

## MINUTES

### Meeting of the West Suburban Conservation Council

9 Dec 2013

4-6PM

**In attendance:** Whit Beals (New England Forestry Foundation), Laurie Bent (Weston), Christa Collins (Sudbury Valley Trustees), Rick Findlay (Littleton Conservation Trust), George Fiske (Sherborn, SRLF), Marylynn Gentry (Harvard Conservation Trust), Dave Goldman (Hopkinton Area Land Trust), Michelle Grzenda (Weston), Beth Gula (SVT), Carol Gumbart (Bolton), Don MacIver (Littleton Conservation Trust), Laura Mattei (SVT), Zach Midwood (Sherborn), Susan Mitchell-Hardt (Acton Conservation Trust), Nick Olson (SVT), Priscilla Ryder (Marlborough), Kathy Sferra (Stow), Gordon Shaw (Concord Land Conservation Trust), Jesse Steadman (Stow Planning), Bill Taylor (Upton Open Space Committee), Betsy Taylor-Kennedy (Bolton Conservation Trust), Lisa Vernegaard (SVT), Sylvia Willard (Carlisle Conservation Trust), Ada Woolston (Bolton)

#### Meeting Minutes:

- Beth Gula gives introduction
- All attendees introduce themselves
- **Announcements:**
  - Laura Mattei: Recaps minutes from last meeting and the WSCC history to date.
    - Congratulates on best attended meeting to date. Restates that the WSCC works together to form unified approaches to conservation strategies in the West Suburban region. WSCC started in 2009. AmeriCorps help with administration and coordination.
    - Survey last year went out to 100 partners that identified priority issues to be addressed by WSCC
    - Priority issues
      - Deer management
      - Open Space/Forestry
      - Agriculture
      - Cooperative Land Protection Projects

- Breakout groups will address these issues
- Christa Collins: Current partnership projects are examples of projects that could come out of the WSCC
  - Littleton aggregation effort hasn't come to fruition yet, but still working with Littleton Conservation Trust to try to put together a project
  - Submitted a project with Boylston, Berlin, and Northborough that hopes to aggregate over 500 acres with over 20 landowners. Project is part of the Landscape Partnership Program through EEA.
- Beth Gula: AmeriCorps members are available to offer workshops on trail maintenance, CR monitoring, or coldwater streams (fishing for trout, water conservation)
- Don MacIver: Littleton conservation working on 4 major farms that at risk for development.
- Marylynn Gentry: Endorses Beth for monitoring workshop. Seconded by many others
- Gordon Shaw: Concord Land Conservation Trust working on invasives, particularly garlic mustard
  - Laura Mattei mentions that SuAsCo CISMA focuses on invasives, so WSCC may benefit from looking at other pressing issues
- Ada Woolston: Curious how far west the aggregation goes
  - Christa Collins said Boylston is the furthest west we go, but the WSCC is not closed to the possibility of teaming up with adjacent organizations
  - Freddie Gillespie said we shouldn't be bound by municipal lines, as development isn't.
- Michele Grzenda: There is a Middlesex Tick Task Force meeting on January 8<sup>th</sup> at 3 pm in the Carlisle Town Hall that will focus on deer management as it relates to tick borne illnesses.
- Laura Mattei: Some invasive species management info is on SVT website
- Rick Finley: Littleton is struggling to remove invasives from some farms, 25 acres in particular that they are trying to reclaim as agriculture (already in conservation holding).
- Freddie Gillespie: Two projects in Southborough look at invasive removal holistically by addressing the bigger question, "What do we want there?" Often invasive management is a big part of that. Seeing Bobolynx, indigo bunting, wood fox. Mentions that it is important not to forget why we are trying to eradicate invasives.

- Kathy Sferra: Goal to protect one buildable acre annually is one of their metrics. Stow has about 40% of lands up for grabs, hope is to protect at least half of that.
- Susan Mitchell-Hardt: Encouraging landowners that have 16 acres to protect their land, and use it for grazing, community garden, or lease it to farmers. If a small trust was asked to hold CR, how do you manage it? How does leasing impact the CR Holder as a steward? Looking for guidance.
- Nick Olson: Looking to strengthen realtor and estate planner networks as they relate to conservation. Asks everyone to pass along contacts of good estate planners or realtors that are conservation-minded.
- Beth mentioned that we are looking for channels to continue conversations and share information between meetings. We may look at using google groups, etc. Keep an eye out for an email in the near future
- **Presentation** Christa's MAGIC presentation (slide show attached)
  - Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination
    - Goal is to come up with a series of recommendations for making agriculture more viable
- **Break-out Groups**
  - Desired Outcomes
    - What role does the WSCC have regarding the priority issue?
    - What are the next steps for the WSCC to be effective in that role?
  - Cooperative Land Protection
    - Role: Serve as a network for funding options and a forum for land protection brainstorming
    - Next Steps:
      - Hold bi-annual potluck for local land trusts, open space committees, conservation commissions, and other interested parties to network and problem solve
      - Find or build an online forum where questions/challenges can be posted to get insight from others
      - Build a library of unique case studies as a learning tool

- Agriculture Land
  - Role: Serve as a network for solutions to keep farmland as working land.
  - Next Steps:
    - Reach out to New Entry to help identify potential farmland using GIS and aerial photos
    - Follow up with Right to Farm bylaw that state legislature passed and the next steps it requires at the local level.
- Open Space, Wetland, and Forestry
  - Role: provide/be a “repository of information:” a centralized place for good information on field management options, resources for funding or ways to make projects happen, and rules and regulations affecting management options
  - Next Steps:
    - In the next month, each participant in the breakout will forward 1-2 resources they have found useful to Beth at SVT ([bgula@svtweb.org](mailto:bgula@svtweb.org)) so that we can begin compiling a “library.”
- Deer Management
  - Role: Networking and developing a unified approach to deer management for the region
  - Next Steps:
    - Creating a statement on deer management from the WSCC
    - Advocating for changes to hunting regulations that will yield greater success in deer management