

LAND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

November 19, 2002 Minutes

@ Town Hall

Members Present:

Ellen O'Brien Cushman	Chairman, Cemetery Commission Representative
Andy Healy	McLean Director of Facilities
Stephen Kidder	McLean Hospital Appointee
Lauren Meier	Belmont Citizen Appointee
Richard Pichette	BHDC Appointee
Mike Flamang,	Conservation Commission Appointee

Members not present:

Michele Gougeon McLean Hospital Appointee
Frank Keefe Land Management Committee
Tim Higgins, Office of Community Development

Others Present: ~Bob Gallant, Joe Hibbard - Implementation Committee, Magnus Snorrason, Tom Grimble -- NEMBA, Gene Record - Judy Record Found, Martha Moore - M.O.S.A, ~Linessa Leana - Belmont Day School, Elizabeth Allison, Dr. Frank. Stanton.

1. 7:05 p.m. Convene.

Approval minutes for October 22, 2002 have been postponed until next meeting. A copy will be distributed by E-mail to the members and the CC list as hard copies were previously sent.

Update Items:

2. Update - Weston and Sampson's letter regarding North Meadow. McLean has responded. Further information will be available at the next meeting.
3. No further information on Telecommunications Tower
4. Steve Kidder reported on meetings with Joel Lerner regarding Conservation Restrictions. Per Steve, Joel Lerner continues to have some concerns about how B2 could work. Further meetings will be scheduled.
5. Ellen O'Brien Cushman: LMC ~needs to begin the process of procurement of land management agent: How will procurement work? State purchasing laws will certainly govern this process. ~Ellen will talk to Dave Hawkins (Town Counsel office) and others to begin exploring this procurement process. The LMC needs to decide on kind of selection criteria that we want to establish - perhaps we need to talk to Wesley Ward for prototypes of where there have been Land Managers. Ellen C. will contact Wes Ward for this information for next meeting. Lauren suggested that conducting a Request for

Qualifications process and then issuing the RFP might be process to follow. There is a question whether this process is permitted. There is also a question whether TTOR could also act as Management Agent if they hold the CR. Not clear whether they are even interested in managing the property but the LMC will need to be careful not to allow real or perceived conflict of interest should either TTOR or Mass. Audubon be interested.

6. Andy Healy reported nighttime incidents with mountain bikers on the McLean property that refused to identify themselves to McLean security. They had lights on their helmets. Andy asked for identification and told them to leave the property. One happened November 14, 2002 at 7:00 p.m. when it was dark. They were observed near Oak building, which is part of the private campus property. Andy stated that it was McLean's desire and procedure to permit activity on the property in the daylight hours only. They will be more watchful for this safety problem. Ellen raised the question how to get word out that this land is private and should only be used during daylight. ~Should there be further dissemination of rules which prohibit use of the property after dark. ~Tom Grimbale stated that current rules are an issue - bikers do want to ride after dark and would like to continue this practice now and after the land transfer. McLean is very concerned that this is a safety issue and will only allow people on site between dawn and dusk - security will ask people to leave the property if they are observed at night.

7. Hours of operation (for use of the open pace) should be an issue for future discussion.

8. Liz Allison has noticed increased usage of site by motorized vehicles; motorcycles, motor bikes which are completely prohibited by the Conservation Restrictions and McLean currently. The neighbors routinely call McLean but what is the chain of communication on this issue (or like) once the property transfers? Liz will call McLean directly to follow up on this issue. Tom Gamble pointed out enforcement is always a difficult issue.

9. Gene Record reported on the event of Saturday, November 16, 2002. This property walk was well attended and well received for Judy K. Record Fund. Much information was shared and the participants were enthusiastic.

10. Continued discussion from last meeting on map and issues that were raised concerning priorities for management. Of particular focus:
~~~~~looking to reach an agreement on what we want to preserve about the property  
~~~~~identify what are perceived threats to these attributes  
~~~~~identify action plan and how to preserve these attributes.

Three "themes/attributes" identified at last meeting -

~~~~~Diversity of habitat, species, trails

~~~~~Informality

~~~~~Safety and security of people, habitats

Joe Hibbard said one way to look at this is to identify certain vegetation or ecological character areas. When these areas are identified we have to come up with objectives how

to preserve them. Ellen agreed stating that her intention this evening was to use the (BSC Group) Ecological Management Plan and move area by area through :

~~~~~open fields

