

MINUTES

Heywood Meadow Stewardship Committee Meeting

Thursday April 8, 2021

Via Zoom

Present: Delia Kaye (Natural Resources Director), Joanne Gibson (Co-Chair), Susan Clark (Co-Chair), Stan Lucks, Sandy Smith (minutes), Cris van Dyke, Mary Clarke, Lola Chaisson, Bev Miller

Guest: Will Holden, Land Manager, Natural Resources Division

The meeting was called to order by Joanne Gibson, Co-Chair, at 9:00am.

Minutes of March 11, 2021 Meeting: On a motion made by Cris van Dyke and seconded by Bev Miller, the minutes of the meeting of March 11, 2021 were approved unanimously, as amended.

Welcome Will Holden, New Land Manager: Will Holden introduced himself. Will started on Wednesday, March 17th as the Town's first full-time Land Manager. He has experience working for Americorps, the Barnstable Land Trust, and the Davey Tree Company. Having a Land Manager will allow the Natural Resources Division to be more proactive than in prior years. He will supervise the Conservation Crew during the summer and will prepare a schedule for repair, maintenance, and restoration work on all the Town's conservation properties. The Committee welcomed Will and looks forward to meeting him in person on the Meadow during the May 13th meeting.

Update on Stone Wall Extension: Delia Kaye reported that although Stan Nobles intended that the stone wall extension would be his first project this spring, the need to confirm the location of the wall relative to the ROW and discovery of a utility box previously buried under leaves has delayed the start of this project while DPW determines if the utility lines are active. Therefore, Stan Nobles has begun work on another project at the National Park which he expects will take about four weeks and will return to Heywood Meadow in May.

[Lola Chaisson joined the meeting.]

The location of the wall was staked about a month ago. Delia showed a photograph of stakes indicating the inside edge of the proposed wall. If it is determined the wall needs to be moved, it will be moved "upslope," which will bring it slightly into the ROW. Stan Lucks said it would be about a 3' move which he said should be fine, and if the in ground utilities are abandoned, it is still possible the current layout could be used.

[Mary Clarke joined the meeting.]

Delia and Stan Lucks will attend the Public Works Commission meeting on Wednesday, April 14th at 4:00pm at which the ROW issue will be discussed.

[Bev Miller left the meeting.]

Request for Memorial Tree for Will Umphrey: Delia was contacted on March 31st by the family of Will Umphrey to inquire about donating a memorial tree to the Town in Will's memory. Will Umphrey was born and raised in Concord and died suddenly in Cambridge, MA on March 17th at age 45. They described their request as follows:

"We are imagining donating a memorial tree to the town to be planted, perhaps, in Haywood Meadow—perhaps a Spring bloomer, as Will's birthday and date of death were in the Spring, though we can be flexible about type and location. We would love some discrete stone or something similar honoring Will's life to accompany the tree if possible. We would, of course, cover the cost of the tree and whatever sort of plaque or stone you think would be appropriate."

A half hour discussion ensued during which the Committee discussed possible types of trees, perhaps considering this as an opportunity to replace one of the apple trees planted several years ago at the request of the Beyer family which did not survive. The Committee felt a plaque would not be appropriate in the Meadow and conflicted with recommendations in the Landscape Plan. Some felt planting, even replacing, trees would violate recommendations in the Landscape Plan, although it was pointed out certain trees have been replaced by the Committee. One member of the Committee observed that planting trees was not consistent with maintaining a natural meadow. Concerns were expressed about setting a precedent, and that perhaps a more appropriate setting for a memorial tree, particularly if a plaque is involved, would be one of the Cemeteries. The Committee asked Delia to discuss the Committee's concerns with the family and offer a couple of alternatives as she did in resolving the discussion with the Umbrella on the location of the Earth Day sculptures.

Review of Landscape Character Recommendations from the Landscape Preservation Plan (pages 21-25):

Meadow Treatment: In the interest of time, Joanne elected to skip over this section because it had been the focus of extensive discussion at earlier meetings.

Mill Brook: This section of the Recommendations was drafted before the current set of Wetlands regulations was adopted. Delia said that current regulations will not permit such broad recommendations as are contained in the Landscape Plan to be implemented. Removing invasives and opening up "windows" onto the Mill Brook are all that might be achievable under the current regulations. Sandy Smith expressed a vision to create a path on the south side of the Brook, mirroring the path on the north side, with a bridge connecting the two paths at the east end of the Meadow, with "windows" onto the Brook at alternating locations.

Topography: The Committee briefly considered this recommendation several years ago when planning to replace the stone wall along Lexington Road in the west Meadow and, concluding it was not practical, did not pursue this recommendation.

Perimeter Trees: Joanne reminded the Committee that the reference to "nursery trees" was to apple trees planted on the west Meadow. These trees were ultimately transplanted to Orchard House and now form the core of the "orchard" located between the Alcott House and Alcott Road. Susan Clark recalled the Committee made a conscious decision to replace one of the maples along Lexington Road in the east Meadow with a tulip tree. Sandy observed that, if the recommended "planting plan" is ever

prepared, a balance must be struck between using trees to “create a physical separation between the street and the meadow” and “ensuring openness.”

Pedestrian Circulation: The Committee maintains a mown path crossing diagonally through each of the east and west Meadows.

Walls and Fences: The Committee has rebuilt the stone walls in both the east and west Meadows, and is currently extending the wall on the east Meadow to curve onto Heywood Street, mirroring the wall on the west Meadow. The Committee’s proposal to install a rail fence on the east side of Heywood Street was reconsidered, and a smaller rope fence with short posts was installed which the Committee feels has been effective.

Structures and Small-scale Features: The electrical boxes behind the Gun House have been removed, and there is one sign identifying Heywood Meadow in each of the east and west Meadows. The Committee has not developed an informational or educational sign (or signs) in the Meadow, although Mary Clarke and Cris expressed particular interest in doing so. Susan suggested an alternative might be to provide guided walks on the Meadow. Joanne observed there is an inconsistency between this recommendation and others urging caution on signs and plaques. Cris suggested a “sloped table” type sign at the top of the steps into the west Meadow. Delia noted the Historic Districts Commission might prefer such a sign to be at the bottom of the steps. Cris asked Delia what kind of signage is at the entrance to the Thoreau-Emerson Amble. Delia replied that those map boxes are currently under discussion by the Trails Committee. She is trying to phase out production of physical maps in favor of QR codes. Will observed that providing QR codes still requires a post. QR codes were a fad several years ago, then fell out of favor but are making a comeback.

The Committee has provided three benches but no plaques or other commemorative markers as recommended, except for allowing the Concord Independent Battery to maintain a sign in front of the Gun House. The root cellar has been removed as recommended.

[Mary Clark left the meeting.]

The Committee has not pursued the recommendation to move the clapper stones to form a bridge over the Mill Brook. Although that was their purpose at their original Hawthorne Lane location, the Committee has felt using them that way today would not be safe. Cris suggested they could be used as a bench. People are often seen sitting on them.

With the Committee’s allotted time nearing its end, Joanne suggested that the Committee take up the Administrative/Management Recommendations at the next meeting. Joanne then suggested that a sub-committee might be appointed to write up a report of these discussions. Delia agreed to check the requirements of the Open Meeting Law as it applies to sub-committees and report back to the Committee.

Cris moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Lola and the meeting was adjourned at 10:30am.