

MINUTES – LAND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

November 1, 2005

Recorded by: Carla Moynihan

Members Present: Ellen O'Brien Cushman (chairman), Frank Keefe, Andy Healy, Steve Kidder, Martha Moore, Carla Moynihan, Wes Ward (ex officio)

Member Absent: Richard Pichette, Michele Gougeon

Also Present: Tom Younger (Town Manager)

1. Minutes of 8/23/05 Meeting

A MOTION was made to approve the 8/23/05 meeting minutes. The MOTION passed unanimously.

2. TTOR Request for Public Funds to the Conservation Restriction Fund

Wes Ward described the TTOR request that was sent in an invoice to the LMC in the amount of \$25,000 for purposes of supporting the conservation restriction. The funds would be deposited into TTOR's general endowment fund that provides financial support for all conservation restrictions under TTOR's management. The plan is to have funds paid out of the gift funds from the transfer of land to the Cosman family. A letter confirming this request will be sent shortly from TTOR to LMC.

Question raised as to whether public funds could be used on the portion of the land subject to the conservation restriction that is in private ownership. This question has been referred to Kathleen O'Donnell, town counsel for interpretation.

Another question raised as to whether the gift funds came with any terms and conditions with respect to the management of the open space. Steve Kidder will provide the document.

A MOTION was made to approve \$25,000 to be sent to TTOR for purposes of managing the land subject to the conservation restriction in Belmont conditioned upon advice of town counsel that the use of public funds is allowed with respect to the privately-owned portions of such land known covered by Conservation Restrictions B1 and B2.

The MOTION passed unanimously with the exception of Wes Ward who abstained.

3. Cemetery Construction Update – Trail Rerouting

Ellen Cushman provided an update on the cemetery construction. It is progressing quickly and the clearing is anticipated to be complete this week. A significant amount of heavy equipment located in the area of the trail off of Concord Avenue to the intersection with the Day School property. Gene Record and Ellen walked this area and identified a

new trail to be used during the cemetery construction. Apparently, people that are using the trail are going over the silt fences. Gene and Ellen identified an existing trail that is used as a fire road to be used during construction of the cemetery. The trail will be relocated to the fire road, signed to identify the relocation, and posted on the town's website along with the LMC minutes.

In addition, Ellen and Gene suggested to the LMC that the clearing equipment being used at the Heart-shaped meadow of the cemetery site is doing a magnificent job. Since the cemetery has already paid the mobilization fees to have the equipment on-site, the contractor is willing to rent the "hog-chipper" (Hydroaxe) to the LMC to extend the limits of clearing for \$1400 per day, including experienced driver. It is estimated that one day would be required to clear the remainder of the Heart-shaped meadow covered by CR B2 and one day for the Great Meadow covered by CR B1.

4. Mowing of Great Meadow, Price, Scope, Timing

Martha Moore opened a discussion about the mowing of the Great Meadow around Lone Tree Hill. Martha shared her experience as a member of the Conservation Commission as to the mowing of Rock Meadow and encouraged the LMC to work in conjunction with ConCom on the mowing of Great Meadow. The ConCom recently requested scopes of work for mowing and hired Grey Lee. He's charging \$100 per acre for mowing, which takes an hour per acre. Question raised: Would McLean Hospital be willing to do some mowing or clearing as "in kind" contribution? Response noted that McLean no longer has that type of equipment necessary to undertake this type of work without contracting to third party.

It was discussed that the Lone Tree Meadow consists of approximately 8-9 acres, which would amount to \$800-\$900 for mowing. However, there are shrubs waist high that may not be able to be mowed with the same equipment used in Rock Meadow. The mower will not be able to do any clearing, just mowing of the longer grasses.

A MOTION was made for Lone Tree Meadow area, up to perimeters in selective areas (as determined by Martha Moore and Roger Wrubel) to be mowed and to spend up to \$1,000 for such work. The MOTION passed unanimously.

Question raised whether there are any volunteer plants that should be left in the meadow that was answered in the negative as against the land use plan.

The discussion returned to clearing the Great Meadow area and what would be an appropriate limit and scope of work for extensive clearing by the cemetery contractor. It was noted that if not taking the roots out but there is a commitment to mow regularly, then it could be contained. There would not be any clearing in a wetland area, buffer zone or vernal pools. Certain specimen trees and shrubs would be tagged to be preserved. The activity would take place this week while the equipment is on site and available. Otherwise, the mobilization fee would be cost prohibitive. The area would be staked in advance. Need to remove black locusts in addition to buckthorn. Appropriate

public outreach would be taken to ensure knowledge of the clearing activity spreads in community.