~~~~~mixed hardwood forest

~~~~~pitch pine pockets

~~~~~Pine Alec

~~~~~wetlands

### **Environment: Open Fields**

Joe Hibbard stated that to preserve meadow habitat we need to mow regularly and clear out the invasive buckthorn which threatens the meadow. Need to establish the desired borders, perhaps back to the original historic limits.

Lauren added we might not want to push Meadow area back to its original limits due to "edge" effects for birds and small mammals. ~

Joe H. countered that the current buckthorn "edge" is actually harboring more predatory birds and small mammals which may threaten the more desirable ones.

Discussion ensued over the desire to manage, preserve and maintain the meadow versus allowing a natural progression to become a different habitat, ultimately woodland. ~The general consensus of the group was to maintain the meadows as meadows.

Andy Healy stated that the field was last mowed approx. 10 years ago.

Methods were discussed to establish the desired borders of the great meadow. Ellen O'Brien Cushman suggested taking a walk around the area with a botanist. This may not be necessary. Joe Hibbard suggested to do this with an Aerial map as the first step. Then identify and flag on the ground for specific lines. This will save money and effort. Also maintaining the irregular shape of field is very important, versus a geometric figure such as a rectangle.

### **Feature : Lone Tree Hill**

need to protect the vista from this point and surrounding habitat

to preserve the 270 degree views and keep area open

Ellen O'Brien Cushman said a risk to view from Lone Tree Hill may be Telecommunications Tower.

Lauren Meier said Lone Tree is itself a signature element of site and should be preserved.

In fact, there are several other trees on this hill already.

Kit Dreier asked how this process dovetails with securing the Land Manager. How will the Land Manager participate in the action plan decisions?

Ellen O'Brien Cushman thinks this identification process is still first step and will be useful as a foundation for the Land Manager in interviews, decision discussions, etc.

Summary of Meadow - Objectives:

reestablish meadow boundaries

control invasive species

protect views.

Joe Hibbard ~stated that some trails might pose a possible threat to the meadow as they run through the middle of meadows.

### **Environment: Pitch Pine Woodland**

There was a discussion a year ago about how this area should be treated, referring to the ecological survey. The survey suggested that the best, only way to guarantee preservation was to burn it periodically to allow it to renew. At that time, Lauren Meier questioned the risk of burning so close to homes. Question? Is this individual, small area worth working to preserve it?

Joe Hibbard mentioned there is not much else that could grow in this area, sandy soil, etc.

~

The ecological survey said it is unusual for this geography so far north of Cape Cod and should be kept.

Ellen O'Brien Cushman pointed out based in the ecological report that without controlled burning, it will not survive. ~Should we work and spend money to preserve the area as is or let it succeed naturally?

Gene Record said there is a little meadow in there that is worth preserving.

The following are two discussed choices:

Leave as it is and let it succeed naturally

Intervene via controlled burning

Mike Flamang: This is an area that we should spend only limited resources. On the other hand we should preserve the meadows, even this small one. Main action required for this area is to prevent soil erosion.

General agreement that we will have limited resources and risk of a controlled burn may be too great to attempt long-term intervention of pitch pine woodland. Succession may be best - self selection due to sandy soil.

### **Environment: Pine Alee**

Grant application identified risks of soil compaction and erosion.

Lauren Meier asked if we actively want plan for replacement of these trees.

Joe Hibbard asked if we ever had an arborist evaluate Pine Alee.

There is a threat to Pine Alee from trail running through. Threats seen to be mostly manmade.

Ellen Cushman: A good portion of the Pine Alee is within the Cemetery Zone. Per agreement the Alee itself will remain in a natural state but any expansion of the identified area is not acceptable to the Cemetery Commission.

It was decided that Ellen would speak to Tim Higgins about securing the opinion of a forestry expert, not an urban tree person, regarding the condition and possible alternatives for the Pine Alee trees.

### **Environment: Wetlands**

Mike Flamang: We need to leave this land alone but some paths which go through should be looked at.

Andy Healy: ~There is one in particular which crosses from the Belmont Day School which may be considered a threat.

Ellen O'Brien Cushman mentioned cemetery would be close to wetland and in some of buffer zone. There is already an agreement between Conservation and Cemetery. But on paper and for future, perhaps that work should be considered a threat. Should be managed through continuing relationship between Cemetery Commission and Conservation Commission, rather than through the LMC.

Joe Hibbard mentioned that the vernal pool is very difficult to find- ~which is one of its protections. This area may be the exception to the elimination of buckthorn. Leaving it in for an edge of a determined depth will aid in continued protection of the vernal pool.

Lauren Meier suggested edge of 10-30 feet. ~She would like to go with the ecological study.

Magnus Snorrason suggested the path from the Belmont Day School is already used for educational purposes and they would likely desire it to continue.

### **Environment: Mixed Hardwood Forest**

Threats are few :

- some invasive plants
- poison ivy all over, but especially near the trails

question: do we want to get rid of all poison ivy

answer : no because it does help control how widely site is used and keeps people out of the woods, on the trails. Also too expensive and troublesome to eliminate it all and result may be only temporary

But it is so bad in some areas that it is a threat to people's safety, particularly overhanging and bordering trails

Bittersweet also a threat to both trees and habitat and should be eliminated if possible

Norway maple and Japanese knotweed are also problem

Ultimately there will be a cost benefit analysis on all these threats.

Ellen O'Brien Cushman suggested the next step is to take a list and maps put into three columns (showing, attribute, perceived threats, action/objectives) and then put into table of contents format suggested by TTOR for the creation of a management plan. She will attempt to do this for next meeting. ~In response to inquiry by Lauren whether she considered the LMC work done on this topic, Ellen replied no, much more public work is required with the goal of having a public hearing on this topic in March timeframe. The committee was comfortable with this timetable.

Committee decided not to have a December meeting but to email to establish a January date of either January 05 or 26th.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.