8. Properties Needing Surveys-Ann Welsh

Inquiries have been made regarding the surveying of the Jackson's Landing tax parcels. A full survey of the property would cost approximately \$15,000. The next step is to pursue funding.

9. Other Committees

Sally Tobias gave an update on the work of the Housing Task Force

10: The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 am.

The Next Meeting is Tuesday, April 26, 2023 at 8:30 am in the Town Hall Chambers.