A MOTION was made for Great Meadow area, to use a the cemetery contractor brush hogg chipper {Hydroaxe) / appropriate equipment with limited soil disturbance and minimum scattering of seed to be mowed/cleared and to spend up to \$2,000 for such work. This motion would replace the motion on grass mowing taken earlier in the evening. The effort to identify limits of work would be led by Roger Wrubel of Audubon with assistance of Ellen Cushman and Gene Record. The MOTION passed unanimously.

Gene Record stated that the Judy Record Fund will donate an additional \$1,000 towards this work to pay for the full two days. Ellen Cushman will work with the Town Accountant to ensure proper payment.

5. Proposed Change to Inscription Language for Judith Record Memorial

Gene Record provided an update on status of installation. The backhoe came into the area November 1st and installed crushed stone. The stones and bench will be placed November 4th weather permitting. Gene also requested the consideration of changes to the inscription language for the Judith Record Memorial to be located at Lone Tree Hill. The discussion centered upon the commemoration of Belmont citizens or volunteers, McLean Hospital, Trustees of the Reservation, and/or other groups including Massachusetts Audubon and Open Space Alliance and number of open space acres. Some questioned having any inscription at all. Others questioned that if one entity was mentioned another should also be listed. More than three was considered too many. It was decided that Belmont volunteers and McLean Hospital would be the only two entities specifically mentioned and that the amount of acreage would not be referenced.

A MOTION was made to authorize the inscription language. ” To commemorate the efforts of Belmont volunteers and Mc Lean Hospital in establishing this open space for the Town of Belmont, June 2005” . The MOTION passed unanimously.

6. Zone 1A Buffer

Ellen stated that Tom Walsh contacted LMC to get permission to have three decayed apple trees removed from the town-owned portion of open space adjacent to zone 1A. Northland offered to pay for the removal expense in connection with other work they are doing in the area.

A MOTION was made to authorize the tree removal. The MOTION passed unanimously.

7. Pine Allee

Ellen discussed the problem of competitive species undergrowth in the area of Pine Allee and suggested it might be a good Boy Scouts project for older scouts. She said that she had already contacted a scout leader in Town and was awaiting response.

A MOTION was made to authorize the removal of the undergrowth by volunteer group. The MOTION passed unanimously. Ellen will pursue and update.

Question raised as to whether there was a plan to replace the 3 pine trees that died. The town had planted them so their health was not guaranteed by the tree supplier. Need to complete research and opine as to whether newly planted trees can grow inside this area versus on the perimeter.

8. North Meadow Update

Wes, Gene, Ellen and others have gone over the north meadow and concluded that under the weeds is a good coverage of grass. There is more there now than 2 months ago. It was discussed that the weeds need to go and it needs to be mowed. There are a couple of areas with more weeds than grass whereas once it is mowed, the area will need to be reseeded and perhaps add some soil. Area in question is approximately 20 x 30 feet. A recommendation was made to allow the weeds to grow 2-3 feet high, mow, and remove the stems before seeding. This would be a separate effort perhaps undertaken next Aug. There was discussion that it could take several years before getting the overgrown areas in line.

9. Telecommunications Tower

Tom Younger reported that the FCC approvals are in hand in addition to those from Gridcom and Massachusetts Historical Commission. The work will be done by December 1st. While the paint scheme has been approved, there is no update at this time regarding installation of Gridcom's landscaping plan (previously approved).

10. Update re Farmhouse Adjacent to McLean Barn

Martha reported that the farmhouse next to the McLean Barn is in very poor condition and the roof has fallen in. It may now cause a safety hazard. The fire department does not want the building. The Town is no longer able to perform controlled burns. Tom Younger will check with Glenn Clancy re: removing the structure.

11. Old Business

Andy Healy reported that all the holes in the area that kids had been mountain biking have all been filled in. An accounting of the man-hours performed for this work has been kept in case the perpetrators are found so that appropriate reckoning may be made.

12. New Business

Tom Younger stated that Jay Szklut, the former Town Planner of Hull, will be offered the new Planning and Economic Development Manager position.

Work will continue on drafting a scope of services for a trail consultant. Drafts of the document will be circulated to committee members over the next couple of months. In addition, Ellen will circulate a draft of the proposed letter to the Belmont Citizens' Forum about the \$300,000 they received in settlement from Northland, earmarked for open space management at McLean and sewer updates.

13. Next Meetings

Next meeting will be held after January 2006.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Carla Moyihan