

## **LAND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING**

**September 3, 2003 Minutes**

@ Town Hall – Conference Room #2

### **Members Present:**

Ellen O'Brien Cushman	Chairman, Belmont Appointee -Cemetery Commission
Stephen Kidder	McLean Hospital Appointee
Lauren Meier	Belmont Citizen Appointee
Mike Flamang	Belmont Appointee - Conservation Commission
Michele Gougeon	McLean Hospital Appointee
Andy Healy	McLean Hospital Appointee

### **Members Not Present:**

Frank Keefe	McLean Hospital Appointee
Richard Pichette	Belmont Appointee – Historic District Commission

### **Others Present:**

Tim Higgins, Office of Community Development. Wes Ward – TTOR, Kit Dreier and Gene Record - JKR Fund, Martha Moore – MOSA, Arthur Katz – Belmont Citizen Herald Newspaper, Bob Gallant – McLean Implementation Committee, Magnus Snorrsson - NEMBA, Liz Allison - BNA.

**7:10** Ellen O'Brien Cushman called meeting to order

She introduced the following individuals representing Northland Residential Corporation; Jack Dawley, Principal, Brad Soule, Project Manager, Tim Jordan, Jordan Associates Jack Dawley made a presentation regarding the northern open space buffer screen as a required condition of the Planning Board Design & Site Plan Review approval letter:

1. buffer planting must be in place prior to occupancy permits for the residential units to screen views from the North Meadow  
within 6 months of applying for building permits, Northland will develop a more detailed plan from the one prepared in 2000 by the Implementation Committee (Joe Hibbard).

Mr. Dawley continued:

Area is within future Town open space along northern boundary of Zone 1A. Private property screening within Zone 1A will also include screen planting.

Schematic plan prepared by Implementation Committee and others identified tree locations and general recommendations related to species.

Northland has begun work to implement residential development and to implement buffer as soon as possible and would therefore like to complete the buffer planting this fall if possible, pending LMC approval.

The original plan recommended 8-10' trees – Northland has made arrangements with a former nursery in Sudbury Massachusetts to purchase trees that range in size but most

are substantially larger than the 8 – 10 ‘ requirement. The trees are not sheared and are field grown so they are hardy.

Working with schematic plan they documented existing conditions. Intent is to clean out the understory, stake locations and place individual trees where they are best located in the field to achieve the desired result. These trees would then be augmented with additional nursery stock. Northland desires some flexibility to determine screen in the field, rather than providing specific planting plans.

Northland may be ready to proceed with land acquisition/building permits in 30-45 days. Jack Dawley said White Pine, Red Pine, Scotch Pine are all available at the Sudbury location. Value and variability of sizes and species is desirable. To achieve the 25-30 additional plants nursery stock would be used. However, they will be smaller and used to diversify for texture, variety, size rather than form the base screening material.

#### **LMC Committee Member Comments:**

Tim Higgins mentioned that the plan called for heights ranging from 6’-8’. The LMC wants a visually natural appearance (species, ages and sizes).

Lauren Meier noted that the ages and sizes are positive. What is mortality/loss expected for the field trees versus nursery trees? You must use proper size tree spade. You will lose 5-10% any source. Jack Dawley said that you do not want to plant evergreens during needle growth. Now thru Thanksgiving is the best time.

Lauren Meier - Red Pine grows quickly; has tendency to separate and is subject to disease as a large tree.

Liz Allison what is cost difference on nursery versus field 8’ spruce versus Red Pine. Size becomes the big factor within a price range. Wholesale price \$25/tree at nursery between 8’ to 16’ tall.

Discussion of habitat value – shorter, taller etc offer more or less variety for habitat/understory for fauna

Gene Record - Diversity is good. There is some artistry involved in the exact placement in the field to achieve desired result. Who would decide in the field? Jack Dawley suggested that once Northland surveys and lays out the plan, the Town should come to inspect, comment and participate in final placement decisions. Likely this would be Tim Higgins and other staff.

