

Town of North Stonington, CT
HEWITT FARM COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, December 17, 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 3:14 p.m. in the New Town Hall Conference Room with members Ellie Banker, Jack Brown, Dick (Coop) Cooper, Ed Harasimowitz, and Nita Kincaid present.

1) Approve 12/10/2012 Meeting Minutes

Nita motioned and Ed seconded to approve the 12/10/2012 Meeting Minutes. The motion carried.

2) Hayfield RFP: Finalize recommendation to Board of Selectmen. Discuss notification of all respondents and Agreement

Nita reported that on Friday last she had provided the Board of Selectmen with a package containing the following:

- a) A cover letter introducing the contents of the package
- b) A block diagram showing the sequence of events in the selection process
- c) A blank copy of the *Evaluation Form* used by the committee to rate the proposals
- d) A copy of the *Response Forms* received from the three respondents.

A copy of the *Request for Proposals* (RFP) had been given to the selectmen on an earlier occasion.

The group next discussed how the presentation of its recommendation should be made to the Board of Selectmen at the board's meeting the following evening. It was agreed that Nita would address the board by first explaining the selection process then naming the recommended respondent.

The group then discussed how to go about informing all respondents if and when the selectmen make a final decision. It was agreed that all respondents should be notified of the decision as soon as possible and that a follow-up letter should be sent to them.

Nita then distributed a DRAFT *Hewitt Farm Hayfield Agreement* for review by the committee and subsequent approval by the Board of Selectmen. She suggested that it be finalized as soon as possible for signature by the selected respondent.

3) Status of rental leases: Fireplace & Insurance issues

Nita distributed a copy of the chimney inspection reports for the 1750 Farm House and Cabin that were received from Armstrong Chimney Services, LLC. She read each one aloud and noted that copies had also been sent to the tenants.

The group agreed, as was stated in the reports, that the fireplaces in the 1750 Farm House should not be used and the fireplace in the Cabin must first be cleaned before it is used.

Revised leases, reflecting changes to the language about fireplace usage and required rental insurance, will be completed and provided to the tenants for signatures.

4) Jim Cowen: Meadow maintenance

Jim Cowen, author of "Botanical Survey" of Hewitt Farm dated April 19, 2010, arrived at the meeting at 4:10 p.m. Nita explained the committee's goal, which is to clear and maintain the borders of the hayfields and to improve the quality of the meadows with regard to invasive species, wildlife habitat, and overall appearance.

Jim brought a sample of Mugwort that he had picked on the farm earlier that day and explained what its presence means with regard to the "health" of the meadow.

When asked if the meadows should be mowed at this time (late December) or in the spring, Jim suggested that the meadows could be mowed one-third at a time over a period of three years or in their entirety now or in early spring. Mowing them one-third at a time will preserve the butterfly habitat and retain food for birds throughout the winter.

Jim also recommended that mowing the meadows would be a good opportunity to overseed them with a wildlife mixture. He recommended the New England Conservation Wildlife Mixture available from Amherst. He also noted that, at a minimum, the eastern slope on the side of the road near the Hewitt Road entrance could serve as an educational display and should be seeded with the mixture, preferably this fall.

The committee indicated they would ask Highway Foreman Steve Holiday if the Highway Department can mow the meadows before winter weather sets in. If not, the mowing may be postponed until early spring.

The group agreed to discuss Jim's recommendations on seeding and mowing at a future meeting,

Jim then distributed a number of brochures containing information on conservation planning and invasive plants including aquatic "hitchhikers," and departed with the committee's thanks.

5) Members updates on projects & any additional items for group discussion

Owing to the late hour, the committee agreed to table all further discussion until the next meeting.

6) Public comments and Questions

No members of the public were present.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, Richard B. Cooper