

Town of North Stonington, CT
HEWITT FARM COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, January 23, 2012 at 3:00 p.m
New Town Hall Conference Room

The meeting of the Hewitt Farm Committee was called to order by Nita Kincaid at 3:00 p.m. in the New Town Hall Conference Room with members Jack Brown, Dick (Coop) Cooper, Ed Harasimowitz and Nita Kincaid present. Ed McGowan arrived at the meeting at 4:15 p.m.

- 1) Approve 01/09/12 Regular Meeting Minutes.

Coop motioned to approve the 01/09/2012 Minutes and Ed seconded. The motion carried.

- 2) Complete "Vision of Hewitt Farm." Discuss relation to Mission & Work Plan

Nita distributed four documents relating to the vision of Hewitt Farm that the committee has been working on since the December 5th meeting. These documents were (a) "Relevant Comparisons" which lists the vision and mission statements of six other "farms" in Connecticut that are operated similarly to Hewitt Farm, (b) "Shared Vision" which lists verbatim the flip-chart entries from the previous meeting, (c) "Vision" from Ellie which lists in outline form vision and/or mission requirements, and (d) "Vision" draft from Nita which states in paragraph form the committee's agreed-to list for the *Vision of Hewitt Farm*.

The committee discussed each of these documents and agreed on the following:

2.1) The draft *Vision of Hewitt Farm* will be revised per the discussion and presented to the full committee at the next Regular Meeting for formal adoption.

2.2) Using Ellie's "Vision" document, Ed will compose a draft *Mission Statement* for review and discussion at the next Regular Meeting.

- 3) Review Jack Brown's "Event Application Request." Develop criteria to assess proposed events & uses on Hewitt Farm

Nita next distributed a draft "Event Application Request" submitted by Jack for consideration by the committee. This form would be used to elicit information from individuals who wish to use Hewitt Farm for an event, project or program.

The group suggested several minor changes, but otherwise the document was well accepted. Jack will make changes and return the form to the committee for formal adoption.

4) Mark Tardiff: update on sign project

Mark Tardiff was not present and had notified Nita that he will attend the 2/6 meeting.

5) Discuss Fire Chief's proposal to install a dry hydrant at Hewitt Farm

The committee briefly reviewed the verbal request of the North Stonington Volunteer Fire Company to install a dry hydrant on the pond at Hewitt Farm. Nita motioned and Eddie seconded to "Move that we request that Chief Charles Steinhart provide a written proposal to install a dry hydrant on the Route 2 side of the dam in conjunction with the up-coming dam reconstruction project, and that we will then support taking this proposal to the Board of Selectmen for approval." The motion carried unanimously.

6) Discuss responses to requests from Jeff Hubbard & Reuben Spitz

The group next discussed the use of Hewitt Farm by individuals who would benefit monetarily from that use. The committee agreed that the *Special Town Meeting Minutes of December 15, 2010*, which list uses allowed on Hewitt Farm, do not address using the property for commercial purposes.

As a result of this discussion, the committee agreed (but did not vote) to establish the following policy:

The Hewitt Farm property may not be used for an event, project or program that results in a monetary benefit to other than a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization or to the Town of North Stonington.

Next, Eddie motioned and Nita seconded to "Move that all proposals brought forward for consideration by this committee be presented in written form." The motion carried unanimously.

Nita distributed a copy of Reuben Spitz's email to the committee dated January 11, 2012 in which he further described his proposed use of Hewitt Farm for the display of art sculpture and a possible related event. Nita also distributed a copy of her emailed response that indicated that the committee would get back to him after their January 23rd meeting.

Ed summed up Jeff Hubbard's request for the benefit of committee members who were not in attendance at the meeting in which Jeff presented his proposal. Essentially, Jeff wants to install beehives on Hewitt Farm but would expect to receive a monetary benefit from the sale of their product.

The committee acknowledged that such a use - raising bees - would be compatible with the agricultural use of Hewitt Farm, but that this request and that of Mr Spitz should currently be denied since both of these proposals would result in a monetary benefit to their proponents. Coop will compose a letter to Mr. Hubbard informing him of this decision and will also notify him by telephone. Nita will be responsible for communicating with Mr. Spitz.

It was agreed that in order to allow a commercial use of Hewitt Farm the committee would need to go back to the town with a new type of use that was not proposed in the December 2010 approved list. The committee felt they were not prepared to make this a priority, but would be willing to consider adding such a new use in the future.

7) Member updates on projects & other items for group discussion

Coop reported that he had not heard from Tom Kane re: his progress on the Scout Footbridge Project, but he would contact him..

Coop also stated that both the Route 2 and Hewitt Road parking areas had been delineated through the use of logs and that the logs appeared to be serving the purpose of preventing visitors from parking elsewhere on the hay fields.

Coop also noted that at some point the parking areas may have to be graveled and that such a project should be included in the *Work Plan*.

Nita asked about the committee's objectives with regard to participating in this year's Town Budget process. Eddie noted that currently many of the maintenance activities on Hewitt Farm are being performed by volunteers and the Highway Department.

Nita observed that when the case was being made for the purchase of Hewitt Farm from Mystic Seaport, an analysis was performed showing the potential income for Hewitt Farm compared to its anticipated expenses. She suggested that this should be done again now that the cost-to-benefit amounts are real and can be compared factually. Nita also suggested that the committee should attempt to determine how much money would be required to operate and maintain Hewitt Farm during the up-coming fiscal year (2012-2013).

Eddie submitted a letter requesting his resignation as a Regular Member of the Hewitt Farm Committee so that he can re-apply to become an Alternate Member. Nita motioned and Ed seconded to accept Eddie's resignation.

Jack then nominated **Ed Harasimowitz** to become a **Regular Member** of the committee. The committee voted and Ed was unanimously elected to that position. This request will be submitted to the Board of Selectmen for Ed's appointment.

Nita then nominated **Eddie McGowan** to become an **Alternate Member** of the committee. The committee voted and Eddie was unanimously elected to that position. This request will be submitted to the Board of Selectmen for Eddie's appointment.

8) Public Comments & Questions

None

9) Priorities for February 6, 2012 Regular Meeting Agenda

The group agreed that at the next meeting it would (a) vote to adopt the final *Vision of Hewitt Farm*, (b) discuss and hopefully finalize the draft *Mission Statement* being prepared by Ed, (c) reinstate review of the *Work Plan* being prepared by Ed, and (d) continue discussion of the committee's involvement in the Town Budget process.

The next **Regular Meeting** is scheduled for Monday, **February 6, 2012 at 3:00 p.m.** in the **New Town Hall Conference Room.**

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, Richard B. Cooper