Mike Flamang said some cutting techniques to remove the invasive vegetation may be more effective if Northland uses an herbicide. Mike Flamang has printed materials related to appropriate herbicide use from the Conservation Commission. Sumac appears in the location of where Northland would like to plant – 25-35 new spruce. Therefore, he asked Northland to move the trees to higher ground. Further discussion about the status of the residual debris piles and trees that are proposed on the edge of the debris area.

**Motion made to accept Northland’s proposal provided the following conditions are met:**

**Overall:**

**A.** The objective is to achieve visual screen from Lone Tree Hill and the south side of the Pine Allee (trail head) with consideration of possible “holes” in the vegetation that may exist after invasive vegetation is removed.

**B.** Land Management Committee designated representatives will review status and proposed tree locations in field and final planting. Designees are Tim Higgins and Lauren Meier with assistance as required from Joe Hibbard, Implementation Committee.

**Specifics:**

1. Elimination of Red Pine from the plant list
2. 25-35 trees of new species (Norway spruce or white spruce preferred)
3. Seed increased to 135 lbs/1000 s.f. (up 50% from proposal)
4. Where possible, trees be moved to upslope locations
5. Treatment with herbicide prior to removal will be done to prevent reoccurrence of the invasives.

**VOTE: Committee voted unanimously to accept the motion.**

**Goals and Objectives Discussion:**

Final edits to the goals and objectives were then discussed. Tim Higgins will provide edits after all is agreed upon.

Liz Allison –

1. add “conservation” to Mission Statement
2. goal 3 – substitute “ecological” for “natural”
3. goal 5 – delete “routine” and add “respectful” of the quiet character of the open space and surrounding properties.

Magnus Snorrsson – goal 2, B – needs addition related to performance of land manager.

Wes Ward – goal 4 – D remove “if necessary”

Goal 6 – D important to note the need to review the monitoring of the Conservation Restriction and add “periodically review Conservation Restrictions and their monitoring”.

**VOTE: After a brief discussion of the proposed enhancements and changes, the goals and objectives statement was accepted unanimously.**

**Other Items:**

- Joel Lerner called T. Higgins stating his approval of the Conservations Restrictions! T Higgins will now forward the documents to each of the signatories and will then return the signed documents to EOEA and hold for filing with Deeds.
- North Meadow – still in agreement phase, require actions. Kit Dreier – is there a plan to reseed the North Meadow? Ragweed 5-6’ tall. Michele Gougeon said has been re-seeded twice. Andy Healy – doesn’t intend to do anything until decisions are made

regarding debris removal from the Weston-Sampson/ McLean consultant agreements. Kit Dreier said Committee needs to decide what the objective is for the area – e.g. restoring as a meadow. Asks McLean to get some professional advice on what to do to restore the meadow. Tim Higgins stated that the objectives are clearly identified in ecological management plan. Michelle Gougeon should wait until we have sufficient resources. Ellen O'Brien Cushman said wildflowers were present in the approved reseeding mix but asked Mike Flamang to consult with Conservation Commission related to herbicide use. Kit Dreier said that a small strip had been mowed and has rebounded nicely. The Belmont LMC members asked McLean to consider mowing as an immediate alternative.

- Minutes of June 16, 2003 were approved.
- Waterline: Removed rocks along trail; bushes chipped, but there's more to do. All siltation fences have been removed and the grass is growing well. No complaints.
- Telecommunication Tower: Town Counsel is in final negotiations with selected vendor over lease. Expect further communication with LMC in fall.
- Trail grant – formal letter due from state. Tim Higgins is working with vendors to find someone to do the work.

**Other Business:**

- Town is considering a sidewalk along Concord Avenue as part of the roadway reconstruction. Tom Gatzunis would like to know the LMC committee position on a sidewalk and granite curbing along Concord Avenue on the cemetery/open space side of the street.
- Wes Ward announced a conference Managing Land and Visitors on October 8, 2003. T Higgins will forward a copy upon receipt from TTOR.
- Next meeting date is October 15, 2003.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.