

**Town of North Stonington, CT**  
**HEWITT FARM COMMITTEE**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, November 18, 2013 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. Brooke Dalton, Diana Hunt, Mary Ann Ricker and Bill Ricker representing the Community Garden Association were also present.

1) Approve 11/04/2013 Meeting Minutes

Ed motioned and Ellie seconded to approve the 11/04/2013 Meeting Minutes as corrected. The motion carried.

2) Community Garden Report

The Community Garden's annual report had been distributed to committee members earlier the previous week, however Brooke Dalton provided the group with a brief verbal summary.

In regard to a description in the report, Jack asked, "What is a bed?" Bill explained how the Community Garden is laid out and how members use the four beds in each plot for their planting scheme. Eight plots were used during the 2013 summer season, each by one member of the association. It was noted, however, that there were as many as 30 helpers over that period. The association is planning to open six more plots in 2014 for a total of 14 plots. These 14 plots will fill the entire community garden space. Each plot consists of four beds, but only three of those beds are planted each growing season. The beds are rotated over the years so that there is one empty bed at all times. Different beds are usually used for different types of crops.

Mary Ann described that other groups have been visiting the site to learn how the garden was constructed and is operated. Bill identified which Community Garden Association members will be returning to plant next season. He expects all plots to be taken. One of the goals of the association is to get new people interested.

Jack asked several questions about the operation of the garden. Nita asked if those attending had a list of any changes to be made to the association's "rules and regulations" document. Brooke responded that the document had been changed to

remove the stop and start-up dates as agreed-upon earlier, and that one of the rules would be changed to better describe the period of use for the garden. These changes will be made before the 2014 agreement is presented to First Selectman Mullane for his signature.

Mary Ann reported the progress made on the "water access plan." The association will return to the Inlands Wetlands Commission once the design of the proposed system is finalized. Bill stated that this past summer the garden used about 250 gallons of water per week. The plan is to capture leakage at the dam and pipe it to a pool before pumping it up to a container on the existing cement slab near the garden area. A portable gasoline-operated pump would be used and would be removed from the site after each use. The pipe would remain.

Jack asked if the association had explored using the Greene Gables well. Bill responded that the selectmen do not want to use that as a source.

Mary Ann noted that the Boy Scouts have expressed an interest in constructing a new gate at the back (south side) of the garden. This would allow the chip and compost piles to be moved to less conspicuous locations.

The Hewitt Farm Committee agreed that the report was very well written and thanked the Community Garden Association for it, and for maintaining the area presentably all season long.

Ellie asked that a date be affixed to the report. Nita suggested that the report would be shared with the Board of Selectmen once any additions or corrections are completed.

Nita then asked the attending members if the Community Garden Association would consider joining in a proposed "2014 Harvest Festival" to be held next fall. She said it would be similar to the Hewitt Farm event in 2011, but because there would be two more organizations involved, there would be more people helping. Nita provided a written description of the proposal for all to read.

### 3) Trail Sign Update

Coop reported that he had contacted two companies that specialize in the design and manufacturer of trail signs. He believes them to be very similar in price even though their pricing is calculated different ways. He has asked them each to send a sample of their work for the group to see. Coop noted that one of the companies scorches the letters and the other paints them. Other than that, the signs will probably be very similar.

Jack noted that he is in the process of cutting logs to be used as sign posts in locations where they are needed. Coop has identified at least five such places so far.

4) Application for Overnight Camping

Christopher Annino, a frequent visitor to Hewitt Farm, submitted an application to the committee to camp with a group of friends on the farm overnight.

After discussing the request, the committee agreed that it could not grant such approval at this time. The possibility of overnight camping by an individual or group of individuals other than an organization such as the Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts, has not previously been explored by the committee and members felt that there were many issues such as liability concerns, selectmen approval, and precedent-setting that need to be addressed first.

The group is very grateful to Christopher and his parents for the volunteer work they do on the farm and the committee agreed to consider a policy or guidelines to address overnight camping in the future.

5) Cutting of Firewood

Nita distributed a revision to the *Hewitt Farm Firewood Harvesting Guidelines* document. The committee unanimously approved it.

6) Review of Rental Properties

Nita briefly reported on what she, Cindy and Ed found when they conducted the annual inspection of the cabin and farm house. She will write a report describing the visits and send it to committee members and the Board of Selectmen.

Ed noted that during the visit, tenant Lynda Prior asked if there was some way she could get some large tree limbs that are piled outside her door cut into smaller pieces so that she could split and burn them. Jack said that he would address this issue.

7) 2014 Meeting Schedule

The *2014 Meeting Schedule* is complete and ready for submission to the Town Clerk. Nita and Coop will sign and submit it.

8) Blue Bird Houses

The group reviewed Nita's letter of appreciation to the Grange for installing Bluebird houses around the edges of the hay fields. Ellie and Coop both agreed that the houses are appropriately located.

9) Garden Club Contribution

Nita shared the thank you note that Coop had written to the North Stonington Garden Club thanking that organization for its contribution to the purchase of new permanent trail signs on Hewitt Farm.

10) Submission to Quarterly Publication by ICONS

Nita distributed a copy of the article she submitted for the next ICONS publication. The group agreed that it describes Hewitt Farm, what is done there, and what can be done there, very well.

11) Letter from Master Gardeners

Nita read a letter from the URI Master Gardeners thanking the committee for allowing the maple tree and sap gathering class at Hewitt Farm. John Bradshaw taught the course.

12) Hayfield Review

Ron Lewis contacted Nita recently to ask if he and Mike Daniels may attend the next committee meeting to report on the 2013 hay harvest. They will be scheduled for December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

13) Public comments and questions

- None

14) Priorities for December 2, 2013 agenda

- To be determined by the co-chairs

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Richard B. Cooper