

Minutes

DATE: March 1, 2021

TIME: 2:38 PM

Land Management Committee for Lone Tree Hill **REVISED

Thursday, May 7, 2020 at 4:20 PM

Remote Access Meeting Only

Meeting convened at 4:21 PM

Members Attending: Tom Grumble, Radha Iyengar, Lauren Meier, Michele Gougeon, Jeffrey North, Andy Healy, Steve Kidder, Ellen O'Brien Cushman

Others Attending: Heli Tomford, Fred Torbison, Fred Paulsen, Miles Connors, Ryan Corrigan, Steve Savarese, Tim Duncan, Leonard Katz, ah879 (Zoom moniker), Jeanne Mooney, Martha Moore

Agenda:

- Letter from Leonard Katz – “dumping” of construction debris/material on Lone Tree Hill property - Leonard Katz presented his questions and concerns about this “dumping” activity in McLean Zone 4 near the Coal Road, he fears that McLean Hospital is leveling and clearing their land to change the contours to prepare a flat area for development. In the debris piles, he reported that he found asphalt and pipes, etc, in other words, not natural materials.
 - Andy Healy of McLean addressed the issues. The Trustees performed their annual monitoring visit and provided photos and coordinates that was filed with the Town Clerk and is available on the website. As noted in the report, The Trustees recommend that the Land Management Committee (LMC) add boundary markers at each of the boundary changes with private property especially corners. Andy said that he responded to The Trustees that as soon as the pile was identified to be on any of Lone Tree Hill land, he dispatched personnel and equipment to remove it and move onto McLean property.
 - Additionally, Leonard stated that he is extremely concerned about run-off and silt from the McLean parking lot down the Coal Road from the fill
 - Several Committee members cautioned Leonard not to use inflammatory language in accusing McLean of wrong-doing. Several, Lauren, Tom, Jeff and Ellen pointed out that McLean is invested in Lone Tree Hill and are full, dedicated participants in its success as partners with the Town of Belmont.
 - Tom and Jeff North volunteered to meet on site with Andy and Leonard to tour the site and the activity to clear the debris and report back to the Committee at our next meeting.
- Update on Planning Board status of zoning proposal, McLean Subdistrict, Zone 3
 - Ellen indicated that the Committee's comments were received by the Planning Board in a timely way. The proposal is continuing and will resume hearings on the Zoning By-law proposal. The demographic study and associated service costs that the Town would provide is due to the Select Board shortly. The Zoning By-law will not be taken up at the June 16th Annual Town Meeting; that's only for financial articles at this point. A Special Town Meeting is expected in the fall, no dates yet.
- Invasives Management Plan Presentation – Parterre & Jeff North

- Miles Connors and Ryan Corrigan of Parterre presented their findings and recommendations for Invasives Management on Lone Tree Hill per their contract. [Ryan noted that he is a former resident of Belmont]
 - There are three areas, as noted in the report/maps:
 - A – the densest invasives on site, much can be attributed to the disturbances caused by the historic uses of the site, displayed with the darkest color. Most invasives – a large stand of glossy buckthorn and some Japanese Knotweed. This area will require professional care, using larger machinery
 - B – Healthier areas including the vernal pool and its border and the area between the Pine allee and the vernal pool, some buckthorne
 - C – Healthier areas but with some Japanese Knotweed.
 - In response to a question by Leonard about whether his hand-pulling efforts are worthwhile Parterre responded that their standard is if the stem is less than 2 inches diameter, okay to pull but more than 2 inches must be cut and treated. There is always the threat when pulling that leaving a small bit will rejuvenate the full plant and possible additional ones.
 - Recommendations by Parterre
 - Follow A, B and C as priorities
 - Leave more snags and downed trees on site once we pull them off the path to allow passage to encourage more diverse wildlife
 - Instead of fully removing dead trees, top them off so animals can find easy places to hide and nest safely while eliminating the largest part of the threat that a tree will fall on someone
 - Wood piles should be about 2 piles per acre
 - The entrance to the Great Meadow should be a primary focus
 - Mow wider pathways this will help to allow visitors to limit ticks attaching to them
 - Ellen thanked Miles and Ryan and their colleagues at Parterre for providing us with tools to take the site to the next level as conservation land
 - Lauren complimented Parterre for a very thorough, professional job, well done. She especially liked the zonal approach and the list of priorities. She asked about the black swallowwort and they indicated that the report addresses it – it's no longer contained in Massachusetts, it's really everywhere. Swallowwort will be treated in each of the zones; we need to contain and eliminate it whenever we can because it affects on desirable pollinators. Lauren then asked for the list of invasive species they consider the priorities for us:
 - Their response – the nastiest are Knotweed, buckthorne, black swallowwort, bittersweet. Then tree of heaven and Norway maples. Barberry are a hiding place for ticks. Garlic mustard should be pulled out completely.
 - Lauren asked what they would recommend when restoring areas in the Great Meadow - do they prefer seeding versus using plugs.
- 5 PM – Michele Gougeon left the meeting
- Parterre also said that they want us to take care of the worst and then remove the garlic mustard because one follows the other filling in the disturbed areas.

