

## Minutes from FoAGM Steering Committee Meeting – August 3, 2004

Approved

Present: David White, Andrea Golden, John Bartenstein, Don Miller, Mike Tabaczynski, Laurel Carpenter.

1. The June meeting minutes were approved with amendments submitted by Sandra Ruggiero.

2. Next meeting will be either Tuesday, September 21 or Wednesday, September 29. David agreed to send out an email to the SC members confirming which date was best. Location is as yet undetermined, but East Village nursing home was suggested as an option.

3. Expense Form: A modified version of the expense form was distributed to committee members and approved.

### 4. Resource management activities

#### A. *Sign project*

Alex MacNeil has nearly completed the sign installation project. Reference signs with the words “Arlington’s Great Meadows” are located at two primary entrances to the meadow: one behind Waldorf School, visible from the Minuteman bikeway, not far from the FoAGM kiosk; the other is at the entrance behind the East Village nursing home, but is not visible from the parking lot. Throughout the rest of the property eleven smaller posts with the letters AGM are spread out along the boundaries of the meadow. A few posts are little wobbly; **Mike** will have Alex go back and re-anchor those that need securing, and he needs to clean up the ground around a few posts to better blend in with the surroundings. Alex reported two encounters with curious (skeptical?) community members while working on the project. The FoAGM website has been updated with a photograph of the bikeway sign and short description of the project [Appendix 1] The Brandon street sign post has yet to be installed due to the question of precise location and the issue of contacting the closest property abutter prior to its installation. Mike emailed a Brandon street acquaintance to inquire if he was acquainted with the closest meadow abutter, but had not heard a response as of August 3 meeting. **All members of the steering committee are charged with the task of visiting the proposed post site prior to the September meeting.** [ Mike & I (David) have looked at this. I think we should send a friendly letter to the corner abutter before we put up the post and invite them if they like to a meeting – DEW 8/15/04 ]

#### B. *Native plant restoration project: Swamp Milkweed*

Andrea reported on the swamp milkweed which she propagated and planted in an area following purple loosestrife removal. The milkweed is coming up nicely; the loosestrife is also doing well and needs to be re-pulled in order to give the milkweed room to grow. Andrea still has two dozen more milkweed plants and would like to schedule a second planting date in the late summer. **Andrea** will post the date to the list and website to

recruit volunteers to assist with removing another patch of loosestrife prior to planting the remaining milkweed.

#### *C. Community Service Volunteer Form*

Mike distributed a revised version of the “Certification of Community Service” form which was approved. Mike subsequently emailed this form and the expense form to members of the steering committee. Community Service forms can now be completed in advance by volunteer supervisors.

#### *D. RTP grant status*

Mike was informed that FoAGM proposal to construct boardwalks over the two wettest sections of the current trail was ranked in the second funding tier from the top, and the final word should be handed down shortly. Mike reviewed several elements of the grant proposal with committee members. A permit is required from the Lexington Conservation Commission, and **Mike** agreed to start the permit application process in anticipation of the possible funding. A work date of Saturday, October 30 has been proposed. Members wishing to view a similar project can visit the boardwalk in Willard’s Woods in North Lexington.

#### *E1. Invasive plant removal: Japanese Knotweed*

Mike will be in touch with Karen of the ConCom and will email the steering committee a draft of the “Proposal for Japanese Knotweed Control Along the Minuteman Bikeway Near Arlington’s Great Meadows” for input. The proposal will then be submitted to the Lexington Conservation Commission in a request for a determination.

#### *E2. Invasive plant removal: Swallowwort*

In July, Andrea cut back a patch near the Ridge Trail which was enveloping a stand of highbush blue berry and staghorn sumac. At that time, the seed pods were still immature but ideally any remaining pods should be removed prior to seed maturity and dispersal. Andrea reported that this plant is difficult to cut, very acrid and harsh on the skin.

#### *F. Yard Waste reduction efforts*

There was no news on this front other than the report of a dead coniferous ornamental shrub in the depression of Infinity Pond. The question was raised whether this might have come from the Lexington Christian Academy compost area, as it seemed mysterious that someone would transport a dead shrub into the meadow.

### 6. Educational Activities:

#### August 1 Nature Walk

Andrea and Laurel reported on their August 1 walk, which had only one participant in addition to the leaders, but netted a variety of interesting invertebrates. Highlights of the walk included two species of ambush bugs hiding in flowers, a lacewing larvae covered with aphid carcasses, adult green lacewings, spiders, leaf hoppers, ants protecting their aphid colonies, a variety of small beetles and butterflies, geometrids [inchworms], galls, and dragonfly exuvia (discarded exoskeletons left behind by molting adults emerging

from their nymph stage). Another interesting aspect of the walk was comparison of the variety of insects captured by sweeping the net through different types of grassy habitats.

