

LAND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
February 11, 2003 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	Historic District Appointee
Mike Flamang,	Conservation Commission Appointee
Michele Gougeon	McLean Hospital Appointee
Frank Keefe	Land Management Committee
Tim Higgins	Office of Community Development

Others Present: ~ Bob Gallant - Implementation Committee, Magnus Snorrason,
Gene Record - Judy Record Found, Martha Moore - M.O.S.A.,
~Elizabeth Allison, Kit Dreier - Belmont Land Trust, Wesley
Ward, TTOR.

1. 7:05 p.m. Meeting Convened by Chairman Ellen O'Brien Cushman.

The Committee unanimously approved minutes for November 19, 2002.

Ellen O'Brien Cushman – The final ruling was received from the Appeals Court supporting the Town/McLean position. There will be no further appeals.

North Meadow - Michele Gougeon mentioned that there was additional testing of the three debris piles. The final report has been presented to the Town's consultant, Weston and Sampson for their peer review. T. Higgins will advise when they reply.

Communications Tower – The RFP was sent out and only one proposal was received. The working group will meet in two weeks to determine if the proposal will be accepted. Work remains on the easement for the facility as the Town does not yet control the property. T. Higgins is hoping to avoid the cost of creating a survey plan for land the Town will eventually own. Selection Committee has seen technical proposal, not the cost proposal. Details include:

Proposal has solid stockade fence

By-Law limits the height to 100 feet. The proposal is 120 feet and requires ZBA approval
Design & Site Plan Review is required

Lack of proposals may be due to height limitation. Vendors could not be assured of having room for 3 service providers (thus the ability to make money).

Conservation~Restriction Update:

Stephen Kidder noted that the revisions to Conservation Restriction 1 (general) are complete and he is awaiting commentary from Attorney Greg Bialecki prior to making

revisions to CR2. Once this is done both documents will come back to LMC for review and comment. They will then be forwarded to Joel Lerner at EOEa.

Goals and Objectives Document

Deferred to next meeting. Copies distributed

Lauren Meier reported that she is considering taking a professional position at Presley & Associates. This may be a possible conflict of interest. An opinion from the State Ethics Commission has been sought. It is expected within a 4 –6 weeks timeframe.

Land Management Planning Process

Ellen O'Brien Cushman used her copy as a guide and went through each issue line by line. The revised document will be distributed under separate cover (copy attached to these minutes).

Action Required of Members for Next Meeting:

The following issues remain to be discussed. Members have been asked to come prepared to make decisions regarding the following:

- Parking access
- Orientation and signage
- Kiosks security
- Enforcement of rules
- Hours of operation
- Emergency response/access
- Identify access and egress points
- Posting and dissemination of rules

It was also requested that McLean obtain any documentation on historic extent of meadow. **Andy Healy will be responsible.**

The scope services for Land Management Contract will be discussed at the next meeting. **Wes Ward agreed to bring samples of the TTOR's contracts to the March meeting.**

Base upon the discussions, the Land Management Guide will be revised and distributed to members prior to the next meeting. **Ellen will be responsible for incorporating revisions.**

Next meeting will be held on March 11, 2003, Town Hall, Room #2:

Land Management Issues
(last revised February 21, 2003)

Environment: Open Fields (Including feature Lone Tree Hill)

Attributes to Preserve:

- ~~~~~ Restore Meadow and maximize size
- ~~~~~ Some edge habitat for birds and small mammals

~~~~~ Views and vistas of 270 degrees  
~~~~~ Signature element Lone Tree  
~~~~~ Birds and invertebrates

**Perceived Threats:**

~~~~~ Invasive species such as buckthorn  
~~~~~ Tree seedlings permitted to grow  
~~~~~ Views from Hill may be compromised by new telecommunications tower and  
~~~~~ construction in Zone 1A  
~~~~~ Lone tree is actually now a group of trees  
~~~~~ Current trail system which cuts through middle of the meadow through Lone  
~~~~~ Tree Hill  
~~~~~ Vernal pool actions refer to Wetlands.  
~~~~~ Visitor  
~~~~~ Dogs  
~~~~~ Cats

Action Plan:

~~~~~ Establish desired borders (Use of aerial photos will keep cost lower, then flag on  
~~~~~ the ground)  
~~~~~ Eliminate invasive species at perimeter (using volunteer labor if possible)  
~~~~~ Eliminate tree seedlings throughout meadow (using volunteer labor if possible)  
~~~~~ Establish and maintain mowing schedule for meadow and edge  
~~~~~ Evaluate desired edge plantings, particularly bordering vernal pool  
~~~~~ Work aggressively with the telecommunications committee to evaluate impact~  
~~~~~ to views from Lone Tree Hill and require appropriate screening  
~~~~~ Buffer Zone 1A plantings are crucial  
~~~~~ Identify "The Lone Tree" and selectively eliminate the other smaller trees currently  
~~~~~ growing alongside  
~~~~~ Evaluate impact of existing trails and uses. Reroute trail to perimeter of meadow  
~~~~~ if negative impact.  
~~~~~ Post regulations regarding pets and conduct information campaign re: cats to  
~~~~~ neighboring property owners  
~~~~~ Determine future character and composition of meadow.  
~~~~~ Enforce the leash law.

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**Environment: Pitch Pine Woodland**

**Attributes to Preserve:**

~~~~~ Vegetation which is unusual for Boston area, but routinely found on Cape Cod  
~~~~~ Small but interesting habitat  
~~~~~ A small but lovely meadow is contained here as well

Perceived Threats:

~~~~~ Without intervention, pitch pine woodland will not survive. Identified intervention is  
~~~~~ a controlled burn which the LMC finds to be not a reasonable option.  
~~~~~ Resources versus return are a question here as well as the risk of any  
~~~~~ type of burn so close to residences.  
~~~~~ Threats to the small meadow are same as Open Meadow (see above)  
~~~~~ Soil erosion is great as trail cuts through from bottom of~ Pine Alee toward Mill~~

Street.~~~

~~~~~ Soil type is sandy and will only support a limited type of vegetation.~ What~  
~~~~~ would natural succession lead to?

