

Town of North Stonington, CT
HEWITT FARM COMMITTEE

Monday, January 7, 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, Nita Kincaid and Eddie McGowan present.

1) Approve 12/17/2012 Meeting Minutes

Eddie motioned and Jack seconded to approve the 12/17/2012 Meeting Minutes. The motion carried.

2) Identify and prioritize major committee goals for 2013.

Nita suggested that in preparation for the Town's Annual Report and upcoming budget submission, the committee should compile two lists, one identifying its accomplishments throughout 2012 and a second that describes its goals for 2013. The committee created the flip chart list that follows:

2012 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Developed Hewitt Farm Vision and Mission statement

Developed standard Event/Project request form to facilitate approval of special activities

Trimmed entryways

Continued to make progress on invasive elimination

Added new trail

Maintained trails well

Improved stream crossings

Submitted First Hewitt Farm Budget (2012/2013)

Developed and installed Hewitt Rd. entrance sign, using NSGC donated funds

Coordinated with local groups to permit four 2012 special activities on site: Three B's Sugaring project, Girl Scout Camporee, North Stonington Garden Club Guided Trail Walk & Boy Scout Campout

Coordinated with Boy and Girl Scout organizations on 3 successful projects: wooden bridge, butterfly garden & picnic tables

Inspected rental residences, revised expired leases, and identified and began necessary rental maintenance work

Negotiated a hayfield Agreement to significantly improve the property

Received many positive comments (& some contributions) from the public

INCOMPLETE 2012 PROJECTS

Plans for Greene Gables (including removal of surrounding overgrown trees)

Plans for the 2 meadow areas

Letters to community groups, encouraging use & support of Hewitt Farm

Completion of identified work to be done on the two residential rentals

Development of a policy for “recognition” signs

2013 GOALS

Work with the Selectmen and the NS Historical Society to establish a plan for the future of the Greene Gables building and the immediate surrounding area.

Work with the Selectmen to determine the status of Hewitt Farm dam repair plans, possible timeline, potential for grants and other dam-related matters with which the committee may be able to help

Develop three or four “seasonal events” to be held at the farm during 2013. These would be based on the permitted activities.

Possible examples:

- *A fishing activity in the Spring*
- *A trail walk activity and/or a town-wide/community family picnic with musical entertainment in the Summer or Fall*
- *A horse event in the Fall or early Winter*

Such events may involve HFC working with other community groups, as well as our identified volunteer “Friends”

Obtain needed information to determine if Frisbee golf should be added to the farm

Continue invasive removal

Identify one of the major projects (ie. Pavilion, “outhouse”, Rte. 2 sign) on our list and complete it during 2013)

Increase communication with the public about Hewitt Farm through contacts with the press and better use of the Town web site, NS Bulletin Board, and possibly development of a Hewitt Farm web site

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

Nita reported that she had received an email from Mac Turner asking if Hewitt Farm would participate in a "Walk Connecticut" event with Avalonia Land Conservancy on Saturday, June 1, 2013. The group agreed that we would support the event whatever way we can and that Nita should communicate that back to Mac.

The group discussed having a school or NSEF-sponsored music event on Hewitt Farm on the same day as the "Walk Connecticut" event. Ellie agreed to ask NSEF if holding the two events together could produce conflict. The group agreed that because the music event has been in the planning stages for a while, if there are fears of a conflict the music event should take priority.

Nita reported that she had gone to a Girl Scouts of America ceremony honoring Karin Leiper's attaining the Gold Award. At the ceremony, Nita presented Karin with a *Certificate of Recognition* from the Town of North Stonington and a *Certificate of Appreciation* from the Hewitt Farm Committee.

4) Meet with Ron Lewis and Mike Daniels about the Hayfield agreement

Ron Lewis and Mike Daniels arrived at 4:20 p.m. to meet with the committee and discuss their plans for the coming year. Nita gave them the Hayfield Agreement dated January 7, 2013 for their signatures. First Selectman Mullane had signed it earlier in the day.

Ron and Mike introduced themselves to the committee and briefly described their farming experience and what they hoped to accomplish on Hewitt Farm. They told about their recent visit to the hayfields with several members of the committee and expressed their opinion of the hayfields, as they exist today. They discussed the amount of work to be undertaken in the first year and subsequently.

They asked if the committee would consider reviewing the progress of the management of the fields after 3 years and at that time determining whether the original 5 year Agreement could be extended for an additional 3 years.

The clearing and improvement work to be done on the hayfields each year is described in an annual attachment to the Agreement. Nita distributed a draft of the 2013 attachment, which included language about a possible three-year review and term extension. The committee supported this idea and determined it should be presented to the Board of Selectmen for approval. Nita will make this presentation.

Ron and Mike agreed to allow Mark Perkins until March 1, 2013 to remove all his hay rolls from the Hewitt Farm hayfields. They did express concerns, however, that when they lime the fields, the lime could get into the hay rolls. They would prefer that the rolls that are remaining be moved to a single location on the property to prevent this.

Ron and Mike plan to take all the cut wood from around the hayfields and asked if the committee knew anyone else interested in having some of it. Several names were mentioned. The need to secure permission to burn the brush debris was discussed, recognizing that this should be done this winter and that it would require permission from First Selectman Mullane. He had on an earlier occasion indicated that this would be possible.

Ron submitted a check in the amount of five hundred one dollars (\$501.00) as payment for the first year of the Agreement. The committee informed him that the Agreement does not require payment until after each harvest period, but thanked him for the early payment.

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

The group recognized and thanked Jack for the work he is doing on the western side of Hewitt Road where it leads up to the 1750 Farm House. Nita reported that she had met with First Selectman Mullane and that the Town crew would also be on site trimming the tree branches hanging over the Farm House and removing one tree that is located dangerously close to it.

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.

7) Priorities for January 28, 2013 agenda

- a) Review and finalize the lists of committee accomplishments, unfinished business, and goals for the future developed at the beginning of this meeting.
- b) Determine plans for participation in the "Walk Connecticut" event.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, Richard B. Cooper