

Town of North Stonington, CT
HEWITT FARM COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, February 13, 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, Jack Brown, Dick (Coop) Cooper, Ed Harasimowitz and Nita Kincaid present. Also attending were Tom Kane and Jim Leonaitis.

1) Approve 02/06/12 Regular Meeting Minutes

Ellie motioned and Ed seconded to approve the 2/06/12 Minutes. The motion carried.

Owing to Scout Tom Kane's presence, Nita asked to move his presentation to next on the agenda. The committee agreed.

2) Scout Footbridge Project

Tom Kane from Boy Scout Troop 71 made a presentation to the committee requesting approval to construct, as an Eagle Scout project, two replacement footbridges over the Shunock River on Hewitt Farm.

Tom showed a model of the proposed bridges, explaining the purpose of tethering them to an anchor to prevent their floating away during high water, which occasionally occurs on the Shunock River. He then submitted to the committee a packet describing details of the project.

Tom stated that he had originally intended to use **Trex** for the bridge decking materials, but that UBS, the potential supplier, suggested using treated Southern Yellow Pine because it would be much less expensive, more natural looking and almost equally durable to pressure treated wood. Tom will still use Trex on the handrails to prevent splinters.

Tom noted that the railing posts will be 4"X4" instead of 2"x4" as shown on the model. They will be bolted to the frame.

Tom next described the assembly process. Each frame (there are two identical bridges) will be partially constructed off-site and transported to the assembly area. The frame will then be lifted into place on the existing supports and the railing and decking, which will have been pre-cut and drilled off-site, will be attached. The entire operation of installing both bridges is expected to take one day.

Nita asked about the weight of the frame and whether town equipment would be needed. The committee discussed this issue and it was concluded that the frames could be off-loaded and positioned without the use of power equipment.

Nita also asked Tom what he had accomplished so far on the municipal approval process. Tom stated that Mr. Mullane and the Building Official had reviewed his plan and did not require any changes. He was told that there are no specific codes that apply to this type of structure and Tom believed the Building Department would provide him with a document stating this information..

Tom stated that he had also made his presentation to the Inland Wetlands Commission and that it had issued an "Inland Wetlands Permit" to him. Tom said he was advised that because the bridges are not permanent structures, approval from the Planning and Zoning Commission may not be required, but he would check with Zoning Officer Juliet Leeming to make sure there is no need to go to the PZC.

Coop mentioned to Tom to be sure to retain a copy of the Inland Wetlands Permit and whatever document the Building Official provides because this project is establishing a precedent by which the committee hopes to review and judge future similar projects.

Tom next distributed a proposed handout by which he intends to raise money for materials. His proposal is to charge \$50 for a brass 2"x4" plaque that would be affixed to each of the planks on the bridges. The plaques would contain whatever information the donor wished up to its limited space. A small number of larger plaques might also be available for major contributors of supplies, etc.

The committee first reviewed Tom's proposed handout and suggested several changes to make it easier to understand and fill out. The committee then discussed the proposed sale and placement of the plaques. It was suggested that the sale of plaques might be more successful if only \$30 were charged instead of \$50. Also, instead of attaching a plaque to each plank on the bridges as proposed, attaching them to the railing or other location where they are less likely to be damaged might be better.

Nita MOVED TO APPROVE the project as presented by Tom, including the design, materials and assembly of the two footbridges, the proposed fund-raising project and the use of brass plaques to acknowledge contributors. Ellie seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The committee encouraged Tom to engage in a wide solicitation for funds from organizations and individuals throughout North Stonington. Nita stated that she would help Tom in getting the press involved during the period of construction.

3) Vote to adopt the revised "Event Application"

Ed motioned and Ellie seconded to approve and adopt for use the "Event Application" form designed by Jack and revised at subsequent meetings. There was no discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

4) Review most current version of *Work Plan* to establish priorities

Ed distributed the most recently revised version of the *Work Plan* dated 2/12/12.

The group then reviewed the document item-by-item, making changes to reflect work completed over the past several months, the committee's newly adopted *Vision and Mission Statement*, and policies that were adopted since the plan's last review.

Ed will incorporate comments and conclusions into the next revision, and it will be reviewed again at the next meeting.

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

Nita explained, and the group briefly discussed, Jack's plan for routine and scheduled maintenance to be performed on Hewitt Farm. His written recommendations received by Nita will be distributed via email before the next meeting.

The group also discussed Brian Murphy's email of February 1, 2012 from the DEEP in which he states, "As for changing the all vessels prohibited regulation, the change to use of boats without motors would not take place until the next fisheries regulation package, most likely early 2013."

Committee members questioned why the DEEP had placed the prohibition of vessels on the pond in the first place and why the present owner, the Town of North Stonington, could not have it immediately removed. The committee then directed Coop to re-contact Mr. Murphy to ask why this prohibition was in place and how it can be removed at the earliest date. The committee intends to allow canoes and kayaks for recreation use and by fishermen, and would like to do so this spring.

The committee also directed Coop to notify Mr. Murphy that from this date forward, the Town would be using the name "Lower Hewitt Pond" on its signs, maps and documentation. The DEEP and State of Connecticut is requested to do likewise.

6) Public Comments & Questions

None

7) Priorities for February 27, 2012 Regular Meeting Agenda

- Review the again-revised *Work Plan*
- Discuss prior leases on the property
- Focus on required work at the Ryder Rd. entranceway, including sign design

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, Richard B. Cooper