

LAND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes from FEBRUARY 5, 2002

@ Town Hall

Members Present:

Ellen O'Brien Cushman Chairman

Cemetery Commission Representative

Stephen Kidder

McLean Hospital Appointee

Lauren Meier

Belmont Citizen Appointee

Michele Gougeon

McLean Hospital Appointee

Ruth Foster

Conservation Committee Commission Appointee

Andrew Healy,

McLean Hospital Appointee

Richard Pichette

Historic District Commission Appointee

Frank Keefe

McLean Hospital Appointee

Others Present: Timothy Higgins, Senior Planner, Wesley Ward, TTOR, Roger Wrubel, Massachusetts Audubon Society (MAS), Martha Moore, MOSA and Belmont Land Trust (BLT), Mr. Record, Murray Reuben, Liz Allison, Daniel Needham, Mr. Power, Larson, Stevens, M. Snorrason & Walter McLaughlin. Conservation Commission members: Lloyd Allen, Kathleen Baskin, Miriam Weil and Nancy Davis.

7:10 p.m. Chairman O'Brien Cushman opened the meeting.

Approved minutes: Approval of minutes from January 22nd was postponed and will be considered in conjunction with these minutes (2/5/02) at the meeting scheduled for February 26th, which will be held in the Flett Room at the Library.

UPDATE TELECOMMUNICATIONS TOWER

Tim Higgins reported that he has been coordinating meetings in which various proposals are being discussed regarding removing the existing communications tower and building a new one. Tim stated that he expects to have more to report on this topic at the LMC's next meeting on the 26th as an important meeting will occur on the 12th of February.

TRAIL SYSTEM USE DISCUSSION: WALKERS AND BIKERS

Stephen Kidder stated that in the preliminary revisions to the Conservation Restrictions, bicycle use is listed as a prohibited use "except along path(s) designated in" a yet to be drafted Exhibit. This amendment language has yet to be adopted by the Committee.

Following Steve's remarks, citizens were encouraged to comment, particularly from a walker's point of view. Daniel Needham of Somerset Street and Murray Ruben and Liz Allison, both of Pinehurst Street, spoke out against allowing use of the trails by bikes. They cited concerns about safety, about the explosive growth of mountain biking and against dual/shared use. It was also noted by Mr. Ruben a former McLean Task Force member, that this issue had been previously discussed and negotiated by the McLean Task Force and that the resulting restriction containing an outright prohibition should stand.

Richard Pichette, speaking in favor of bicycle use, pointed out that the two uses currently coexist successfully on many trails, even if informally tolerated by McLean. On some trails such as the National Heritage Trail in Concord, if there are particularly narrow areas, bikers are asked to dismount and walk their bikes. He also stated that increased use of open land should be encouraged and not restricted to individuals who are fortunate enough to be able to walk to the site from streets like Somerset and Pinehurst. Walter McLaughlin indicated his agreement Mr. Pichette's comments encouraging open access. Mr. Record was asked if he knew of Judy Record's position on this issue to which he responded that he was unsure. Martha Moore of MOSA stated that in prior discussions within her group, there was some support for non-destructive bike use. Magnus Snorrason stated that he had ridden bikes on the site for 10 years and that it wasn't that popular a site with bikers and that he did not believe that use of some trails would increase bike traffic from prior/current levels. Michele Gougeon stated that she had observed a number of bikers over the years and that, on occasion, injured bikers had come to McLean Hospital for assistance. She noted that safety for all participants in the open space is of critical importance. **CONSERVATION**

RESTRICTIONS/AMENDMENTS/ MANAGEMENT DISCUSSION

The Conservation Commission, which had been meeting earlier, reconvened and from this point forward the two groups met in joint session. Ellen Cushman stated that the LMC was interested in the Commission's position on four issues: They included: the telecommunications tower, the definition of utilities, use of the trails by bikes, and the pros and cons of building flexibility into the Conservation Restriction.

Kathleen Baskin, speaking on behalf of the Commission stated that it had not yet had an opportunity to discuss those issues in detail. She went on to say that while it was the Commission's preference that The Trustees of Reservations (TTOR) hold the Conservation Restriction on the open space, the Conservation Commission would be willing to do it if TTOR declined or another suitable party could not be found. Ellen pointed out that that final decision would have to be approved by McLean as well as by the Selectmen. She also noted that the McLean Task Force had been educated to believe that the owner of the land (1), the manager (2) and the holder of the restriction (3) need to be different to maximize the preservation opportunities. This would appear to disqualify the Commission since they are a town body. Ruth Foster pointed out that the Commission is empowered by the State and not the Town. Steve Kidder stated that the CR holder should not be the Town and Walter McLaughlin concurred stating it would destroy the

balance that was built into the Agreement particularly the Land Management Committee (4 seats McLean, 4 seats Belmont, 1 seat the CR holder or manager). Wes Ward of TTOR clarified a statement made by Ms. Baskin (Conservation Comm.) stating that there was no funding problem on the endowment but rather a funding problem for ongoing management of the property. He remains hopeful that a way will be found to have a TTOR presence on the land. There followed some discussion about who would field phone calls regarding problems with the land.

DRAFT CHANGES TO CONSERVATION RESTRICTION

Steve Kidder took the Committee through the various changes contained in the draft he prepared in cooperation with Wes Ward and Tim Higgins. In particular, he highlighted changes to Sections III, IVA2, 3, 8, B2, 11-13, C, D, VII c, iii and XI.

It was agreed that these changes would be discussed and voted on at the next meeting scheduled for February 26th in the Flett Room at the Library.

The meeting was then adjourned at 9:22 p.m.