

Land Stewardship Subcommittee Meeting Minutes for June 14, 2023

Members Attending: Ted Howard (for Mike Everngam), Marty Gorham, Gale Carey, Jim Lawson, Ann Welsh and John Carroll.

Absent: Sally Tobias, Larry Brickner-Wood, Mike Drooker, John Nachilly, and Mike Everngam.

Also attending: Sara Callaghan, Rich Reine, and Rachel Gasowski.

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

2. The Agenda was approved.

3. The minutes of the May 23, 2023 meeting with corrections were approved.

4. Potential pollinator garden – Eagle Scout project:

An eagle scout is proposing to create a pollinator garden somewhere in Durham. In general, the discussion was favorable to support the project, and some possible locations were discussed. It was decided that the scout should present a proposal which would include a possible site, a plan and a budget. It was also suggested that future maintenance of the site be the responsibility of the local scout troop.

Other town boards would have an interest in this proposal. This includes the Agricultural Commission and the Conservation Commission.

Some of the possible locations discussed were town road sides, The Meadows, Jackson's Landing and the Library.

It was suggested that over the next few weeks that subcommittee members try to come up with other potential sites that could be suggested for the garden.

A subcommittee member will contact the scout to let them know the LSSC is working to find a site.

5. LSSC goal setting

Ann stated that the town council has requested that the LSSC develop written goals that dovetail with the town council goals approved during their May 15, 2023.

Some suggested goals that were mentioned and discussed are:

- Provide input to the land stewardship coordinator on projects and priorities, and to take responsibility for some lower priority projects that the land stewardship coordinator cannot address.
- To assist the land stewardship coordinator with securing volunteer resources as needed for projects.
- Set up a schedule for the review of property guidelines for management and use.
- Have LSSC members take responsibility for walking key properties periodically to identify both issues and new opportunities for improvement.
- Maintain a collaborative relationship with DPW to help facilitate an efficient use of the DPW resources.
- Assist and educate private land owners to help community members make what the LSSC believes are prudent land stewardship decisions.

- Direct land owners to the UNH Cooperative Extension when appropriate.
- Manage properties to sustain wildlife and control invasive plants.

Ann asked subcommittee members to send her suggestions for discussion during a future meeting.

6. Stewardship Working Group Update – Gale Carey

A presentation of the LSSC working group questionnaire findings for Jackson Landing and Thompson Forest was postponed to the next LSSC meeting.

7. Land Stewardship Coordinator Updates-Sara Callaghan

Milne Sanctuary

Sara coordinated and completed a work day at that included removing some invasive plants, weeding and mulching trails.

Nature Groupie Projects

Sara is planning for Nature Groupie Projects that will extend over 7 to 8 days. A day at Wagon Hill Farm installing new trail signs; two days at the Oyster River Forest installing new trail sign; working to remove wild parsnip; and working around old cellar holes to remove overgrowth.

Sara is working with Steve Lutterman, GIS Program Administrator, to prepare a park asset inventory on conservation lands. This inventory would include kiosks, boardwalks, benches, culverts, bridges, etc.

Rotner Bridge Approach from Thompson Lane

The planned pollinator garden is currently postponed while DPW works to determine if the existing propane tank will be removed.

Stolworthy Wildlife Sanctuary

Sara worked with middle school students to remove invasive plants. Sara was able to locate some property corner monuments. It was suggested that it may be appropriate to have the property surveyed and to provide/improve trail signage. Trail head access near the ORMS is over grown and can be difficult to locate.

Parks and Recreation is planning to use the SWS for summer recreation activities.

Vacation!

Sara will be away July 8th to August 18th.

8. Committee Reports

Agricultural Commission

Farm Day will be August 19th and will include Lee and Madbury.

Council

VHB will be giving a presentation on the removal of the Mill Pond Dam during the July 26th council mtg.. Todd received an inquiry about possible use of the Wagon Hill Farm North 40 for private use.

9. The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 am.

The next meeting is planned for Wednesday, July 12, 2023 at 8:30 am in the Town Hall Chambers.