#### 7. Fall events/Outreach/Recruitment

Saturday, September 11

FoAGM will have a booth at Arlington Town Day. **David** agreed to make booth arrangements and staff the booth for a portion of the day; **Laurel** may be available to help in the morning. [ The submittal date for the application was 7/14 so we are too late. But ConCom (and probably Open Space Cmte) can give us some space – DEW ]

Saturday, October 2

FoAGM will have a booth at the 165<sup>th</sup> Annual East Village Fair, held on the lawn area between Waldorf School, the East Lexington Library, and Follen Church . **Laurel** agreed to make booth arrangements and to staff the table. She will advertise the October 3 nature walk at the booth.

Both of these events will be an opportunity to recruit new participants in FoAGM activities. It was suggested that Roly Chaput might be a potential member of the FoAGM steering committee, and **David** agreed to approach Roly on this question.

Sunday, October 3, 8-10 a.m.

Laurel will lead a nature walk with a focus on fruits, nuts and seeds. “Fall is a peak time to observe berries, fruits, nuts and seeds. Fruits serve as protection for seeds as well as effective means for dispersal. Join us for a walk to look at the structures of different fruits and the ways they have evolved to attract animals, spill or eject ripe seeds, or stick to passers-by.”

Saturday, October 23

Citizens for Lexington Conservation will co-sponsor a walk with FoAGM lead by Chris Floyd.

Mystic River Watershed Association is publishing a 2005 calendar and is seeking relevant events from community members. It was agreed that FoAGM will advertise tours of woodcock courting displays in general terms for the month of April and direct interested parties to the FoAGM website for more information about place and time. **Mike** agreed to contact MRWA regarding our submission.

#### 8. Recruitment:

In general public events will be an opportunity to recruit new participants in FoAGM activities. It was suggested that Roly Chaput might be a potential member of the FoAGM steering committee, and **David** agreed to approach Roly on this question.

9. Community relation issues, particularly in response to Cynthia Tollen’s expression of concerns in her email of July 30.

**David** agreed to contact Ms. Tollen to clarify the role of FoAGM and listen to her concerns. He will offer to meet with her if she is interested; **Laurel** agreed to attend this meeting if needed.

**Sandra** asked via email to invite to invite Francesca Coltera who has been working in the school educational program to our next Meeting. We all thought this an excellent idea.

The committee discussed several ways FoAGM might improve communication with the general public. In the future, it would be useful to post information about steering committee meetings on the website so that it is clear that all are welcome. Prior to changes in the meadow, advance information about projects should be provided. This has particular application for the boardwalk installation, should this project be funded. It was suggested that the FoAGM fall general meeting include a public information session about the boardwalk installation. It was also suggested that prior to responding to potentially controversial postings on the listserv, that the list moderators pass their response by members of the steering committee.

11. Thank You Scott: Members of the steering committee wrote a card to Scott Kirschner thanking him for his service to the group and expressing best wishes in his transition to his new job and location. David will mail the card.

12. New business: Trail Workday, August 14, 9 AM  
Mike mentioned that he had scheduled a trail workday on August 14 and asked for volunteers to assist him.

13. Items tabled for the next meeting:  
Reviewing of goals  
Addition to goals list: correspondence with meadow abutters  
Annual report

Respectfully submitted,  
Laurel Carpenter for the FoAGM Steering Committee  
8/13/04

Minor revisions and additions by David White on 8/15/04.  
Approved at meeting on 9/27/04.

## Appendix 1

### **Signs Installed by Eagle Scouts**

During my frequent and sometimes lengthy visits to Arlington's Great Meadows with maps, GPS, and camera in hand, people often ask me questions, the most common by far being "What is this place?" Well, thanks to the hard work of Lexington Boy Scout Alex MacNeil, no Great Meadows visitor will need to ask that question again. With help from his friends, Alex recently completed his Eagle Scout project of installing two large signs reading "Arlington's Great Meadows" near the most popular entrances, and about a dozen posts reading "AGM" at the other entrances.

Stay tuned for future Eagle Scout projects in Great Meadows. With minimal supervision from FoAGM, guidance from troop leader Skip Irving, materials donated by Friend Lumber, and pizza "fuel" supplied by his mother, Alex's sign project was done at no cost to FoAGM or the towns of Arlington or Lexington. It's an impressive example of how a diverse collection of civic minded folks can work together to make a small change that identifies the largest natural open space in Lexington and Arlington as public land that the communities care about.

Mike Tabaczynski, 8/8/04.