Action Plan:

~~~~~ Treat small meadow same as Open Meadow (see above)  
~~~~~ Re-route, regrade and~ restore trails per grant application action plan to  
~~~~~ prevent/limit soil erosion  
~~~~~ Since controlled burn is not a reasonable option, explore what other vegetation  
~~~~~ would survive and evaluate cost benefit and likely long-term survival.  
~~~~~ Allow pitch pine woodland (with above exceptions) to naturally succeed., or plant  
~~~~~ new pitch pine woodland in small meadow to sustain the environment type.

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**Environment: Pine Alec**

**Attributes to Preserve:**

~~~~~ The experience of walking through the Pine Alec evergreen plantings  
~~~~~ The grandness of the Alec  
~~~~~ The visual buffer Pine Alec provides from~ Lone Tree Hill and from Concord  
~~~~~ Avenue  
~~~~~ The trees of virtually all the same size; regular spacing.

Perceived Threats:

~~~~~ Risks of soil compaction and erosion on roots and health of evergreen trees (See trail  
~~~~~ grant application)  
~~~~~ Heavy trail usage by walkers, dog walkers and bicyclists causing additional  
~~~~~ erosion  
~~~~~ Erosion  
~~~~~ Pine Alec is located in cemetery subdistrict. Cemetery Agreement K iterates  
~~~~~ preservation of Alec in current state. No opportunity for expansion of the Alec  
~~~~~ further into cemetery zone.  
~~~~~ Health of trees is a question

**Action Plan:**

~~~~~ Follow specific action plan as detailed in Trail Grant Application  
~~~~~ Have arborist evaluate health and life expectancy of trees  
~~~~~ Develop tree maintenance plan and a plan to replace trees  
~~~~~ Consider effects of types of trail usage and limit use or relocate trail as necessary to  
~~~~~ protect/preserve trees  
~~~~~ Prepare communication to public to help minimize threats

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**Environment: Wetlands**

**Attributes to Preserve:**

~~~~~ Wetlands  
~~~~~ Vernal Pool  
~~~~~ Buffer Zones

Perceived Threats:

~~~~~ Paths and trails which cross through the buffer and/or the wetlands.  
~~~~~ If adequate "buffer" vegetation around vernal pool is not left (after meadow  
~~~~~ actions, see above), the vernal pool may be in jeopardy from people going too  
~~~~~ close, making their own paths, etc.

~~~~~ Development of cemetery within the buffer zone of red maple swamp  
~~~~~ Eventual development of cemetery zone which contains the vernal pool  
~~~~~ Invasive species, particularly Japanese knotweed, poison ivy.

**Action Plan:**

~~~~~ Continue cooperation between Cemetery Commission and Conservation~  
~~~~~ Commission regarding any cemetery activities within the buffer and near the  
~~~~~ vernal pool. Hold to agreement which states that the vernal pool area would be  
~~~~~ developed as last phase of cemetery in distant future. This is best managed  
~~~~~ through Conservation Commission, not LMC.  
~~~~~ Evaluate paths and relocate as necessary to protect wetland resources  
~~~~~ Articulate the desired depth of edge/bordering vegetation to the vernal pool on  
~~~~~ the Lone Tree Hill/Meadow side as well as other three sides. Ecological Study  
~~~~~ suggested determining appropriate depth.

Environment: Mixed Hardwood Forest

Attributes to Preserve:

~~~~~ Varied trail system allowing diverse experiences  
~~~~~ Feeling of being far away from civilization  
~~~~~ Connection from Pleasant Street side of property to Concord Ave and Mill Street  
~~~~~ side  
~~~~~ Knolls above Pleasant Street offer lovely views  
~~~~~ Rock walls of interest  
~~~~~ Trails include broad cart paths, walking trails and single foot paths

**Perceived Threats:**

~~~~~ Invasive plants, specifically Bittersweet, a threat to trees & landscape and~~  
~~~~~ Norway Maple and Japanese Knotweed, Poison Ivy, a threat to people and pets  
~~~~~ People and pets  
~~~~~ Some trails take sharp turns and up steep inclines creating potential conflict of  
~~~~~ users, specifically bicyclists, pedestrians and walkers with pets  
~~~~~ Erosion of coal road  
~~~~~ Keep people and pets on paths  
~~~~~ Trail system should maintain continuity of trails  
~~~~~ Perpetuation of informal trails  
~~~~~ Take action to address erosion and take action to prevent future erosion problems.  
~~~~~ Construction may interrupt trails.

Action Plan:

~~~~~ Perform cost/benefit analysis on eliminating invasive species (eliminate entirely,  
~~~~~ eliminate along paths, leave alone)  
~~~~~ Propose to eradicate and control poison ivy along the paths and where it may  
~~~~~ present a health/safety threat to those using the property according to the rules  
~~~~~ Develop program to eliminate and control Bittersweet  
~~~~~ Develop thoughtful trail/path system and communicate to users at main trail  
~~~~~ heads. Mark closed trails.  
~~~~~ Develop appropriate trail marker system to designate trails which have  
~~~~~ prohibited uses such as bicyclists or walkers with pets.  
~~~~~ Leave dense vegetation along borders of trails to discourage off-trail walking.

