

Town of North Stonington, CT
HEWITT FARM COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, March 26, 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 3:05 p.m. in the New Town Hall Conference Room with members Ellie Banker, Dick (Coop) Cooper, Ed Harasimowitz, Nita Kincaid and Eddie McGowan present.

1) Approve 03/12/12 Meeting Minutes

Eddie motioned and Ellie seconded to approve the 03/12/12 Minutes. The motion carried.

2) Mark Tardiff to review status of the history sign

Mark Tardiff arrived at 3:20 p.m. to update the committee on his progress designing, constructing and installing the history sign. He stated that he was having considerable difficulty getting accurate and complete information on the history of the Hewitt Farm property and its structures. He had met with members of the North Stonington Historical Society and was in the process of doing research from information leads that he had received from various sources. He noted that he will need considerably more time to compile this history if it is to be all-inclusive, and may have to focus only on those aspects of the history for which accurate and ample information is available.

The committee suggested to Mark that one way he could narrow this scope would be to limit his write-up to interesting but straight-forward history, such as the story of the Dew Drop Inn for which much information is available. Curtis Moussie, grandson of the Dew Drop's founder and operator, Ethel Moussie, is available to help.

Mark concluded by stating that he had not yet determined a location for the sign or details of its design. That will be determined once he is more certain of the content.

3) Discuss Greene Gables approach

First Selectman Nick Mullane arrived at 3:45 p.m. to brief the committee on the Board of Selectmen's discussion with Tim York at the March 20, 2012 Board of Selectmen's (BOS) meeting.

Nita began the discussion by distributing an email communication from Ellie Banker to committee members dated March 26, 2012 that described her observations from the BOS meeting. Nita also distributed "Greene Gables Information: First Draft for

Discussion and Correction Only," which briefly described the background of the Greene Gables issue and some examples of the kinds of things the committee should consider.

First Selectman Mullane described Mr. Penfield's letter received shortly after the property had been purchased by the town and stated the reasons that its offers it had been rejected. He then described the timeline of events that have occurred to date with respect to the structure. Mr. Mullane noted that the results of the December 15, 2010 Town Meeting indicate that the townspeople want to know more about the condition and possible uses of Greene Gables before a decision on its disposition should be made.

Nita then described her and Ed's request to North Stonington's Building Officials last fall to provide an opinion about the condition of Greene Gables. All agreed, however, that any evaluation by the Building Officials might be problematic due to their possible future involvement should the structure be renovated or demolished.

After considerable discussion with Mr. Mullane, the committee agreed that a small number of volunteers who are recognized as being knowledgeable in building construction, building codes, and renovation should visit the site to determine if it would be cost-effective to have a professional survey performed. If the building is obviously in such poor condition that it is not even worth a professional survey, then a decision on its disposition may be possible without further expenditure.

Mr. Mullane and the committee agreed to proceed as follows:

Mr. Mullane, former North Stonington Building Official Tim York and Hewitt Farm Committee members will visit the structure to conduct a "walk-around" appraisal of its condition and to determine what questions should be asked of the volunteer evaluation team.

Second, the committee will contact three individuals who have experience in structural evaluation and renovation work to ask them if they would visit the site to answer these questions.

Third, Ellie and Coop will attend the Historical Society's Board of Trustee's meeting on April 2, 2012 to ask the trustees if they have any suggestions with regard to Greene Gables' future and how this future should be determined.

4) Status of Ryder Road Entrance Sign

Nita distributed two drawings of entrance signs that she had arranged, one containing previously agreed-to wording and one edited to improve upon this wording.

The group discussed each aspect of the design and made changes to be reflected in the next revision.

The group agreed to meet next Monday, April 2, 2012, for a workshop to finalize the sign's design and ready it for submission to the manufacturer.

5) Discuss leases on Hewitt Farm rental properties.

Ed will review any possible improvements to prior rental leases at the next Regular Meeting.

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

Eddie reported that the Fire Department Chief Steinhart had submitted a written request for permission to install a dry hydrant on Lower Hewitt Pond. The committee can now submit our positive recommendation on this to the Board of Selectmen.

Nita reported that Grant Leiper was considering construction of picnic tables for his Eagle Scout project instead of an Osprey pole. She has reminded him that he must submit a *Project Application* with details before permission can be granted.

Coop stated that Tom Kane has received official approval from the Eagle Scout Review Board to begin collecting funds for his footbridge project. Contribution forms for use by donors have been placed in a receptacle located at the bridge site.

7) Priorities for April 9, 2012 Agenda

- a) Conclude work on the Ryder Road Entrance Sign
- b) Steps to activate a "Friends of Hewitt Farm" group
- c) Process for granting permission to cut firewood
- d) Update on Grant Leiper's and Tom Kane's projects
- e) Hosting a possible music event
- f) Initial review of leases for Hewitt Farm rentals
- g) Progress on the disposition of Greene Gables
- h) Name (if any) for a restored trail behind Greene Gables Meadow

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, Richard B. Cooper