

Town of North Stonington, CT
HEWITT FARM COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, February 27, 2012 at 3:00 p.m
New Town Hall Conference Room

Nita Kincaid called the meeting of the Hewitt Farm Committee to order at 3:00 p.m. in the New Town Hall Conference Room with members Ellie Banker, Jack Brown, Dick (Coop) Cooper, Ed Harasimowitz, Nita Kincaid and Eddie McGowan present. Also attending was Mark Perkins, lessee of the hayfields,

Nita asked to move Agenda item #5, "Discuss prior leases on HF rental properties," to first on the agenda so that the group could discuss Mark Perkins' lease with him. The group agreed.

1) Discuss prior leases on HF rental properties

Nita began the discussion by distributing a handout consisting of

- the *Request for Proposals, Haying of the Fields* dated September 5, 2009,
- *Mark Perkins' Proposal* (undated),
- the *Minutes of the Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting* dated October 27, 2009 which noted the award of a 3 year contract to Mark Perkins,
- a memo from Nita Kincaid re: *Soil Testing and Use of Biosolids* which described her phone conversation with Richard Meinert of the UConn College of Agriculture and Natural Resources,
- and an Internet printout entitled "Earthlife Fertilizer Pellets - bulk" from New England Organics, Inc.

Nita described each of the documents to the group and related what she had learned in discussions with professionals regarding requirements for soil testing and rates of application of the Earthlife Fertilizer product This is the product which Mark Perkins has requested permission to use on the Hewitt Farm hayfields.

Mark Perkins explained in detail what he knew about the use of this product elsewhere, as well as his success with the product in the past. Mark also explained to the group what precautions he has taken in the past and what he proposes to do in the future. He is currently having the soil tested and will follow the recommendations of the testing laboratory.

Nita stated that three (3) tons per acre was recommended to be the maximum per application. Mark agreed that he would apply whatever the testing laboratory recommends, but will not exceed three (3) tons per acre. He will also spread the product within 24 hours after it is delivered. Nita noted that Earthlife Fertilizer is certified pathogen-free per her discussion with their office.

The group agreed unanimously that Mark could proceed with ordering and applying Earthlife Fertilizer to the hayfields in the manner he had just described as soon as he has received the soil test results.

Nita next reviewed Mark's current agreement with the Town. Ed observed that Mark may have difficulty cutting hay close to the stone walls because of the overhanging tree limbs and brush piles. Coop distributed a map of the hayfields and meadows showing where these brush piles still exist. Several large piles had been removed last fall in preparation for "Celebrate Fall," but many still remain.

The group then discussed what could be included in the formal lease that would be used when proposals for haying the fields would again be sought in the fall of 2012. Mark noted that he would like a longer-term lease, perhaps 5 years and would welcome signing a new lease before his present agreement expires. Nita indicated that the committee's focus with regard to the future lease would be to insure that the fields were properly maintained with edges cleared. Mark stated that overhanging tree limbs were the reason he could not cut closer to the stonewalls. Committee members agreed that they would examine each of the fields to determine what kind of work was needed and how much of the work would be expected to be done by the future lessee.

The group asked Mark if the location and use of the parking areas posed any problems. He stated that they were not a problem, but that the damage being done to the turf by vandals was causing problems. The group assured him that it was aware of this problem and is attempting to address it.

The group thanked Mark for attending the meeting and told him they would consider his suggestion that the future request for proposals be issued prior to the end of summer.

2) Approve 02/13/12 Meeting Minutes

Ed motioned and Ellie seconded to approve the 02/13/12 Minutes. The motion carried.

3) Preparation for 02/28/12 meeting with Board of Selectmen (Budget & Work Plan)

Nita asked who on the committee will attend the Board of Selectmen's meeting "tomorrow night" (2/28/12), and noted that the selectmen will hold an Executive Session first and would probably not receive us until after 7:30 p.m. Committee members agreed they would each make an attempt to attend.

Nita stated that she will give to the selectmen a copy of the "Hewitt Farm Vision and Mission Statement," the most recent version of the "Work Plan," and the "Hewitt Farm Committee Proposal for the Town of North Stonington Budget for Fiscal Year July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013," which she had drafted earlier and which had been reviewed by the committee. Nita concluded that she would give a brief presentation of what each document represents and encouraged other members of the committee to offer their comments during the review.

4) Review revisions to the *Work Plan*.

Ed read the *Work Plan* aloud item-by-item to ensure that everyone fully understood each task. The group then made whatever changes were necessary to bring the plan up-to-date and to better reflect Start and Finish Dates, Status, Lead (responsibility), and Progress Estimate (%).

Ed will once again update it for submission to the Board of Selectmen at the meeting.

5) Outline work to be done on the Ryder Road Entrance Sign (design and contents), as well as tasks involved in completing the entrance area itself

Noting that there was little time remaining in the meeting to discuss this subject, Coop stated that he would design a "strawman" sign for critique and rework at the next meeting. He noted that one of the first things that the committee must do is decide where the sign will be located and specifically what type of information (title, vision/mission, history, rules and regulations, map, photos, etc.) it should contain. Also, we must find out from Mark Tardiff what he intends to put on his sign and its possible locations.

6) Member updates on projects and any additional items for group discussion

Nita reported that she had received several contributions to the Hewitt Farm Fund. The donations were given by John and Marti Bradshaw and Jim and Cathy Holdridge. These accompanied their submissions of Friends of Hewitt Farm forms.

7) Public Comments & Questions

None

8) Priorities for March 12, 2012 Agenda

- a) Results of the budget meeting with the Board of Selectmen.
- b) Review of Hewitt Farm lease agreements.
- c) Critique and rework of the "strawman" sign.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, Richard B. Cooper