- The prefer to use seeding in the Great Meadow and plugs for the Mill Street entrance after invasives management in 2020 – it will take about 3 years to fully re-establish.
- Steve Savarese asked if these activities should be performed by professionals or volunteers and what is the cost of doing the work?
 - Parterre responded that their fees are \$80/hour for a person with/using a chain saw, \$1500 for forestry work per day and they may be able to do about 1 acre a day.
- Leonard asked about the garlic mustard, and is concerned that the forest become a healthy ecosystem. He said that the knotweed taproots are very long and he's been hand pulling them at the Coal Road and believes that only due to his efforts has the knotweed been contained there.
 - Parterre – any broken root of 4 inches or more will resprout – they do not recommend any volunteer efforts on knotweed.
- Jeff North asked them to reiterate the priorities.
 - Parterre – Concentrate first on Zone A, especially plants with berries and seeds. Zones A1 and A8 are medium to low.

Ryan and Conner left the meeting

- Signage and Trails Update - Tom Grimble and Jeff North
 - Tom Grimble indicated that they would like to reserve a significant amount of time for the next meeting. Today they will discuss the map providing goals and updates. The June meeting will discuss signage that should be added to eliminate confusion. He will be reconstructing the kiosks and making them permanent as well as adding a "permanent" trails and features map made of acrylic or another more durable material within the kiosk along with the Bylaw and rules. He suggested to add a full kiosk on Pleasant Street at the entrance to the Coal Road and reminded us that we had previously agreed to place "Lone Tree Hill, Belmont Conservation Land" signs on Pleasant Street, Mill Street and Concord Avenue
 - Tom then spoke about his finding – the Waltham Land Trust has great graphics and signage, made a significant investment; it would ideal if we could be graphically consistent with this property that abuts Rock Meadow.
 - Tom reminded the committee that we had decided to use names for key trails instead of numbers. Other smaller trails can have numbers. They are easier to remember and can have some local meaning or historical references.
 - Jeff and Tom recommended that we provide some proposed routes of varying lengths and difficulties. Also designations for trails that lead off property.
 - Tom demonstrated the solid lines trails, the dotted lines, the points of interest and squares with numbers that will show intersections to assist in way finding.
 - We should include the Western Greenway overlap with Lone Tree Hill..
 - There are navigation apps that use QR codes at kiosks to help plot a route for visitors. Many are open source, can use the Town's GIS for the baseline and add a layer.
 - The Committee members thanked Tom and Jeff for their work and look forward to a more detailed discussion. Particularly the Committee members and interested parties should be prepared to suggest names for trails.
 - Leonard asked about unrecognized trails of "trail c" – bikes or no?
 - Steve Savarese suggested that bike-accessed trails should be designated with universal bike signs
 - Tom suggested that restricted use trails must be designated on the map

- Lauren suggested that we want to install signage boundary markers
 - Tom questioned whether there is already an adequate boundary survey – needed at trails and problem areas and border with McLean
 - Radha suggested the “leaving Lone Tree Hill property” signs for trails crossing to private property
 - Lauren complimented Tom and Jeff for their excellent work. She agrees we want signs to assist in way-finding but not too many signs in the natural areas, there should be a balance... don’t want visual clutter
 - Tom said that the materials for the Kiosks are about \$250 for materials and maps and he used the leftover 6x6 timbers that he had. Kiosk summary – rules, maps, Bylaw, emergency phone number
- Concerns about usage and access during the COVID-19 pandemic, actions if any
 - Ellen reported that there is monitoring underway for users of Lone Tree Hill so it doesn’t have too many people without social distance, etc. So far, Rock Meadow seems to be bearing the brunt of the dog playgroups and larger active sport folks and the police are monitoring
 - The Trustees Annual Monitoring Inspection and Report of the Conservation Restricted Property
 - Invoice from Asplundh for removal of hazardous trees in Pine Allee, \$231.06 **
 - **Committee unanimously voted by roll call to approve the payment** Tom Grimble, Radha Iyengar, Lauren Meier, Jeffrey North, Andy Healy, Steve Kidder, Ellen O’Brien Cushman each voted Yes.
 - Brief update on Barn –Ellen reported that the final security work will be completed shortly to connect video to the Police Station
 - Minutes of prior meetings
 - February meeting minutes needs to be corrected to remove the double S on page 4, paragraph 7 (motion by Radha) and in paragraph 5 please correct to National Historic District (motion by Lauren).
 - **Committee unanimously voted by roll call to approve the minutes with the corrections listed above.**
Tom Grimble, Radha Iyengar, Lauren Meier, Jeffrey North, Andy Healy, Steve Kidder, Ellen O’Brien Cushman each voted Yes.

The meeting was adjourned at 6 PM.